"No revolution is worth anything unless it can defend itself."

Lenin

David Golinkov

The Secret War Against Soviet Russia

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FOREWORD

The Great October Socialist Revolution of October 1917 in Russia inaugurated a new era in the history of mankind, an era of the triumph of socialism and the demise of capitalism. The revolution was brought about by antagonisms characteristic not only of Tsarist Russia, but of the whole world in the period of imperialism and the overall crisis of capitalism.

Following the triumphant outcome of the October Revolution, the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet government at once began to fulfil their programme of democratic and socialist reform.

On October 26, 1917,[1] the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets enacted its Decree on Peace in which the new Soviet government, voicing the working people's unanimous desire to end the protracted and exhausting imperialist war which the bourgeoisie had unleashed, proposed to all the belligerent nations and their governments that negotiations begin to secure a fair and democratic peace. It also expressed its readiness to conclude an armistice without a moment's delay. Another edict issued on

[1] Note that up to February 1918 all dates are given according to the Old Style.

the same day, the Decree on Land, abolished landed estates and nationalised the land. A few days later, on November 2, the Soviet government, then known as the Council of People's Commissars, adopted the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which declared that the old Tsarist policy of setting these peoples at loggerheads must be replaced by a new policy of voluntary and honest association of the peoples of Russia. For "only as a result of such an association is it possible to weld the workers and peasants throughout Russia into a revolutionary force able to withstand any encroachments of the imperialist-annexationist bourgeoisie".

The socialist and democratic ideas and principles that the new Soviet government set out and implemented made a deep impression on the broad masses of all nationalities, who rallied round the Soviets to give their firm support to the new regime. The force that was able to bring together all the currents of the revolutionary movement for socialist and democratic reform, especially for land, peace, and national emancipation, was the Communist Party, the party of the new type that Lenin had founded in 1903 at the Second Congress of what was then known as the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. At that Congress delegates divided on a number of programmatic and organisational points. The revolutionary Marxists supporting Lenin secured the majority in elections to the Party executive and came to be called Bolsheviks, from the Russian word "bolshinstvo", which means majority, while the opportunists opposing Lenin came to be called Mensheviks, from "menshinstvo", the Russian word for minority. The Bolsheviks were fully aware that the new socialist system would not win unless a struggle was waged against the deposed capitalist system and they foresaw resistance from the bourgeoisie, the landed proprietors and other anti-socialist forces.

In the months following the overthrow of the bourgeois Provisional Government [1] and right up to February 1918 Soviet power spread like wildfire across the former Russian Empire. This was a time of the revolution's triumphant advance. Working people enthusiastically acclaimed the proletarian dictatorship's revolutionary transformations. Meanwhile, in this initial period of Soviet power, the resistance put up to the countrywide popular revolutionary movement both by the bourgeoisie, who still retained considerable wealth and had many highly experienced persons serving them, and by their Right-wing socialist accomplices, was more in the nature of futile gambles, since the reactionaries were blocked by outnumbering forces of the masses. Only on the fringes—along the Don, in the Southern Urals, the Ukraine, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus—did the seed of counter-revolution fall on fertile ground.

What actually were the forces of Russian domestic counter-revolution at that time?

The extremely reactionary section of the anti-Soviet camp consisted of monarchists from among the former landowners and big industrialists and merchants to whom the Tsar had granted certain privileges, as well as top civil servants, leading churchmen and especially former generals, the revolution's most dangerous enemies, who formed the armed core of the anti-Soviet movement and dreamed of a Tsarist restoration.

A second anti-Soviet force consisted of the bourgeoisie and intellectuals of bourgeois origin, whose political credo was best expressed in the platform of the Constitutional Democrats, or Cadets, a party

[1] Established in February 1917 when the Tsarist autocracy was overthrown.

which, established in 1905 by Russia's liberal bourgeoisie, tried to salvage tsarism by installing a constitutional parliamentary monarchy.

A third anti-Soviet force consisted of Right-wing Socialist parties which, highly heterogeneous in composition, well reflected the motley makeup of the petty bourgeoisie whose interests and outlook they expressed. Their common ideal was to secure a West-European type of bourgeois democracy in Russia by agreement with the big bourgeoisie. Since they masked their counter-revolutionary essence with socialist phraseology, the arch-reactionary Rightists exploited them as a convenient cover.

A fourth anti-Soviet force was made up of the varied assortment of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, at times nationalist parties and organisations active in the outlying regions of the old Empire. By playing upon nationalist feelings, they sought to divert working people from the struggle for socialism and at the same time to preserve capitalist, even feudal society, as well as their own special local privileges. Even earlier, at the time of the February 1917 bourgeois democratic revolution, sundry local national so-called parliaments and governments had been created in these areas, while Cossack regions had their own military governments, all of which, as part of domestic counter-revolution, opposed the internationalist policies of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet government.

In those first few months after the October Socialist Revolution domestic counter-revolution, lacking any broad social basis, recruited supporters from among people who viewed Soviet power with hostility or who had been duped by the pseudo-socialist phraseology of the Right-wing Socialist Parties and bourgeois nationalists. But the very first anti-Soviet actions and counter-revolutionary insurrections demonstrated that in Russia the counter-revolutionary forces were not on their own strong enough to overthrow Soviet power.

This book briefly traces the history of the struggle against the various counter-revolutionary movements, plots, insurrections and machinations of international imperialism from 1917, the year of the victory of the October Revolution, up to the complete elimination of the organised anti-Soviet underground movement in 1925.

THE FIRST ANTI-SOVIET PLOTS AND REVOLTS

On October 27, 1917, in opposition to the Bolshevik Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC), which directed the armed uprising in Petrograd, the enemies of newly established Soviet rule, then only two days old, set up their own "Committee for the Salvation of the Fatherland and the Revolution" and appealed to the people to disregard and disobey the new authorities. In response many civil servants in various ministries, the banks and the Treasury, and in the postal and telegraph offices, as well as army officers, sabotaged the new Soviet government's instructions, created a central strike committee under what was known as the "Union of Civil Servants Unions" and announced a work stoppage at all government institutions. Meanwhile, the bourgeois and Right-wing socialist newspapers which were still being published slandered the revolution and slung abuse at the Bolsheviks and the new Soviet government's decrees. It was soon learned that A. F. Kerensky, Prime Minister of the deposed Provisional Government, having escaped from Petrograd, was returning at the head of Cossack formations (a privileged military caste in Tsarist Russia) with the express purpose of crushing the revolution.

In response to the MRC's call scores of thousands of Petrograders armed with rifles, cartridge belts, crowbars, spades and coils of barbed wire, and dragging machine-guns and cannon along, flocked on foot, by cart and lorry to the city's South-Western outskirts to throw up barricades and barbed wire entanglements and generally take up positions to repulse the advancing Cossacks.

Meanwhile, in the city itself the reactionaries were plotting to stab the revolution in the back.

At daybreak on October 29 a Red Guard patrol detained two suspicious characters and escorted them to the Commissar of the Peter and Paul Fortress. One of the two was identified as a leader of the Right-wing Socialist Revolutionary (SR) Party. Set up in 1902 as primarily a peasant party, it split in 1917 under the impact of revolutionary developments and stratification of the peasantry into a Right and Left wing; the latter broke away to create its own party. In the possession of the detained SR leader was a copy of an Order of the Day No. 1, dated October 29, issued to the "Troops of the Committee for the Salvation of the Fatherland and the Revolution", demanding that all orders of the Bolshevik MRC be ignored and its Commissars arrested. Though the man detained refused to offer any explanations, it was clear that an armed revolt was being hatched against the new Soviet government. That same morning the headquarters of the insurgents and all the city's military academies were surrounded by military units loyal to the revolution, and by units of sailors and Red guards.

Meanwhile, the advancing Cossacks refused to engage in further fighting against the people and entered into peace negotiations with representatives of the revolutionary forces, even promising to surrender Kerensky for trial. He escaped, however, and on

the evening of October 30 the anti-revolutionary march on Petrograd was over.

Nests of Counter-Revolution

The enemies of the revolution tried to recruit the Cossacks, those traditional guardians of the monarchy, and the officer corps, which was comprised primarily of people from privileged classes.

As soon as news of the revolution in Petrograd reached the Don region, where most of the Cossacks lived, Don Cossack army commander General Kaledin declared that he would not recognise the new

The government and the Party addressed to the people with a message entitled "Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger!" Petrograd's YCL members mobilised to fight on the front against Yudenich undergo military training.

Central Soviet government. He established control over the Don Cossack capital of Novocherkassk and proclaimed martial law throughout the region. All counter-revolutionaries flocked there, among them such Tsarist generals as L. G. Kornilov, A. I. Denikin, and A. S. Lukomsky, to mention only three, who had been arrested long before by the Provisional Government but had escaped from detention. Kornilov urged all former Tsarist army officers to gather in the Don, or to form their own anti-Soviet forces if unable to get through. Such political leaders as M. V. Rodzyanko, former President of the State Duma, the legislative assembly with restricted powers which the Tsar had permitted during the first Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07, P. N. Milyukov, head of the Cadets, and A. I. Guchkov, head of the Monarchist Octobrists also hastened to the Don area. A Volunteer Officer Army was established under the command of Gen. M. V. Alexeyev, who had been Chief of Staff in Tsarist times, and by generals Kornilov and Kaledin. In this way the Don region became a highly dangerous nest of counter-revolution.

But not daring to call openly for the Tsar's restoration this counter-revolutionary force hid itself behind "democratic" slogans. Playing upon the wishes of the more prosperous Cossacks to retain the economic privileges that the Tsar had granted them, the Cossack chieftains campaigned for an exclusive Cossack caste, contending that as a special nation the principle of the self-determination of nations was applicable to the Cossacks. At the same time the Volunteer Army advocated convening the Constituent Assembly to define the future state structure of "united indivisible Russia".

Other major nests of counter-revolution emerged in other Cossack regions in the Urals and Siberia,

as well as in non-Russian regions, where nationalist cliques craving to secede from Soviet Russia were active.

However, as was said earlier, the counter-revolutionary forces within the country were not strong enough to overthrow the new Soviet power, and so world imperialism came to their aid. . .

Russia's October Revolution took place at the height of the First World War. The bourgeois governments of the Anglo-French Entente and the United States, which had been Tsarist Russia's allies in the war, declined to agree to the Soviet proposal for concluding an immediate universal and democratic peace treaty. The other warring side, Germany and its allies who had occupied part of Russian territory, though consenting to peace talks, sought to use them to further its own imperialist interests. At the same time, the imperialist forces on either side wanted to destroy the world's first socialist state. A situation had emerged which foreshadowed foreign intervention in Russia's affairs. The revolution was forced to defend itself.

Soviet Investigation Committees and Courts of Law

In the very first days of the revolution the people dismantled the old government apparatus of force and coercion, that is to say, the police, the gendarmerie, the law courts, and the procurator's offices. The armed workers, peasants and soldiers and their organisations themselves undertook to combat counter-revolution and violations of public law and order.

As early as October 24, 1917, in an appeal to the working people of Petrograd the MRC warned that "at the very first attempt by shady elements to create disorder in the streets in Petrograd, to rob, open fire or use knives, the criminals will be wiped from the face of the earth". It went on to declare that the "cause of order and revolution rests in firm hands". Relying on the masses of armed workers and soldiers, the MRC quashed counter-revolutionary action and resistance from supporters of the old regime and protected law and order in Petrograd. The workers formed their own new popular revolutionary institutions of justice and inquiry–the investigation committees and courts of law.

The first Soviet Investigation Committee was set up under the Petrograd MRC at a time when revolutionary fighting was still going on in the streets. The workers, soldiers and seamen engaged in the Committee's work detained counter-revolutionaries, criminals and black marketeers and escorted them to the Smolny Institute, where the first governmental offices of the new Soviet republic were housed, and where members of the Investigation Committee, delegated by public organisations, examined their cases. They investigated the crimes of counter-revolutionaries and plotters and took action against sabotage by civil servants, capitalists subsidising anti-Soviet actions, and counter-revolutionary media slandering the revolution, as well as against robbers, black marketeers and hoodlums.

On November 4, 1917, Russia's first people's revolutionary court, established by one of the district Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in Petrograd, held its first session.

The working folk involved in the first Soviet courts and Investigation Committees conducted inquiries and dispensed justice, guided by their con-

The first members of the popular revolutionary court in Petrograd. December 1917.

science and revolutionary understanding of law, and the verdicts returned earned the court great respect among the population.

Yet, since in some places pre-revolutionary courts of law were still functioning for a time after the revolution, there was an imperative need to unify the system of judiciary and investigatory agencies on a legal basis.

On November 22, 1917, the Soviet government issued its first Decree on the Judiciary, which stated that all pre-revolutionary judicial institutions were abolished, and that new democratically elected judicial and investigatory agencies were to take their place. It further stated that pending new legislation these agencies were to return verdicts and rulings in conformity with their revolutionary understanding

of the law and their conscience. Provision was made for the creation of special agencies, such as revolutionary tribunals and special investigation committees, "to combat counter-revolutionary forces by way of action to safeguard the revolution and its gains from them, and also to take decisions in cases of marauding, embezzlement, sabotage and other abuses by merchants, industrialists, civil servants and other persons".

This edict and subsequent instructions juridically recorded the key democratic principles of the organisation of the judiciary, as previously evolved by the first people's revolutionary courts of law and investigation committees. These basic principles were: the election of judges and members of the investigation committees by the Soviets; the broad participation of people's delegates in their function-

A revolutionary patrol checking documents.

ing; the dispensation of justice in full public view, as well as the proceedings of the investigation committees which adopted key decisions at open hearings; the equality before the court of all parties to a case, this equality secured by abolishing the special powers previously invested in the Procurator in the conduct of investigation and trial; the provision that any person present in the courtroom, provided he or she was not compromised in any way, could act as public prosecutor or public defence counsel; the provision that a defence attorney could participate in the process of preliminary investigation; the provision that all matters pertaining to the investigation and trial had to be settled collegially; and finally, the fact that the penalties that the court could impose included fines, public reprimand, social ostracism, compulsory public work, deprivation of freedom, and deportation. There was no provision for the death penalty.

Anti-Riot Committee

It was soon discovered that the judicial and investigatory agencies established after the revolution could not ensure adequate law enforcement against counter-revolutionary and other dangerous crimes, because these agencies only investigated and examined crimes which had already been committed, but could take no preventative action. Yet counter-revolutionaries were secretly plotting uprisings and the political situation was such that there was an imperative need for a machinery by which the working people could detect and prevent the criminal actions counter-revolution was hatching. To this end special commissions and committees, among them the Anti-Riot Committee and All-Russian Extraor-

Felix Dzerzhinsky, Chairman of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission.

dinary Commission for Combatting Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, were established to fight crimes which presented a special danger to the revolution.

In Petrograd at the time it was a common thing for the dregs of society to ransack wine cellars and warehouses, to burgle flats and to carry and use firearms illegally. An Anti-Riot Committee under V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, the head of chancellery of the Council of People's Commissars, was set up composed of workers delegated from meetings of public organisations.

As early as on the night of December 5, 1917, this Committee uncovered a criminal conspiracy. At a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich reported that "Petrograd is swamped by a wave of drunken riots... The questioning of the people detained has brought to light that they were supplied with liquor and organised into a band to incite others to drink, for which they were paid as much as 15 rubles a day". Committee members detained two persons handing out leaflets which though outwardly resembling Bolshevik proclamations, because they bore the slogan "Working men of all countries, unite!" and closed with the slogans "Down with imperialism and its lackeys!" and "Long live the world working-class revolution and the world proletariat!", were actually inflammatory pieces inciting soldiers, sailors and workers to ransack wine cellars and in every way disrupt the normal tenor of life in Petrograd.

On December 6 the Committee proclaimed a state of siege in the city and issued the warning that "all attempts to loot wine cellars, warehouses, shops, private flats and so on will be stopped by machine-gun fire without warning" (published in *Izvestia*, December 6, 1917).

The Committee's firm action helped to bring about a more orderly situation in the city.

Creation of the Cheka

That same day, after discussing the question of a nationwide civil service strike that was being fomented, the Council of People's Commissars asked Felix Dzerzhinsky, one of the heads of the MRC, to "set up a special commission to clarify ways and means of putting down such a strike through the most energetic revolutionary action, to clarify ways and means of suppressing sabotage". The next day, after hearing Dzerzhinsky's report, the Council adopted a resolution setting up the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combatting Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, better known for short as the Cheka, from the initial letters of the Russian words for Extraordinary Commission, with Dzerzhinsky as chairman.

The Petrograd MRC was abolished and its functions were transferred to the Cheka as the first special Soviet organ of state security. Unlike the MRC, which employed mainly military forces, the Cheka was to detect persons guilty of counter-revolutionary crimes, conduct the appropriate inquiries and refer such cases to revolutionary tribunals, as well as to take the disciplinary measures envisaged by law against the culprits. It was declared an organ for "ruthless struggle against counter-revolution, sabotage and black marketeering", and came under the immediate supervision of the People's Commissariat of Justice, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) and the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet. The Cheka was mandated to act in con-

The first revolutionary tribunal.

formity with the instructions which it and the two Commissariats had jointly drawn up, and either to refer cases to the Investigation Committee of the Revolutionary Tribunal or to terminate the case. On January 31, 1918, after debating the exact demarcation of functions between operative agencies for the detection of crime and for the concluding of investigations and trials, the government ruled that the "Extraordinary Commission shall undertake all work connected with the detection, stopping and prevention of crime, while the further conduct of investigations and committal for trial are the whole responsibility of the Tribunal's Investigation Committee".

To sum up: The Cheka was established as an administrative political organ to detect, stop and prevent counter-revolutionary crimes. It was allowed to work out its own ways of achieving this end, and to take against persons it uncovered such disciplinary steps as confiscation of property, banishment, deprivation of ration cards, and the publishing of lists of enemies of the people, among other measures. As for judicial powers, it was to discharge the functions of an agency of detection and initial investigations; it could conduct investigations "so far as is necessary to stop a crime" but afterwards the case was to be referred to the Investigation Committee of the Revolutionary Tribunal for preliminary investigation and committal for trial. In short, it was seen as a body that relied on the help and assistance of broad masses of the people. Its staff went round factories and military units to inform the workers, soldiers and sailors of their task, to ask them to report any

information they might have about counter-revolutionaries, and to invite them energetically to help in Cheka operations. The popularity of the Cheka grew by leaps and bounds and, despite a small staff of only some two or three dozen at the outset, with the co-operation of many voluntary helpers the Cheka was able to do a great deal.

Because of its complex and specific tasks and the extensive powers invested in it, the Cheka and its staff had to be wholly devoted to the revolution and to have a high degree of awareness, honesty and self-sacrifice. Dzerzhinsky considered restraint and courtesy essential and in one of his 1918 instructions wrote: "The entry of armed people into private homes and the detention of culprits is an evil to which one must resort today too, so good and truth may triumph. But it should always be remembered that it is an evil, that our aim is to use this evil to root out the need for resorting to it in the future. So may all those empowered to conduct searches, deprive persons of liberty and detain them in prison give considerate treatment to the people arrested and searched, and may they be far more courteous to them than even to a close relative or friend, aware that the person deprived of liberty is unable to protect himself and is in our power. Everyone must remember that he represents the Soviet government of workers and peasants and that every shout of his, every manifestation of rudeness, immodesty or discourtesy is a blot on this government."

Humanism and Democracy

The democratic principles established after the victory of the October Revolution and underlying the structure and operation of judicial investigatory

and punitive offices gradually broadened to encompass the entire country, quite in accord with the prevailing social and political situation. The victorious proletariat displayed magnanimity towards its defeated enemy. The revolutionary tribunals imposed the minimum penalties and the extraordinary commissions arrested counter-revolutionaries only to nip their damaging activities in the bud and to isolate them from society while the political situation was acute, releasing them as soon as they promised no longer to take an active part in the struggle against the worker-peasant revolution.

Thus, during the suppression of the Petrograd insurrection of October 29-31, 1917, crowds wanted to lynch the captured counter-revolutionaries, but the Soviet government prevented this and took every step to protect their lives. Thus the newspaper *Izvestia* reported on November 1: "On the night of October 29th 44 military cadets and three officers from the destroyer Deyatelny, who had surrendered at the Telephone Exchange, were escorted to the Naval Detention Centre in Kronstadt. All detainees were delivered safe and sound to the Naval Detention Centre. The Investigation Committee and the Centre's Board of Governors took immediate action to provide normal conditions for their detention. The detainees are allowed visits twice a week, on Thursdays and Sundays. They are also allowed to correspond and to receive parcels. They are in no danger, as the Centre is under the protection of a Red Guard composed of class-conscious city workers."

The members of the Investigation Committee accepted signed pledges from the persons detained to the following effect: "I, the undersigned, hereby pledge my word of honour to the Military Investigation Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies not to take up arms

against the Soviet government and not to urge others to do so, and to report to the afore-mentioned Committee at once when required." This pledge was considered sufficient warranty to set the insurrectionists free. Subsequently investigation was completely terminated under a 1918 government edict proclaiming a May Day amnesty.

In fact no action at all was taken against the "Committee for the Salvation of the Fatherland and the Revolution", under whose banners the insurrection had been staged in the city. As newspapers reported, the government "notes that no order was issued for the arrest of the Committee of Salvation... most of the detained persons have already been released and that all, with the exception of those who threaten the gains of the revolution, will be set free later" (*Izvestia*, November 7, 1917).

Many examples could be given of the leniency of repressive action taken by the institutions established to combat counter-revolution. Indeed, this was the general line of the new government's punitive policies. Immediately after the revolution the Soviet government took the necessary action to ensure strict observance of revolutionary legality, calling upon all its agencies to have arrests and other repressive measures against counter-revolutionaries undertaken exclusively by judicial and investigatory agencies. In a circular to all Soviets dated January 31, 1918, the People's Commissariat of Justice indicated that the "suppression or stopping of counter-revolutionary actions must be within the mainstream of revolutionary legal order. Political arrests, searches and seizures should be conducted only by the Investigation Committee whose sole purpose should be committal for trial by a revolutionary tribunal... Let retribution be speedy and decisive, but let it come from the hands of a revolutionary court; let

no one dare say that there is no socialist justice throughout the territory of the Soviet republic. The revolution is stern to active enemies and magnanimous towards the overthrown and the defeated" (*Izvestia*, January 31, 1918).

The "Union of Unions" Affair

After the victory of the October Revolution, striving to prevent the new worker-peasant government from assuming state power, counter-revolutionaries induced civil servants and the staff of public institutions to sabotage the new regime. In Petrograd in November 1917 these latter set up a "Union of Civil Servants Unions", with a central strike committee. The strikes aroused widespread indignation among people hard hit by economic chaos, the food crisis, and other disturbances that counter-revolutionary saboteurs had provoked. At many offices and institutions some of the staff protested against such sabotage and helped the managers and other executives that the Soviet government had appointed. Cheka officers discovered where the ringleaders of the "Union of Unions" met and on December 22 Dzerzhinsky, who was personally directing the investigation, ordered the place to be raided and all the suspects to be detained. It was established that several organisations, among them the "Union of Unions", the "Union of Working Intelligentsia" and the "Union of Engineers" had their headquarters there. Some 30 people were apprehended while attempting to destroy papers and escape. But members of the Cheka unearthed documents attesting to subversive activities, including a strike bulletin and "Strike Fund" donations list. Dzerzhinsky and his subordinates pieced together the torn papers and

strike bulletin and on their basis began an investigation. The "Union of Unions" with its central strike committee was found to be masterminding the political strike of civil servants in Petrograd and to be preparing a nationwide strike. Moreover, it had ties with anti-Soviet political associations and with agents of banks, big industrialists and merchants, from whom it received the money to pay salaries to the strikers. It was also established that the Union had strike committees at various ministries and industrial associations and that it also had a press bureau and a bureau for liason with Moscow. One strike committee was at credit offices, where considerable resources had been channelled into the "Aid Fund" for striking civil servants.

In the course of the investigation, the Cheka isolated the ringleaders, disrupted the strike committee and its machinery, blocked funds and did everything it could to persuade waverers to side with the Soviet government. Many of the arrested civil servants signed pledges that they would no longer participate in sabotage, upon which they were immediately released by the Cheka.

On March 1, 1918, the Cheka referred all the evidence it had gathered to the Investigation Committee of the Revolutionary Tribunal. By that time the only person still under arrest was A. Kondratyev, chairman of the "Union of Unions", who was set free next day by the Investigation Committee, as the strike had been quashed by then.

The Case of Countess Panina

This was the first case to be heard by the Revolutionary Tribunal of Petrograd, which was headed by factory worker Ivan Zhukov, who had fought

in Russia's three revolutions and had been elected to head the tribunal by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

On December 10, 1917, Zhukov and six lay judges, factory workers elected by the Petrograd Soviet, strode into the crowded hall of the palace that had once belonged to Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, brother of the deposed Tsar. Also among the audience were former members of the judiciary, friends of the defendant, Countess Sofia Panina, a well-known bourgeois public figure and member of the Cadet Party executive, as well as reporters from bourgeois papers published in Petrograd, who were already claiming that the new Revolutionary Tribunal was an extremely harsh one.

Zhukov told the seething audience that the new Revolutionary Tribunal was of special significance and he compared it to those set up during the 1848 revolution in France. "Like those first revolutionary courts," he said, "so will this newly created Russian Revolutionary Tribunal, I trust, be strict in its judgements and fervently safeguard the rights and customs of the Russian Revolution. It will pronounce stern sentence on all who go against the resolve and will of the people, all who stand in their way. At the same time I am sure that those who are innocent... will find a most dependable champion in the Revolutionary Tribunal."

Countess Panina, who had been Deputy Minister of Education in the deposed Provisional Government, was charged with sabotage. Asked by the presiding judge whether she pleaded guilty or not, she said she did not recognise the Soviet government and would account for her activities "exclusively to the Constituent Assembly". The point was that, when refusing to recognise the Soviet-appointed heads of the Commissariat of Education, she had also re-

fused to hand over the funds of the old ministry, as a result of which the Soviet authorities found not a kopek in the safe.

When the hearings began, no one dared to step forward and respond to the presiding judge's request by agreeing to act as public prosecutor. V. Y. Gurevich, former headmaster of a private school, undertook to act as the public defence counsel. His description of the defendant as a woman of merit who should be acquitted fell on sympathetic ears among the anti-Soviet elements in the audience. At this point a factory worker asked for the floor. "The court was absolutely right to call Citizeness Panina to book," he said. "The oppressed class won power at the price of blood and cannot and must not tolerate insults against this power. We have before us not an individual but a public figure, a party and class leader, who with all the representatives of her class has contributed to organised resistance to the people's power. That is the crime she has committed and for that she deserves to be tried."

The judges retired to confer and, when they returned, a hush descended. Zhukov read out the sentence. "In the name of the revolutionary people," he announced, "the Revolutionary Tribunal, having heard the case of Citizeness Sofia Panina about her taking from the finance department of the former Ministry of Public Education funds belonging to the people in the sum of around 93,000 rubles, hereby rules: 1. to detain Citizeness Sofia Panina until she returns to the finance department of the Commissariat of Education the money she has taken; 2. the Revolutionary Tribunal, while deeming Citizeness Sofia Panina guilty of resistance to the people's government, confines itself, taking into consideration the defendent's past record, to imposing a public reprimand on Citizeness Panina."

On December 19 the saboteurs returned the money and Panina was released. Later she emigrated.

The Purishkevich Monarchist Conspiracy

V. M. Purishkevich, a large landowner and pillar of Russia's belligerent monarchists, greeted the February Revolution with unconcealed hostility. Unable to reconcile himself to the bourgeois Provisional Government, he organised a small counter-revolutionary monarchist group of plotters in Petrograd. After the October Revolution he went into hiding, using a false passport, and recruited more members to his group, which purchased arms, organised its own counter-intelligence body, and actively prepared for an armed revolt.

The Investigation Committee ordered the group's arrest and several people, including Purishkevich, were detained at the Rossiya Hotel, where they had lodged. Also discovered were arms, even a machine-gun, and stacks of false identity papers made out on the letterheads of various military units.

The trial of Purishkevich and his thirteen confederates, which continued from December 28, 1917, to January 3, 1918, was the young Soviet republic's first major political trial. The accused and their counsels, former Petrograd attorneys, contended that there had been no monarchist plot at all but only a "group of like-minded people" who had met "to discuss politics". The accused made no attempt to hide their monarchist convictions, even airing them in the courtroom.

The judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal meticulously examined the evidence against the accused and the case made by the defence, displaying complete patience and objectivity. One of the prosecu-

tors said: "The men in the dock before you are arch-enemies of the working masses. However, the triumphant people, whose victory was won at the fearful price of blood and untold sacrifice, now that they have won, do not seek vengeance against their old enemy... We have put you here," he continued, turning to the accused, "so that the people's court may pass judgement on you and render you harmless. We shall not treat you in the same way as men like you treated the French Communards... They used umbrella tips to gouge out eyes... You will return your verdict," he went on, turning to the judges, "so that they do not stand in our way, these people of the kingdom of darkness must be isolated. But when our revolution gains strength and the time of transition is past... we shall let them go free" (*Izvestia*, January 4, 1918).

The Revolutionary Tribunal noted that "the monarchist organisation of Purishkevich pursued counter-revolutionary aims, the fulfilling of which could lead to bloodshed at any opportune moment"; it sentenced Purishkevich to "forced public labour in prison for a term of four years, the sentence to be suspended; moreover, upon expiry of the first year of the term, inclusive of preliminary detention, V. M. Purishkevich is to be set free, and should he not engage in any outright counter-revolutionary activities during his first year of freedom, he is to be exempted from further punishment". On April 17, at Purishkevich's request Dzerzhinsky sanctioned his being granted provisional paroling. In a signed statement presented to the Tribunal, Purishkevich wrote, "I hereby pledge my word of honour to report upon the expiry of the said term, that is, at midday on the 25th of the month, to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Meanwhile I pledge to take no part in public affairs and make no public speeches. I hereby certify that

my request for provisional parole has been made exclusively so that I may take care of my sick son."

On May 1, 1918, to commemorate this international proletarian holiday, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Petrograd Commune issued an edict granting an amnesty to all those arrested and convicted for political crimes. Purishkevich was also amnestied, but viewing the people's magnanimity in his own light he made his way to the South to join the counter-revolutionary forces there and he went on fighting the revolution until he died of typhus in 1920.

PETTY-BOURGEOIS COUNTER-REVOLUTION

The Political Situation Worsens

Towards the close of 1917 the crucial issue facing the country was that of withdrawing from the war. The Soviet government deemed it essential to conclude a peace treaty with the governments of the Austro-German coalition and to use the respite thus gained in order to consolidate its rule. This policy, which Lenin proclaimed, was frenziedly opposed by the counter-revolutionary forces in the country, while on the other hand, the Anglo-French and US imperialists stepped up their intervention and intrigue in Russia's internal affairs.

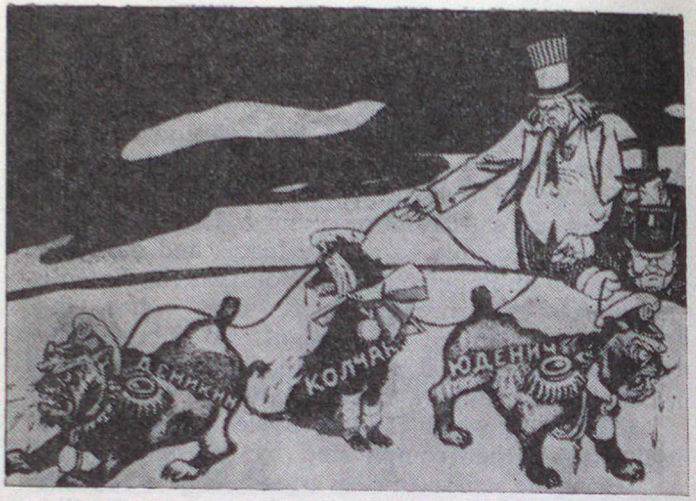
The German imperialists demanded reparations and extensive tracts of Russian territory. They backed their brigand demands with force: on February 18, 1918, violating the terms of the December 21, 1917 armistice, they mounted an offensive, occupied much of Western Russia and directly menaced Petrograd. To protect the revolution's gains the Soviet government was compelled to agree to the onerous terms imposed and on March 3 a Soviet delegation duly signed the peace treaty at Brest-Litovsk.

Meanwhile, the governments of the Anglo-French coalition and the United States launched outright

armed intervention. British, French, US and Japanese troops landed in several places. On May 25 the Czechoslovak corps numbering some 50,000 prisoners-of-war from the Austro-Hungarian army, mutinied. Earlier, late in March, the Soviet government had allowed the Czechoslovaks to go back home via Vladivostok. As a result, trainloads of them were strung out across the entire country. The purpose of this was strategically to deploy forces and pave the way for the anti-Soviet insurrection that the Entente governments had provoked. At short notice, the Czechoslovaks seized key points in Siberia, the Urals and the central part of the Volga river, thus lending added support to local anti-Soviet forces.

The plight in which the new Soviet republic found itself was further complicated by the severe food and economic crisis that overtook Russia by the spring of 1918. The urban population was starving and the army was also short of provisions. Industrial establishments had to close down for lack of raw materials and fuel. The country's entire grain resources were listed, the Soviet government obliged the peasantry to sell its grain only to the state on the basis of fixed prices, in order to ensure centrally organised supplies for the population and the army. But the kulaks, the rich peasants who exploited hired labour, concealed their stocks of grain. In view of this on June 11 the Soviet government decreed the establishment in the countryside of Kombeds (Committees of the Poor), to join in confiscating from the kulaks grain surpluses, as well as extra land, agricultural implements and draught animals which were to be shared out among the poor peasants. Detachments of armed factory workers were sent out to help. An acute class struggle began.

In this complex situation anti-Soviet forces sharply stepped up subversive activities. Sundry political as-



A cartoon of the Civil War period showing Britain, France and the USA holding on a leash a pack of dogs (Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenich).

sociations, differing mainly in their belonging to different camps of world imperialism, mushroomed, all eager to seize power.

Counter-Revolutionary Centres and "Governments"

The first political association which sought to direct the anti-Soviet movement was formed in Moscow in March 1918. This was the illegal "Right Centre", which involved the Cadet executive, the semi-monarchist "Council of Civic Leaders", uniting reactionary segments of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, the "Commercial and Industrial Committee" of large industrialists, bankers and merchants, and the "Union of Landed Proprietors". The "Right Centre" set itself the aim of bringing all Right-wing forces under one leadership so as to lead the country upon the presumed early collapse of Soviet rule. Most of its members looked to Germany, with whom they planned to reach an agreement and with whose aid they thought to overthrow the Soviet government and restore the bourgeois landowning system that had existed before the revolution. However, friction soon began, as a result of which many members withdrew from the "Right Centre" to create in May-June 1918 another Rightist underground association, called the "National Centre", and now looking to the Anglo-French coalition and the United States.

At the same time anti-Soviet "democratic" groups

Ukraine, 1918. German troops marching in Kiev streets.

also consolidated. In the spring of 1918 representatives of petty-bourgeois parties set up in Moscow a "Union for the Resurgence of Russia", which sought to install in the country by agreement with the bourgeoisie a West European type of "democracy" in place of Soviet rule. This organisation also looked to the Entente and the United States and deemed it necessary to continue the war against Germany.

With the help of foreign interventionist forces the united anti-Soviet elements succeeded in overthrowing Soviet rule in a number of places and formed local, mostly SR, governments. Thus, in the Volga region there was a "government" of the Committee of Constituent Assembly Members backed by Czechoslovak forces; in Siberia a "Provisional Siberian Government" for territories again seized by the Czechoslovaks; in North Russia there was a "Supreme Administration of the Northern Region" set up by the "Union of Resurgence" in Arkhangelsk, then occupied by a combined force of British, French and American troops; and in Ashkhabad there was a "Government of the Transcaspian Region", formed by local Right SR groups backed by British troops.

In the Ukraine, meanwhile, power was usurped by the Central Rada and its government, the Council of People's Ministers, of whom six represented the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party. While paying lip service to democratic and socialist reform, it was actually a bourgeois government propped up by foreign occupation forces. This body annulled Soviet legislation on nationalising the factories and banks and on labour, and hindered the solution of the crucial issue for the peasants of handing over to them the land gained as the result of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The German occupation army command forced the peasants to return to

the landowners the land and other properties seized from them, disbanded the Soviets and trade unions and gunned down or hanged all who refused to submit.

All the territories under anti-Soviet "governments" became dangerous nests of counter-revolution, where armies were formed to fight the Soviets and from which agents were smuggled into the Soviet hinterland for secret subversive activities.

Left SR Revolt

Political developments in the spring and summer of 1918 affected the Left SRs, who were represented in the Soviet government coalition. They opposed the peace treaty with Germany and other measures which the government majority had adopted. When the Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets ratified the peace treaty on March 14, they left the government coalition, retaining their posts, however, in the Executive Committee and other Soviet institutions. At the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which opened on July 4, they sharply attacked the government and called for annulment of the peace treaty and a resumption of hostilities against Germany.

On July 6 two unknown persons claiming to be Cheka officers called at the German Embassy in Moscow and, presenting a letter from the Cheka, asked for a personal interview with the Ambassador, Wilhelm Mirbach, to discuss some business. The Ambassador agreed to receive the two visitors. As they were talking, one of them suddenly pulled out a gun and fired at the Ambassador, who staggered out of the room, only to be killed by a bomb

blast. The assassins leaped from the window and made off in a getaway car. This extraordinary incident was fraught with political complications and could well have affected relations between the Soviet and German governments. As the respite gained by the peace treaty was in jeopardy, Dzerzhinsky himself came to the Embassy to investigate. Looking at the Cheka letter that had been left behind, he established that the signatures had been forged, although the stamp and letterhead were authentic. He deduced that the assassins were Left SRs on the Cheka staff.

As was established later, the Left SRs had operated in accordance with a secret decision by their party executive, which had deemed it imperative "to end as soon as possible the so-called breathing space afforded by Bolshevik ratification of the Brest peace treaty". To this end the Left SR executive had resolved to stage several acts of terrorism against leading representatives of German imperialism, and to defend their positions should the Soviet government retaliate. They organised patrols, stopped cars and arrested senior officials. They also occupied the Central Telegraph Office, from which they issued appeals to the population. Finally, they arrested Dzerzhinsky when he visited their headquarters and announced that they had taken him hostage.

Since the dangers with which this insurrection was fraught were aggravated by a possible Whiteguard resurgence in this acute political situation, the Soviet government had to take firm action. All Left SR delegates to the Congress of Soviets were isolated. The insurrection itself was put down by July 7. Only thanks to painstaking efforts and diplomatic tact was the Soviet government able to normalise relations with Germany and to avoid war. The Left

SRs now sided with the outright opponents of Soviet power.

Foreign Masterminds of Counter-Revolution

In the first few months of Soviet power German imperialism was Russia's greatest danger. The advance of its armies through Russia swung the scales in favour of counter-revolution in the Ukraine, the Baltic region, the Don region and Transcaucasia. Meanwhile, in the Soviet rear official representatives of the German Embassy proceeded with their secret war against Russia even after the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty. Count Wilhelm Mirbach, who in April 1918 was appointed Ambassador to Moscow, believed Russia's Soviet regime to be shortlived and he attached greatest significance to liason with the "Right Centre", believing it could be exploited to get many influential industrialists and bankers of Russia to promote his own country's economic interests.

The Entente and US imperialists represented no less a danger to revolutionary Russia with their embassies and consulates becoming in the spring and summer of 1918 the headquarters of counter-revolution in the Soviet rear.

Thus the French Ambassador, Joseph Noulens, directed his country's secret services in Russia. His legation and consulate in Moscow were in touch with every anti-Soviet political grouping in the country. The "Union for the Resurgence of Russia" had its own military organisation to train cadres for armed action in the Soviet rear and it was wholly subsidised by the Allies. In reminiscences published

abroad V. A. Myakotin [1], one of its leaders, confirmed that the French subsidised the Union and also noted the high-handed way French Ambassador Noulens treated the members of anti-Soviet political organisations.

The British government also carried on an intensive secret war against Soviet Russia. The very next day after the October Revolution it advocated financial and other support for all anti-Soviet forces in Russia, provided they gave assurances that they would follow Allied policy. The British Ambassador, George Buchanan, was allowed to spend some 10 million rubles on the counter-revolutionary movement in Russia. On December 7, 1917, the British Government decided to risk supporting the rebel General Kaledin and anti-Soviet forces in the Ukraine [2]. Note that from January 1, 1918, to March 31, 1921, Britain spent £89,700,000 on anti-Soviet activity [3].

Shortly after the October Revolution, Buchanan left Russia as a token of Britain's refusal to recognise the Soviet government but he left behind Embassy staff to continue with intelligence work and among them that experienced intelligence officer Captain Francis Newton Allen Cromie R. N.

In January 1918 a British mission came to Russia led by Robert Hamilton Bruce Lockhart, who in the past had served for several years with the British Consulate General in Moscow. Pretending to be a well-intentioned friend advocating recognition of the Soviet government, he conducted subversive activities.

[1] V. Myakotin, "From the Recent Past" (in Russian) in *Na Chuzhoi Storone*, No. 2, Prague, 1923, pp. 188-190.

[2] War Cabinet Archives for November 29 and December 3 and 7, 1917.

[3] Foreign Office Archives, No. 5034 (4854) 38.

British military intelligence also despatched to Moscow a special agent in the person of Lieut. Sidney George Reilly. He was actually one Rosenblum, an Odessa-born businessman who, finding himself in Britain during the war, took British nationality, married an Irish girl and adopted his father-in-law's surname. This very adroit agent, who spoke very fluent Russian and commanded considerable resources, was able to worm his way into the confidence of people and recruit spies. Later that year in the summer, another British mission came from India to Tashkent with the express wish to establish contact with the local Soviet government. Actually, the mission served as a spy post for British forces that had overrun the Caspian Sea region. After numerous "adventures" it was forced to flee.

US agents under Ambassador David Rowland Francis were also active against the newly established Soviet republic.

In the face of the increasing menace the Soviet government was compelled to step up punitive action against the counter-revolutionary forces.

The Revolution Defends Itself

In a crucial hour for the revolution, on February 21, 1918, when the Germans were on the approaches to Petrograd, the Council of People's Commissars issued its famous decree, "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger", which declared: "German imperialism seeks to *throttle the Russian and Ukrainian workers and peasants, to return the land to the landowners, the factories and mills to the bankers and power to the monarchy. The Socialist Republic of Soviets is in mortal danger.*" The decree provided

for emergency measures to ensure defence capability and revolutionary law and order.

On the following day the Cheka announced: "So far the Commission has been magnanimous in its struggle against the enemies of the people, but at this present moment, when the hydra of counter-revolution grows more brazen every day, encouraged by the treacherous attack of German counter-revolutionists... the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, basing itself on the resolution of the Council of People's Commissars, envisages no other action against counter-revolutionists, spies, black marketeers, hoodlums, thugs, saboteurs and other parasites than their ruthless extermination on the spot where the crime is committed" (*Izvestia*, February 23, 1918).

Thus, countering the activities of the enemies of the revolution, the Soviet government for the first time resorted to an extreme measure of social defence, the shooting of the most dangerous criminals on the spot. The Cheka undertook to carry out these exceptional measures. Thus, on February 26 in line with a unanimous decision taken by its collegium it executed a bandit, the self-styled "Prince Aboly", and his moll, Britt, for a series of robberies committed under the guise of searches.

At the outset execution as an extra-judicial measure was employed only to combat banditry. The first such execution for a counter-revolutionary crime was in the case of the Cherep-Spiridovich brothers, ex-officers of the Semyonov Household Troops Regiment. Under the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty the Soviet government was obliged to redeem all Russian securities that Germany offered. Cashing in on this provision, German agents bought for a song the shares of nationalised enterprises, to

News from the front.

offer them for redemption. As major stockholders and members of the management board of Veselyansk Mines, the Cherep-Spiridovich brothers sold to German agents five million rubles worth of stock. For this crime, which was qualified as high treason, they were shot on May 31.

The use of the death penalty changed the nature of the activities undertaken by the Extraordinary Commissions for Combatting Counter-Revolution. Now they were not only organs for detection and investigation, which they had primarily been before, but also organs directly punishing the most dangerous criminals.

Revolutionary tribunals gradually stepped up their punitive policies. On June 16, 1918, the People's Commissar of Justice issued an instruction that "in their choice of methods to combat counter-revolution, sabotage and so on, the revolutionary tribunals were not bound by any restrictions". This gave them the legal right to return death sentences.

The Soviet government considered on-the-spot execution and death sentences to be exceptional measures in retaliation to the sharp rise in counter-revolutionary activities and crime. How extensively they were employed depended on the prevailing social and political situation in the country. Thus, when putting down the Left SR insurrection, the Cheka had several participants shot, but later, when the political situation was more stable, the others were sentenced to three years in prison and were amnestied shortly afterwards.

Liquidation of the "Union for the Defence of the Motherland and Freedom"

In May 1918 a hospital nurse told the commander of the Kremlin guard that a patient had told her about a secret organisation in Moscow that was hatching a revolt. The information was relayed to the Cheka, which soon tracked down the undercover flat where the members of this organisation, known as the "Union for the Defence of the Motherland and Freedom", congregated. A copy of this organisation's programme was found which declared its immediate tasks to be overthrowing the Soviet government, setting up a "firm authority" in the country, reviving the old army and continuing the war against Germany. The document also set out strict rules for conspiracy. Officers formed the nucleus of the

organisation, which had a membership of up to 5,000 and branches in many cities and towns. It was led by Boris Savinkov.

Boris Savinkov had an extremely checkered life. In 1903-07, as one of the leaders of the SR "Combat Organisation", he was involved in terrorist activities against the Tsarist government. But in 1907, because of friction with the SR leadership, he withdrew from the party and went abroad. During the First World War he enlisted in the French army to fight against Germany. When the February Revolution broke out, he came to Petrograd styling himself an Independent Socialist. Kerensky appointed him the Provisional Government's Commissar at the fighting front. This self-styled "Socialist" dreamed of military dictatorship and in the first few days after the October Revolution he took part in a counter-revolutionary march on Petrograd. When this fell through he fled to the Don region. He considered his supreme task to be building up a secret organisation to carry out acts of terrorism and subversion in the Soviet rear. In February-March 1918 he organised in Moscow the underground "Union for the Defence of the Motherland and Freedom".

The Cheka was now dealing with a skilful plotter and adventurer. It failed to detain the masterminds of the organisation. After its exposure Savinkov and his closest associates escaped.

In concert with French agents and in the hope of gaining assistance from an expected landing of Entente troops, on July 6-8 they staged armed revolts in several Volga cities. The bloodiest was in Yaroslavl, where the plotters captured an army depot and armed themselves, and were joined by ex-army officers residing locally and bourgeois elements. A White Terror was immediately initiated, with the insurgents giving short shrift to all Soviet functiona-

Red Army units liberated the city of Samara on the Volga from Whiteguard troops.

ries they captured. They doomed to agony and starvation more than 200 people by confining them on a barge anchored in midstream, opening fire whenever anyone aboard this floating hell tried to escape. Only 13 days later did the prisoners succeed in breaking the anchor and bringing the barge to within Red Army lines, but with only 109 survivors. Red Army formations came to the aid of the people of Yaroslavl and of loyal units resisting the plotters.

At the same time the revolts which the Union had planned to bring about in other Volga towns and cities were aborted. In Rybinsk, where Savinkov chanced to be at the time, the local Cheka, having gained wind of the plot, set guards round the artillery depot and repulsed the advancing insurgents. Though on the night of July 8 Savinkov and his

forces captured Murom, they were ousted the next day by local worker and soldier formations.

As a result of the crushing blows inflicted upon the Union and its aborted revolts it ceased to exist in the same year of 1918.

Red Terror Answers White Terror

The Civil War grew ever more bitter and bloody. Everywhere where counter-revolutionary forces had managed to overthrow Soviet rule, in the Ukraine, the Volga and Don regions, Siberia and Turkestan, the rebels including even representatives of the so-called Socialist parties, launched a wholesale White Terror. Workers and peasants opposed to the restoration of the bourgeois landowning regime were massacred until the rivers ran with blood. Meanwhile, in the Soviet rear White terrorist plotters were not idle. Counter-revolutionary forces planned to decapitate the working class and revolution, striking first at Vladimir Lenin as head of the worker-peasant government.

When on New Year's Day, 1918, Lenin together with Fritz Platten, secretary of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party, were returning from a meeting, their car was fired upon by unidentified strangers. Lenin escaped unscathed but Platten was wounded in the arm.

Soon afterwards, the Extraordinary Commission in charge of the city's security gained wind of one more attempt that was being hatched to take Lenin's life. The riflemen on guard duty at the Smolny Institute noticed that certain characters were shadowing cars leaving the grounds. In mid-January Y. N. Spiridonov, a soldier who had previously won the St. George's Cross, the highest Tsarist medal

for bravery awarded to rank-and-file soldiers, called on V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, head of chancellery of the Council of People's Commissars, and told him that he had been promised 20,000 rubles to capture or kill Lenin. For a time he had kept under observation the flat where Bonch-Bruyevich lived and which, according to information the plotters had, Lenin visited from time to time. Then Spiridonov had had a change of heart and decided to tell Bonch-Bruyevich about the plot.

It was learned that the plot was masterminded by the leaders of the Association of Recipients of the St. George Cross. Several of the plotters were arrested on January 21 and confessed that they had planned to attack Lenin either to kill him or take him hostage. In the course of the investigation news came that the Germans had mounted an offensive and when the arrested plotters asked to be sent to the fighting front Lenin consented; they were released and sent off to fight and the case was dropped.

Some five months later on June 20, when his car ran out of petrol on a deserted street in Petrograd, V. Volodarsky, a member of the Presidium of the City Soviet, and his companions got out to walk to a nearby district Soviet. At that moment a stranger approached, drew a gun and fired several shots at Volodarsky. The assassin was pursued but managed to escape by throwing a hand grenade. Volodarsky died on the spot. His assassination sparked off a wave of indignation. City workers were eager to retaliate to the terror of the enemies of the revolution by conducting their own terror but they were restrained by the city's Party and government bodies.

Then the following incident occurred. At about 10 a. m. on August 30 a cyclist stopped outside the

building of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs and the Cheka in Petrograd's Palace Square. The rider, a young man wearing a leather jacket and an officer's forage cap, placed his bicycle by the entrance and went in, it happening to be the day for receiving visitors at the Commissariat. A short while later, M. S. Uritsky, People's Commissar and Chairman of the Cheka, drove up to the Commissariat, entered and, as the doorman was opening the lift door, shots suddenly rang out. They were fired by the young man in the leather jacket. Uritsky was killed.

That same day an attempt was made on the life of Lenin in Moscow. The Soviet leader had just ended a speech at a meeting at the Michelsohn (now Vladimir Ilyich) factory, which had been held at about 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening. Stopping by his car in the factory yard to continue a conversation with a group of factory workers, he was suddenly struck down by two of three shots fired and was very gravely wounded.

The news of Uritsky's assassination and the attempt on Lenin's life instantaneously evoked a nationwide storm of indignation. The government called on working people to step up the struggle against counter-revolutionary elements and declared that "to attempts on the lives of its leaders the working class will reply by rallying its ranks even more closely together and will retaliate with ruthless mass terror against all foes of the revolution". Reaffirming the resort to Red Terror, the Council of People's Commissars ruled on September 5 that all those involved in Whiteguard organisations, plots and revolts would be shot.

The Soviet government regarded the Red Terror it had proclaimed as an exceptional single measure on the part of the working class in retaliation to

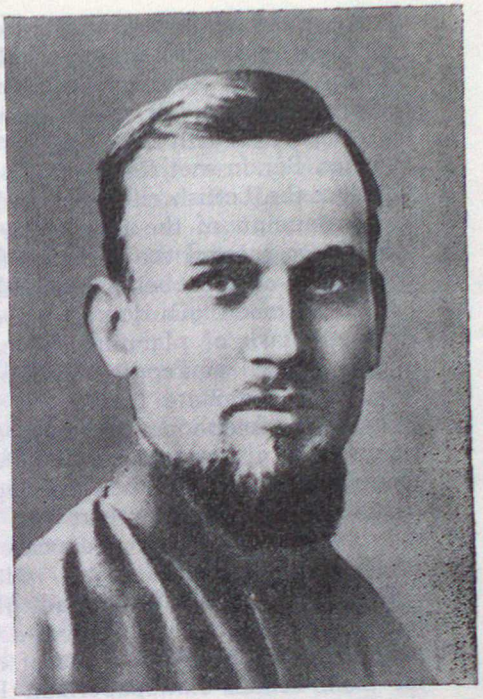
wholesale White Terror in a situation marked by a bitter struggle against the enemies of the working people. Later on despite the country's dire plight the Red Terror resorted to in September 1918 was never repeated in that form.

The Plot of the Three Ambassadors

One summer day in 1918 two young Soviet commanders, both of them Latvians, started visiting the Latvian Club in Petrograd. They soon gained the confidence of those regularly visiting the club, some of whom belonged to a counter-revolutionary group that had ties with British Intelligence officer Francis Cromie, naval attaché at the British embassy. Believing one of the two men, who had introduced himself as ex-officer Schmidchen, to be deserving of trust, Cromie suggested he go to Moscow and get in touch there with Bruce Lockhart, head of the British diplomatic mission, and under the latter's guidance start subversive activities in Latvian military units. He provided "Schmidchen" with a letter of recommendation. The next day "Schmidchen" and his friend left for Moscow, where they at once reported to the Cheka. Actually, they were Chekists themselves. Schmidchen's real name was Jan Buikis and his friend's name was Jan Sprogis.

The Cheka decided to continue with the "game", to penetrate to the heart of the diplomatic plot and discover what the diplomats were up to. E. P. Berzin, commander of the First Artillery Battalion of the Lettish Rifles, was also brought in to play a part. When on August 14 "Schmidchen" and Berzin visited Lockhart, the experienced intelligence officer was at first surprised, but after reading and rereading Cromie's letter of recommendation he had no further

Eduard Berzin, a member of the Soviet secret service.



doubts. Berzin and "Schmidchen" told Lockhart they were Latvian officers disillusioned by Soviet rule.

Next day the two men had another meeting with Lockhart. Now he encouraged them in their professed wish to break with the Bolsheviks. He told them the Allies would help the Latvians to gain national independence, advised them to establish a "National Latvian Committee" and promised money. To enable them to have contact with General Dewitt Poole, the officer commanding the British force that had landed at Arkhangelsk, on August 17 Lockhart furnished the two Chekists with identity papers to

enable them to travel safely within British lines. He told Berzin to maintain all further contacts through Sidney Reilly. Naturally, these identity papers, which bore Lockhart's own signature, were at once deposited with the Cheka.

When Berzin met Reilly, the British spy discussed the part the Lettish riflemen might play in the military campaign of the British force in Arkhangelsk. Next he suggested the Lettish riflemen join in a revolt that was then being planned in Moscow. Since Lettish riflemen guarded the Kremlin, he assigned them the task of planning the capture of members of the Council of People's Commissars and also the seizure of the State Bank, the Central Telegraph Office and Telephone Exchange and other strategic points. He also gave Berzin 700,000 rubles to finance the plot. At further meetings Reilly again discussed plans for a future revolt. He gave him another 500,000 rubles "for expenses". Naturally, Berzin deposited all this money with the Cheka.

Meanwhile, the Cheka had gleaned further information about the subversive activities of the diplomat conspirators. One piece of evidence was a letter from French newspaperman René Marchand to President Poincaré, expressing disagreement with the anti-Russian activities of the consular staff (*Izvestia*, September 24, 1918).

On August 30, just as the Cheka was in the midst of uncovering the plot, Uritsky was assassinated in Petrograd and the attempt was made on Lenin's life in Moscow. As there were enough grounds to suspect complicity by the diplomats, the Cheka resolved to quash the "Plot of the Three Ambassadors" even if it meant violating the diplomatic immunity of these international spies and conspirators. The houses of some British and French diplomats in Moscow and Petrograd were raided and some of the diplomats

were arrested. Lockhart himself was detained on the night of August 31. I. J. Peters, the Cheka deputy chairman, asked Lockhart to explain the attempts made to corrupt the Soviet officer Berzin and showed the identity papers Lockhart had made out for a Latvian "conspirator" sent behind the British lines. Though embarrassed, Lockhart refused to give any explanation on grounds of diplomatic immunity. On the instructions of the Soviet Premier, Yakov Sverdlov, and the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Georgi Chicherin, Lockhart was released.

The French and British governments and the Western bourgeois press raised a protest campaign against Moscow's violations of diplomatic immunity. In retaliation the British unwarrantedly detained in London the Russian Federation's envoy Maxim Litvinov, releasing him later in exchange for Lockhart and certain other diplomats.

The trial of the case took place in Moscow from November 28 to December 3, and was open to the public. It was attended by representatives of the Norwegian, Swedish and Danish diplomatic legations. All in all 24 defendants were in the dock. In its verdict the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal found proven "the criminal activities of the diplomatic agents of the Anglo-French-American coalition" and in determining the sentence of each defendant carefully stated his degree of culpability.

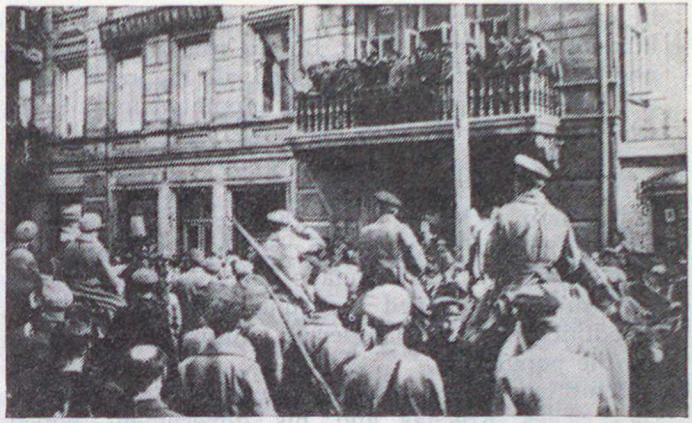
The information gathered in the course of the Lockhart investigation nevertheless did not give a full picture of the subversive activities of Allied Ambassadors against Soviet Russia. More facts came to light later. But thanks to the measures taken by the Soviet government at the time the criminal activities of foreign spies masquerading as diplomats were greatly curtailed.

THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL GROUPINGS OF MONARCHIST AND BOURGEOIS COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

The Regime of Admiral Kolchak

The redeployment of anti-Soviet forces which began in the autumn of 1918 was completed by the spring of the following year, by which time the arch-reactionary circles of counter-revolution were leading the struggle against Soviet power. Now enjoying political, military and material support from Entente imperialists, several large military and political groupings, headed by monarchist generals acting as military dictators, emerged on Russian soil. In the East there was A. V. Kolchak, "Supreme Ruler of Russia", in the South–General A. I. Denikin, "Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in Southern Russia", and in the vicinity of Petrograd–General N. N. Yudenich. Monarchist and Cadet organisations formed the political core of these military dictatorships.

The main strike force of domestic counter-revolutionary forces in the country during the Civil War was unquestionably the Kolchak regime that raged throughout Siberia, the Urals and the Volga region from November 1918 to January 1920. Vice-Admiral Kolchak, who headed this dictatorship, had in



Red Army units leaving Moscow for the Eastern Front on the Volga, the key front of the Russian Republic in 1918.

the First World War commanded the Baltic torpedo boat flotilla and later–the Black Sea fleet. By the counter-revolutionary stand he took after the February 1917 Revolution, he aroused the ire of naval ratings, who demanded that the bourgeois Provisional Government dismiss him. On June 28 he was sent to the United States at the request of its government as a mine warfare expert. Then the British War Office offered him the command of British ground forces in Mesopotamia. Kolchak accepted the offer but, before he left, the British decided he would be of more use if he stayed on in Russia to command anti-Soviet armed forces.

As soon as Kolchak was "enthroned", the old order was restored all down the line. Thus, imitating the Tsar, Kolchak always wrote on papers of state importance the single word "Agree" and always had his title of "Supreme Ruler" printed and typed

in capital letters, as were the words "Sovereign Emperor" under the Tsar. But in cruelty and harshness his regime far outstripped all the repressions conducted under the Tsar. He appointed local heads who were invested with the powers of governor-generals, he restored the secret police and "passed" a series of laws reinstituting the death penalty. A common occurrence was the despatch of special punitive expeditions during which such henchmen of Kolchak's as the atamans Semyonov, Kalmykov and Annenkov gained particular notoriety for their bloodthirstiness by plundering, killing and terrorising the population.

Tempting foreign capitalists with visions of Siberia's riches, Kolchak and his government hoped thereby to restore the old regime with their help and to return estates to the landowners and factories to the capitalists. The Special Conference established with this aim in view financed factory owners. Virtually every day Kolchak's government granted tens of millions of rubles to various stock companies and handed thousands of Siberian enterprises over to foreign capitalists for them to exploit.

Calling in foreign troops to fight against Russia's working masses, Kolchak paid for the upkeep and transport of these forces. In return for arms deliveries he consigned to Entente governments and capitalists vast quantities of bullion from the national gold reserve which the counter-revolutionaries had seized.

The Regime of General Denikin

Perhaps even more reactionary than Kolchak's regime was that of Denikin, which held sway from late 1918 to March 1920 in areas of Southern Russia occupied by counter-revolutionary forces. With Entente backing this monarchist general made himself the supreme military dictator of Southern Russia and the commander of all Cossack forces.

In April 1919 the Special Conference, the advisory body at Denikin's headquarters, circulated among the diplomatic missions of the Entente governments a declaration setting out Denikin's political credo. It announced that Denikin's goal was to destroy Bolshevism, introduce "legal order" and "restore the might of United and Indivisible Russia". The vague promises given to convene a "National Assembly", to grant extensive local self-government, regional autonomy and "civil liberties", and to implement a "land reform to gratify the land hunger of the working population" as well as to introduce labour legislation which would "give security to the working classes"–all these were just so many words. On the heels of Denikin's army came what was then known as the "landowners' charabanc"; these landowners at once reclaimed their former properties in town and country. Tsarist ways and laws were openly restored, labour organisations were disbanded and instead of the promised land reform the principle of "reserving to owners their title to the land" was harshly implemented.

Furthermore, Denikin's Special Conference had what was known as Osvag, a combined propaganda and counter-intelligence body whose newspapers, posters and printed broadsheets conducted intensive anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic agitation and hounded and harassed Bolsheviks.

Denikin's regime aroused the indignation not only of peasants and workers, but even of some of his own supporters. The most "Leftist" legal organisation under Denikin was the South Russian "Union for the Resurgence of Russia". In one of

their memorandums, this body's leaders, disagreeing with some of Denikin's policies, advised the general to go halfway to meet the needs of the peasants on the agrarian issue, because otherwise, they contended, it would be impossible to "pacify the country" and overcome peasant hostility towards "state power". To convince Denikin that it was essential to take urgent steps to consolidate the rear, they noted that "prices are rocketing with fearful rapidity, and black marketeering is increasing by leaps and bounds, which not only dispossesses the population but also almost totally corrupts the administration. Forced at times to feed and clothe themselves, military units are drawn into looting and plundering".

The attitude adopted towards non-Russian nationalities deserves special mention. Overrunning the Caucasus, Denikin's forces quelled every attempt made by the highland tribes to voice their wish for national determination, thus compelling the Caucasian mountain people to ask the British occupation forces for help. But an appeal to the population circulated in September 1919 by Colonel Rolandson, head of the British military mission to General Denikin, well illustrates the kind of "action" that the Allies took against the outrages perpetrated by Denikin's soldiery. Britain, this document stated, was helping Denikin with equipment, tanks, aircraft, cannon and machine-guns and would go on helping him until he achieved his aim. Britain had provided instructors to this end, it continued, and it would be most regrettable if these arms were to be turned against the mountain people and if their villages were to be destroyed. It was absolutely certain, the document said, that Russia, purified by fire and blood, would become Great and Indivisible, and would then justly reward all who assisted in its rebirth and punish all who had stood in the way.

This outright threat aroused the general indignation of the Caucasian mountain people.

The Regime of General Yudenich

The third major military dictator of the period was Infantry General N. N. Yudenich, who was active in North-western Russia. As a monarchist opposed to the February 1917 Revolution, the Provisional Government had dismissed him from his post as commander-in-chief of the Caucasian front.

After the October Revolution Yudenich carried on counter-revolutionary underground activities in the hope of a Tsarist restoration. His basic aim was to capture Petrograd by force of arms, as he believed that in this way he could thereby crush Bolshevism at its root. He had hoped to implement this plan with Germany's help, but after that country's defeat in the war he was forced to look elsewhere for support. In November 1918 he fled to Finland, where he negotiated with the ex-Tsarist General Mannerheim, then Finnish head of state, for a joint campaign against Soviet Russia. He also was in touch with Entente and US representatives whom he notified of his plans to build up a front against Petrograd, for which purpose he asked for money and arms and expressed his loyalty and readiness to subordinate himself to Entente guidance.

In Finland at the time there was a colony of some 20,000 White emigres from Russia, dominated by industrialists, bankers and former high-ranking Tsarist bureaucrats, who had established a German-oriented monarchist "Russian Political Committee" under former Tsarist Premier A. S. Trepov. But when in January 1919 A. V. Kartashev, former minister in the Provisional Government, illegally crossed into

Finland, he became president of the "Russian Committee", and did much to change its orientation to side with the Entente. This body backed Kolchak and nominated General Yudenich commander of the anti-Soviet movement in North-western Russia with a "Political Conference" under him.

In that same month Yudenich sent Kolchak a message noting his acceptance of the Admiral's political platform and set out his plan to capture Petrograd. Kolchak took Yudenich "under his wing", even sending him a million rubles "for urgent needs". The White emigre bankers and industrialists also subsidised Yudenich, who with Mannerheim's permission began to form a White guard army in Finland. On May 24 Kolchak ordered Yudenich to assume the office of "Commander-in-Chief of All Russian Forces in the North-west". Yudenich moved to Estonia wherefrom he planned to launch his "march" on Petrograd.

The British wanted Yudenich to have a "proper government", but its formation was a real farce. British General March summoned the members of Yudenich's "Political Conference" to his headquarters in Revel. As soon as they entered the British Consulate General March invited them into a room to join other White emigres he had summoned as well as representatives of the US and French legations. Without further ado he suggested that they at once, there and then create a "North-western Russian government". He handed to them a "list of government members", naming the people he wanted. When doubts were voiced as to whether Yudenich would agree to such a "government", the British general said that if Yudenich did not agree another commander-in-chief could be appointed. In this fashion a "government" was "formed" in just 40 minutes. In a telegram to Kolchak on August 30, 1918, the veteran Tsarist diplomat K. Nabokov, who represented Kolchak in Britain, said in reporting "the artificial creation by the British" of this "strictly legal government" that "this new government arouses disgust or ridicule in all circles".

The establishment of the afore-mentioned large anti-Soviet military and political groupings seriously aggravated the social and political situation in Russia. As the armies of Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich advanced upon Central Russia, their agents, as well as those of the Entente and monarchist and Cadet elements, strove even more energetically to set up secret organisations and to plot in the rear of the embattled Red Army.

The Exposure of the "National Centre" Underground Organisations

In the spring of 1919, when the Whiteguards were preparing to assault Petrograd, there were increasing subversive activities in the rear of the Soviet troops, as well as acts of outright treachery and betrayal.

Lenin attached great significance to all this, believing that an anti-Soviet organisation was actively collaborating with the advancing Whiteguard troops. In an appeal to the people on May 31, 1919, Lenin and Dzerzhinsky said:

"Death to spies!

"The Whiteguards' advance on Petrograd has made it perfectly clear that in the vicinity of the front line, in every large town, the Whites have a wide organisation for espionage, subversion, the blowing-up of bridges, the engineering of revolts in the rear and the murder of Communists and prominent members of workers' organisations...

"All class-conscious workers and peasants must rise up in defence of Soviet power and must fight the spies and Whiteguard traitors. Let every man be on the watch and in regular contact, organised on military lines, with the committees of the Party, with the Extraordinary Commission and with the most trusted and experienced comrades among the Soviet officials." [1]

On June 12 the commanding officers of the Krasnaya Gorka Fort incited part of the garrison to mutiny. The mutineers were supported by counter-revolutionaries from neighbouring forts. This mutiny was part of a wide-ranging counter-revolutionary plan, which "devised in conjunction with the Allies incorporated... armed action from the Finnish-Estonian-British armed forces... and armed revolt by the bourgeoisie in Petrograd" (*Pravda*, July 18, 1919). But since no support was forthcoming, the mutiny was quashed on the night of June 16.

Soviet organs in Petrograd took steps to purge the city of counter-revolutionary elements. In conjunction with Chekists more than 15,000 armed workers conducted mass raids of suspicious dwellings and confiscated 6,626 rifles, 141,895 cartridges, 644 revolvers, as well as machine-guns and grenades. Of the hundreds of counter-revolutionaries detained, some were expelled from the city.

Documentary evidence was discovered, such as letters, reports by Whiteguard agents and intelligence summaries, proving that a widely ramified counter-revolutionary organisation, namely the "National Centre", was active in the city. But at the time its leaders escaped discovery.

In June on the Luga sector of the Petrograd front Red Army soldiers spotted a man secretly making his way into enemy lines. Opening fire they killed him. Inspecting his belongings, military intelligence discovered in the mouthpiece of one of his straw cigarettes a note that read: "For General Rodzyanko or Col. S. Upon the entry into Petrograd Gubernia of the troops under your command, mistakes may occur that will cause persons who are secretly of great use to us to suffer. To avoid such mistakes, we would like to know whether you could find a way to devise your own countersign. We suggest the following: If anyone says in any form or sentence 'at all costs' and also 'VIK' and simultaneously touches his right ear with his fingers, that person will be known to us... I am known to Mr. Kartashev, from whom you may receive information about me. Should you agree, please be so kind as to send an answer to the address which the bearer will supply" (*Izvestia*, September 25, 1919). The note was signed "VIK".

In July several people were detained on the Finnish border. When searched, a parcel was discovered containing a letter addressed to "our dear friends", and providing information of Red Army troop deployment and counter-revolutionary groupings in Petrograd. In the process of interrogation Chekists learned that this report, which the detained persons were to take to Yudenich's headquarters, had been received from a certain Steininger.

V. I. Steininger turned out to be a Petrograd engineer, the proprietor of a firm and a member of the Cadet Party. When searched, papers fully exposing him were found. He admitted he was a member of the leadership of the Petrograd branch of the "National Centre" and that "VIK" was his undercover name. Under interrogation, he and the other persons arrested named only confederates whom they believed to be dead, exposed or on the

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 403.

other side of the front, which was why, on concluding its investigation in August, the Cheka was able at first to render harmless only a few of the plotters.

On July 27 militiamen detained a man who when questioned was found to be working for the intelligence arm of Kolchak's headquarters and to be bringing money for the Moscow branch of the "National Centre".

On the night of August 28 Chekists arrested N. N. Shchepkin, member of the Cadet Party executive and former member of the State Duma, and A. D. Alfyorov. The former turned out to be a leading member of the Moscow branch and the latter–the headmaster of a school which he had turned into an undercover meeting place for the organisation.

Discovered in the yard of Shchepkin's house was a tin box containing notes in cipher, photographic film and recipes for invisible ink. The notes were in minute letters on narrow strips of paper to make it more convenient to smuggle them across the frontlines, and they contained a list of Red Army divisions, information on the artillery of one of the armies, the battle plan of an army group, plus a list of personnel, information on the disposition and presumed redeployment of certain staffs, and a description of one of the fortified zones, including the disposition of anti-aircraft guns and information about frontline base depots. In one of the letters addressed to Denikin's headquarters the view was expressed that shortly, "in about a fortnight", a revolt might occur in Moscow "in which case you must get ready to help us and tell us where to find this help and where to go to establish contact" (*Izvestia*, October 5, 1919). An analysis of these espionage reports and a comparison with Red Army Command data indicated that this intelligence had

been gathered by spies with access to military establishments.

In conjunction with the "National Centre" the Staff of the Volunteer Army of the Moscow Region drew up a comprehensive plan for a revolt in Moscow, which was to involve the Cadets of several military schools outside Moscow and many former officers. It had been hoped to take and hold Moscow at least for a few hours, to seize the radio station and telegraph office, to notify the fighting fronts that the Soviet government had been overthrown and so provoke panic and demoralise the army. The plotters had already prepared several appeals and orders. But their plans were foiled. With the assistance of workers' organisations the Cheka arrested some 700 counter-revolutionists and disarmed the Cadets of military schools where the influence of counter-revolutionary officers was manifestly felt. At the same time Denikin's offensive against Moscow was halted.

In October 1919, when General Yudenich was for the second time close to Petrograd, the counter-revolutionary underground in the Soviet rear again stepped up its activities.

In the city itself the Cheka exposed a nest of spies associated with the "National Centre" and its military organisation, which involved several leading military specialists serving in the Red Army, as well as professional spies. The mastermind was one Paul Dukes, of British Intelligence. This man, who had been sent to Russia before the socialist revolution, was fluent in Russian and had many contacts among Russians. He wormed his way into the confidence of the officials of some Soviet institutions, organised a spy ring, and arranged for information to be relayed to London via the British consulates in Helsingfors (now Helsinki) and Stockholm. He also established contact with Steininger and Shchepkin, lead-

ers respectively of the Petrograd and Moscow branches of the "National Centre". He financed them and got them to spy for Britain. Deciding to quit Russia on August 30, 1919, Dukes left behind one N. V. Petrovskaya, a "National Centre" activist who went under the code names of Maria Ivanovna and Miss, to direct counter-revolutionary and spy rings in Petrograd.

The key man in the "National Centre" military organisation in Petrograd was Colonel V. G. Lundekvist, the former Chief of Staff of the Soviet Seventh Army. Well informed about the strength and deployment of Soviet troops outside Petrograd, he devised a plan for an offensive on the city, which he smuggled across to Yudenich's headquarters. The Whiteguard underground military organisation also drafted an exhaustive plan for a revolt in Petrograd, which was to be led by Colonel Lundekvist and Admiral Bakhiryev.

In one of his reports to General Yudenich, Lundekvist wrote: "This is to tell you what we plan to do when your troops approach Petrograd: a) create panic and disorder among troops deployed on the Finnish border...; b) stage rioting and raids in Petrograd to seize the Telephone Exchange, Telegraph Office, the Commissariat of the Railways, the Smolny Institute and so on; c) create panic and disorder among troops defending the approaches to Petrograd... This must all occur simultaneously on one definite day and at a definite hour by special directives. The timing... will be co-ordinated with developments at the front."

General Yudenich instructed the Petrograd branch of the "National Centre" to form a "government"–in place of the discredited "government" that the British had knocked together "in the space of half an hour"–to take over power at once in the event of his troops entering the city.

But all these plans had no real backing. According to the testimony of the plotters, they could muster no more than 400 men for the revolt. Further developments revealed the complete impotence of the counter-revolutionary forces. The plot was nipped in the bud and most of the conspirators were arrested, to receive their deserts at the hands of the Cheka. In the autumn of 1919 the Soviet government decorated a large number of Chekists for successfully exposing the "National Centre".

The Leontyevsky Lane Bomb Blast

On September 25, 1919, Bolshevik Party functionaries, lecturers and canvassers, some 100-120 persons all told, met at the Moscow Party Committee headquarters in Leontyevsky Lane to discuss stepping up agitation and propaganda activity in connection with the exposure of the "National Centre" conspiracy. At about 9 o'clock in the evening a bomb was tossed into the window facing the gardens and the blast partly destroyed the building, killed 12 people and injured another 55. Shortly afterwards, an illegally printed leaflet was circulated in Moscow announcing that the bomb blast was the work of the "All-Russian Rebel Committee of Revolutionary Partisans", and that this act of terror had been "revenge".

The bomb blast aroused indignation and anger throughout working-class Moscow. But the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party took every precaution to prevent mob retaliation.

In the course of the investigation it was found that an anarchist underground band and a group of

Left SR "activists" were involved in the terrorist Committee and its crimes. The ringleader, anarchist Kazimir Kovalevich, represented Moscow anarchists advocating "active" terrorism and armed struggle against the Soviet government.

These anarchists stepped up their activities, especially after establishing contact with the Left SR group. In a letter which was found the writer informed his confederates of collaboration between the Moscow Left SR organisation and underground anarchists, and of their intention "to organise a rebel headquarters of revolutionary partisans throughout Russia from among us and real anarchists, wherever they are, and to act for them" (*Izvestia*, January 25, 1920). Revealing the political platform of this united Left SR-anarchist organisation to be nothing but a mixture of random petty-bourgeois ideas and demagogic demands seasoned with pseudo-revolutionary phrases, the letter added: "The masses today know two names–the Bolsheviks and Denikin. We must popularise a third–the Rebel Headquarters–and all will follow this third revolutionary force. That, comrades, is our action programme."

In effect, this underground organisation, which was uncovered after having perpetrated several dastardly crimes, was nothing but a band of criminal elements masquerading as "revolutionists". The Moscow Cheka put an end to their activities and the captured terrorists were shot.

Whiteguards and Interventionists Defeated

By the beginning of 1920 the Soviet people had scored resounding victories over the united forces of the Entente and the counter-revolutionary forces within the country.

In November 1919 the Red Army crushed the forces under General Yudenich, who fled abroad.

In January 1920 Soviet troops, supported by popular uprisings in the enemy rear, liquidated the remnants of Kolchak's armies. Fleeing from the blows of the Red Army, Kolchak and his retinue rolled East, travelling with Czechoslovak troop trains and taking the stolen Russian gold reserves with them. On January 4 the "Supreme Ruler" abdicated, and issued a "decree" designating the licked, but still kicking, Denikin his successor. Even the command of the Czechoslovak corps deemed it necessary to disavow Kolchak. In fact, back on November 13, 1919, in a memorandum to the Allied powers the generals of this rebel force declared: "Behind Czechoslovak bayonets local military Russian bodies (the Kolchak authorities–Ed.) take the liberty of doing things that would shock the entire civilised world. The burning down of villages, the massacre of peaceful Russian citizens by their hundreds, and summary executions, merely on suspicion of political disloyalty, are common occurrences. But the responsibility for all this in the eyes of the peoples of the world devolves upon us for not having obstructed this lawlessness, though in command of an armed force".

When the Czechoslovak troop trains were cut off, their command asked the Soviet military command to let them through to Vladivostok. The Soviet side agreed, provided the Czechoslovaks would agree to be disarmed and would hand over Kolchak. On January 15 Kolchak and his retinue were handed over to the Soviet authorities in Irkutsk and an Extraordinary Investigation Committee was established to investigate the Tsarist admiral's crimes.

On February 6, however, the Military Revolutionary Committee in the city noted in a resolution

1920. The arrest of the ministers of the Kolchak government.

that arms dumps had been discovered and that a suspected secret organisation sought to incite a revolt to release Kolchak and his confederates. To "prevent the city from being plunged into the horrors of a civil war and also basing itself on the investigation evidence amassed, the Military Revolutionary Committee of Irkutsk has resolved to execute the former Supreme Ruler, Admiral Kolchak".

After Soviet power had been firmly established in Siberia, investigatory organs made a fuller inquiry into the crimes perpetrated by Kolchak and his "government", and 23 people were tried by the Emergency Revolutionary Tribunal of the Siberian Revolutionary Committee in Omsk. During the hearings, which took place in the presence of some 8,000 workers, peasants and people from areas which Kolchak's forces had devastated, the monstrous atrocities committed by Kolchak's "government" were fully revealed. The tribunal sentenced four of the

accused to be shot and the others to various terms of deprivation of liberty.

Meanwhile, Denikin, "the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Southern Russia", frantically clung to power, urging his men to fight "to the last ditch", promising "extensive autonomy" to the Cossacks and "land to the peasantry", and even agreeing to "democratise" his regime. But all this was futile. Denikin gained no popular support and on March 22, 1920, delegating his powers to Baron P. N. Wrangel, he went abroad.

The Entente forces that had occupied some parts of Russia and the Ukraine also suffered a debacle. Masses of working people in the Entente countries called for an end to policies of intervention and soldiers refused to fight against Russia's workers and peasants. Forced to pull out their troops, the Entente governments decided to end further aid to the Whiteguards and to call off the blockade of Soviet Russia. Further developments, however, revealed that, despite the proclaimed ending of intervention, the Entente governments were still in fact backing counter-revolutionary forces active in Russia. They had merely changed the scenario, preferring now to have Russia's counter-revolutionaries and "buffer" states pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. Shipping arms to Wrangel, who had entrenched himself in the Crimea, and to Pilsudski in Poland, they incited them to fight against Russia.

On April 25, 1920, the Polish army mounted an offensive against the Ukraine and Byelorussia, while on June 6 Wrangel went into action. Russia was again at war. Behind Polish troops came Polish gentry and industrialists who hoped to regain their estates and factories. Wrangel, too, was followed by

the same Russian "landowners' charabanc" that had followed Denikin. Thanks to the gallant efforts of the Red Army and the people of Soviet Russia, both Pilsudski and, subsequently, Wrangel were crushed. A peace treaty was concluded with Poland in October, while in November Wrangel was driven from the Crimea–this marked the complete defeat of the Whiteguards and foreign interventionists.

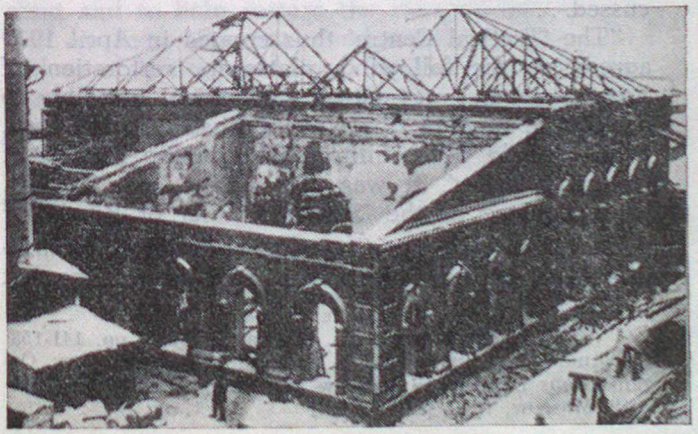
The "Tactical Centre" Affair

The military defeat inflicted on the largest counter-revolutionary groupings in Russia plunged the anti-Soviet camp into a crisis.

In February 1920 the Cheka arrested a group of counter-revolutionaries and for the first time in the history of Soviet trials the accused openly repented in the courtroom. When he was living abroad later, one of them, S. P. Melgunov, sought to offer an explanation for this. "During the preliminary investigation," he wrote, "none of those to be tried kept silent, which meant they talked not only about themselves, but also about others... Escorted back to my cell after the first interrogation, I thought hard about how one should behave under interrogation. The case, in effect, was a historic one in the full meaning of the word, and one had to bear responsibility for the past, not for what one had done in the present. The interrogator knew all the facts I could tell him, for which reason it appeared that if I were to stay silent on principle, I would needlessly make it worse for myself and perhaps for others, who were not inclined, as I realised, to take

General Semyonov's bands barbarously murdered Soviet people.

The main electric power station in Tsaritsyn (now Volgograd) blown up by General Wrangel's troops during their retreat.



a negative stand." [1] The accused made a clean breast naming all the anti-Soviet political associations that had been active since the October Revolution, including the hitherto unknown "Tactical Centre", and their leaders.

In the winter of 1918-1919 representatives of various anti-Soviet groups met at the home of Y. D. Kuskova, a well-known bourgeois public figure, to discuss political events "over a cup of tea" and to evolve a political platform acceptable to all. These gatherings produced the "Tactical Centre". As the Cheka indictment stated: "In February 1919 events started that induced Moscow's counter-revolutionists to club together. What triggered this off was an Entente broadcast about a possible conference on Princes Islands to decide policies towards the Soviet republic. In February a preliminary conference was convened of members of the 'National Centre' and the 'Union of Resurgence', after which a second conference was held to which the heads of the Council of Civic Leaders were also invited... The issue of federating all three organisations was discussed...

"The 'Tactical Centre' thus created in April 1919 agreed on the following platform: restoration of Russia as a state entity; a national assembly to decide the kind of government Russia should have, which should be a military dictatorship capable of restoring 'order'. It was also agreed that Kolchak be recognised as the 'Supreme Ruler of Russia'." [2]

The "Tactical Centre" was no centralised organisation with uniform rules and a fixed programme, but rather a liaison commission composed of people high up in the "Council of Civic Leaders", the "National Centre", and the "Union for the Resurgence of Russia", and it was seen as the "brains trust" of all anti-Soviet movements to work out the principles of a comprehensive programme and certain reforms that a future government of Russia should take as its guide. These were various projects for state structure and solutions of the agrarian, labour, food and nationalities issues, that on the whole conformed to the Cadet platform. The "Tactical Centre" also had contacts with rebel generals, military underground organisations and Entente diplomats.

The "Tactical Centre" inquiry was completed by August 1920. Because of an amnesty many of the people involved in the crimes committeed in 1918-1919 were released. The Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal tried 28 persons, found the principal defendants guilty and sentenced them to be shot. Taking into consideration their sincere repentance, however, their desire to co-operate with the Soviet government and to help restore the ravaged economy, as well as their categorical condemnation of the armed actions of Whiteguards and foreign interventionists, the tribunal commuted the death sentences and in 1921 they were all pardoned. Some, however, emigrated to continue anti-Soviet activities abroad.

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[1] *Na Chuzhoi Storone*, No. 6, Prague, 1923, pp. 141-153.

[2] Indictment in the Case of Counter-Revolutionary Organisations Exposed in Moscow and Their Activities in 1918-1919, Moscow, 1920, pp. 20-21.

THE COLLAPSE OF ORGANISED COUNTER-REVOLUTION

Riot and Rout of Petty-Bourgeois Anarchy

After seven years of imperialist and civil wars Russia found itself towards the close of 1920 in desperate economic and political straits, further aggravated by an unprecedented drought in the summer of 1921, which devastated the country's most fertile farming regions and brought famine to millions.

The workers and peasants–the two basic classes of Soviet society–were in a dire plight. Some workers gave up their jobs in factories and went back to the land. Nor was the lot of the peasants, who had surrendered to the state all their surplus produce, any easier. While the fighting against the landowners and capitalists was still raging, the peasants tolerated the privations and austerities of "war communism". But afterwards they wanted to till the land they had received, freely to dispose of the produce of their labour as petty-commodity producers and to sell their grain on the open market. Demobilisation sent hundreds of thousands of men back to town and village but since they did not immediately find jobs the ranks of the disgruntled swelled.

A countrywide wave of demonstrations followed, involving primarily peasants, not only the more prosperous farmers, but also many middle peasants. "Petty-bourgeois anarchy" was rife. Counter-revolutionists availed themselves of the situation to try to channel peasant discontent towards a restoration of bourgeois rule.

Then in March 1921 the Soviet government decided to end food requisitioning and introduce instead a tax in kind, to allow the peasants to retain part of their surplus grain. Free commerce was also permitted. Along with other provisions of the New Economic Policy, better known as NEP, this made it possible to resolve the crisis as a result of which the petty-bourgeois counter-revolutionary movement began to subside. The middle peasants broke with the counter-revolutionaries and, surrendering to the authorities, were allowed to return to their farming. Many former factory owners now asked for concessions to run smaller and medium enterprises that were either to be denationalised or leased to them; some joined the staffs of government enterprises and institutions. The overwhelming majority of those with technical skills went back to work in production, honestly striving to set the economy on its feet again: NEP brought advances in both industry and farming.

Along with the earlier defeat sustained by the organised forces of counter-revolution in Russia NEP helped to speed the disintegration even of Whiteguard emigre circles; groups emerged that endeavoured to re-shape their political platforms. In 1922 various "Unions for Repatriation" appeared abroad, urging Russians to return home and atone through honest labour for the crimes they had committed while serving in the Whiteguard armies.

Moscow, 1922. Former aristocrats at the second-hand market.

All these developments naturally tended to modify the punitive policies pursued by the Soviet state in its drive against counter-revolution.

Combatting Counter-Revolution under NEP

Even before the Civil War ended, but immediately after the defeat of Kolchak and the signal victories over Denikin, the Cheka raised the question of ending the use of the death penalty by Cheka bodies. On January 17, 1920, the Soviet government decreed that no more executions were to be carried out by either the Cheka or the revolutionary tribunals. However, the fighting against Poland and Wrangel that broke out shortly afterwards compelled Soviet organs to reintroduce the death penalty.

Nevertheless in December 1920, as soon as the

country began to turn to a peacetime footing, the Cheka forbade all local Cheka organisations to carry out death sentences without its sanction, believing that such sentences could now be revoked in respect of all political crimes, except for acts of terrorism and open armed revolt. This was because political banditry was still rife and there was no possibility of finding a radical solution for problems of revolutionary legality.

The Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets indicated in December 1921 that in conditions of peaceful construction "one task on the agenda is to implement in all fields of life strict principles of revolutionary legality". It authorised the Presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee to restructure the Cheka and limit its powers.

On February 6, 1922, in compliance with the resolution of the Congress of Soviets, the Soviet government abolished the Cheka and its local organs. The task of suppressing armed action and combatting espionage and certain other particularly dangerous crimes was now vested with the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), within which a section known as the State Political Administration (GPU) was established. The government decree strictly regulated the procedure for arrest, search and other investigatory action by the GPU, formulating the key provision that "henceforth all cases of crimes against the Soviet system... may be heard exclusively in conformity with judicial procedure by revolutionary tribunals or people's courts, as the case may be".

Furthermore, steps were taken to strengthen judicial bodies. Soviet state law codes were drafted, including the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Statute on the Direction of Public Pro-

Moscow, 1922. Felix Dzerzhinsky at a parade of GPU units in Red Square marking the fifth anniversary of the formation of Soviet agencies for the struggle against the counter-revolution.

secution, making the GPU an organ of investigation—and of preliminary inquiry in cases of counter-revolutionary crimes—subordinate to the Prosecutor, who would sanction warrants for the arrest of the accused, issue mandatory directives to the GPU as regards investigation, and decide questions of committal for trial and the dismissal of cases.

Of crucial significance in consolidating the Soviet state was the class solidarity of the workers and peasants of the many nationalities of the Soviet Union. On December 30, 1922, the Congress of Soviets meeting in Moscow adopted its historic Declaration on the creation of the USSR, which stated

that only in the conditions of a proletarian dictatorship, which had rallied the majority of the population around itself, had it been possible to eradicate national oppression, generate mutual confidence and pave the way for the fraternal co-operation of nations, and that only thanks to this had the Soviet republics successfully repelled the assaults of counter-revolutionary forces within the country and world imperialism, and had embarked upon peaceful economic construction.

Accordingly, on November 15, 1923, an independent department for safeguarding state security, known as the United State Political Administration

(OGPU), under the USSR Council of People's Commissars, was constituted to function over the entire country. The law duly laid down the rules, established after the transition to NEP, for investigating and hearing cases concerning counter-revolutionary crimes.

The key task of the organs of state security was to combat the counter-revolutionists who were still active, the remnants of the once large anti-Soviet organisations inside the country, along with the foreign centres directing them, as well as economic counter-revolution.

Degradation of the SR Party

The Right-wing Socialist parties had been obliged in late 1918 to acknowledge the failure of their policy of joining with the bourgeoisie. The first to do this, in November, were the Mensheviks. In the winter of that year, an SR Congress of members of the Constituent Assembly exhorted Siberian and Cossack military formations to resist Kolchak, while an elected deputation began negotiations with the Soviet government for conciliation. In February of the following year, an All-Russian Conference of the SR Party made similar pronouncements.

The Soviet government went halfway to meet petty-bourgeois democracy. Considering that the SR conference had "categorically rejected attempts at armed struggle against Soviet power, . . . categorically came out against foreign intervention in Russia's affairs, . . . urged its party organisations to overthrow reactionary governments, . . . resolutely spurned all alliance with bourgeois parties", the Soviet government decided on February 26, 1919, to

allow the SRs along with other parties to participate in Soviet activity and to release from imprisonment members of the Right SR Party who "subscribed to the views" of the conference.

In June 1919 the Ninth Council of the Right SR Party adopted a resolution stating in part: "The decision the party is taking in the current political situation not to undertake armed struggle against the Bolshevik dictatorship. . . must be seen exclusively as a tactical decision dictated by the state of affairs".

However, even these resolutions were not implemented by all the party's organisations. Some trends were prepared to continue anti-Soviet subversive activities. The political line of the SR executive gravitated increasingly towards an ultra-Right stand. The September 1920 conference passed a resolution stating that it called for the inevitable future resumption of armed action against Bolshevik rule. Finally, in August-September 1921 the Tenth SR Party Council declared that the party's prime objective at the time was to "overcome the dictatorship of the ruling government".

In late 1921 several SR militants provided the Cheka with serious evidence of the crimes their leaders had committed against the Soviet state, more specifically that in 1918 they had been responsible for the attempt on Lenin's life and the killing of Volodarsky.

On February 27, 1922, the Presidium of the GPU announced that an investigation had begun in the light of this evidence. GPU interrogators and subsequently an investigatory team from the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal questioned hundreds of witnesses, amassed a wealth of documentary evidence and committed a group of 34 Right SRs for trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal. Incidentally, in

the course of the investigation the accused fell into two sharply opposed political groups. One, consisting of members of the executive and other high functionaries, pigheadedly advocated bankrupt policies. The other, consisting of militants and the rank-and-file of the party's combat groups, realised that their party's policies had been erroneous, broke with it and exposed the crimes of its leaders.

The case was heard in public by specially authorised judges of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal from June 8 to August 7, 1922. The examination of the activities since the October Revolution of the leaders of what had once been one of the country's biggest parties transformed the hearings into a historical case study of a very special kind.

The judges found that since the October Revolution the SR Party had engineered armed revolts against the established authority in Russia, to which end it had had contact with Whiteguards and world imperialism, had spied for troops fighting against the Red Army and had engaged in wrecking and expropriation. Especially important was the exposure at the trial of the acts of terrorism committed against Soviet political leaders, which for four years the SRs had taken every precaution to hide. In fact, even in the courtroom the accused members of the SR executive would not admit to these facts, alleging that though their party had employed terror against the Tsarist autocracy, it had not done so with respect to Soviet political leaders.

This was not true.

The first attempts at acts of terror were undertaken by individual SRs and SR branches. More specifically, the Petrograd branch planned to blow up the train on which the Soviet government moved to Moscow.

In May 1918 a certain Semyonov, chief of the SR combat group in Petrograd, organised under the party executive a "central combat unit" and initiated an organised terror campaign, the upshot of which was that Volodarsky was assassinated on June 20. Nevertheless, two days later the Petrograd Bureau of the SR executive issued a misleading statement to the effect that "no party organisation had anything to do with the killing of Press Commissar Volodarsky". However, the SR party executive retained Semyonov's group of terrorists, moving them to Moscow, where they began to prepare for an attempt on the life of Lenin. On August 30, 1918, one of its militants, Fanny Kaplan, seriously wounded the Soviet leader. The trial established that Kaplan had been an SR militant and a member of Semyonov's "central combat unit" and had perpetrated her villainous deed with the connivance and secret permission of members of the SR executive.

The accused, all high SR party functionaries, were sentenced to be shot, but the carrying out of the sentence was stayed, and the sentence was subsequently commuted to five years of deprivation of liberty, after which some of those sentenced emigrated.

The trial of the SR executive speeded the party's degeneration. An All-Russia Congress of former rank-and-file SRs, mostly workers and peasants, held in Moscow from March 18 to 23, 1923, noted that the party had crumbled. It branded the shameful doings of its leaders and stripped the executive of its powers. Subsequently, many former SRs joined the Bolshevik Party or retired from all further political activity. Only a few vestiges of this once large party, people who could not reconcile themselves to Soviet power, and also its leaders living abroad, at-

tempted to continue underground anti-Soviet activities, which, however, were totally unproductive.

The End of Savinkov

Boris Savinkov, who escaped from Russia in late 1918, spent 1919 as a member of the "Committee-cum-conference" attached to Kolchak's legation in Paris, knocking on the doors of French and British statesmen to beg for arms for Kolchak and Denikin. Also, as head of the White emigre Union Press Bureau, he circulated slanderous information about the state of affairs in Russia and campaigned for continued imperialist armed intervention against his country.

When the Soviet-Polish war broke out in 1920, Savinkov rushed to participate on the side of the Polish gentry. He became chairman of the "Russian Political Committee" in Warsaw and took a hand in forming the Whiteguard detachments that were commanded by General Peremykin and the Bulak-Balakhovich brothers. In 1921 with his brother Victor, a Cossack captain, Savinkov formed an intelligence ring in Poland to spy in the Soviet rear. In the same year the two brothers knocked up a new organisation which they called the "Popular Union for the Defence of the Motherland and Liberty". Hoping to make it an all-Russia anti-Soviet centre, Savinkov agreed to collaborate with emigre groups of Ukrainian and Byelorussian nationalists and Cossacks. It should be noted that Savinkov formed his organisation with the connivance of the Polish authorities and the French military mission in Warsaw, which sought to hamstring the Soviets and spy on them. In fact nearly all Savinkov's agents were simultaneously on Poland's

payroll, with the Polish police helping to put them across the border. In short, Savinkov's outfit was nothing but an international espionage "office".

But Savinkov saw his main objective to be that of preparing for a revolt in the Soviet rear in the spring of 1921. With this end in view various underground territorial committees and also cells in Soviet institutions and military formations were organised, though Savinkov mainly counted on the peasantry. But his hopes were not justified. Savinkov's underground bands in Byelorussia and Western Russia were nothing but gangs of adventurers and bandits, the peasant masses recognising them for what they were, as Whiteguard restorers of the old regime. The dastardly crimes that were committed by these bands, which had been sent in from Poland, aroused universal indignation and on July 4 the Soviet government demanded of the Poles that they put a stop to the activities of anti-Soviet organisations in their country and expel their leaders. After lengthy negotiations a protocol was signed on October 7, banishing Savinkov and several of his confederates from Poland.

After this Savinkov's organisation eked out a miserable existence. It consisted only of a few "regional committees" in Warsaw and Vilno, and in a few places inside the Soviet Republic. Foreign secret services cut down subsidies to a mere trickle. Savinkov, who had moved to Paris by now, was feverishly hunting for new gambles.

In the summer of 1922 border guards detained Savinkov's aide, a certain L. D. Sheshenya, a former Tsarist officer, as he was coming in from Poland to get into contact with agents previously smuggled into the country. Interrogated at the GPU, Sheshenya made a clean breast of the assignment he had been given and named the agents he was to see. In turn,

one of the detained agents, a certain M. D. Zekunov, made a full confession and offered his services to the GPU to expose Savinkov's underground organisation.

The GPU despatched Zekunov with a letter from Sheshenya to Ivan Fomichov, Savinkov's man in Vilno. Sheshenya wrote what the GPU had told him to say that in Moscow he had established contact with an anti-Soviet group. The GPU dangled this as a bait, which the leaders of Savinkov's organisation in Vilno, and in Warsaw too, swallowed hook, line and sinker. They thought they had at last found inside Russia a well-established counter-revolutionary group and could therefore raise their heads once again. Fomichov expressed the wish to go out at once to see the "Moscow group" and at the same time hastened to inform his chief, Savinkov, in Paris of this important turn of events.

At this point the GPU devised a plan to "lure Savinkov into Soviet territory" in order to arrest him and put paid to his organisation. This was extremely difficult. Savinkov and his inner circle had to be induced really to believe that there was an anti-Soviet organisation in Moscow and that Savinkov should come to Moscow to take a hand in it.

To effect this A. P. Fyodorov, an experienced GPU counter-intelligence officer, brilliantly acted the role of only one of the leaders of the "Moscow anti-Soviet organisation". Under the alias of A. P. Mukhin he visited Warsaw several times, where he met the leaders of the Warsaw and Vilno groups of Savinkov's organisation and made a good impression on them, thus causing them fully to believe in the existence of an anti-Soviet group in Moscow.

Subsequently, Fomichov "illegally" travelled from Vilno to Moscow personally to meet the GPU officers masquerading as members of the notorious

"Moscow organisation", who were introduced incidentally, by none other than Sheshenya. Convinced that the Moscow "group" was a "reality", he eagerly urged full contact with it, persuading Savinkov to take over direction.

In July 1923 "Mukhin" travelled to Paris to see Savinkov and to tell him that the "Moscow organisation" was about to break up because of differences on certain tactical matters which, he intimated, could be resolved only by such an experienced leader as Savinkov himself. But the latter was wary and decided first to see whether the "Moscow group" really existed. He commissioned Col. Pavlovsky, his closest confederate, to travel illegally to Russia to check up. Arriving in Moscow in September, Pavlovsky went to see Sheshenya, but as he was very aggressive the GPU arrested him. Now he too agreed to help and the GPU assigned him a role to play. In letters to Savinkov and his group outside the country he on GPU instructions confirmed the existence of the "Moscow group", said it was a very viable organisation and said that Savinkov must come to Moscow himself. The upshot was that on August 15, 1924, with the assistance of the "Moscow group" Savinkov and some of his followers crossed into Soviet Russia from the Polish border and were arrested in the country on the following day.

The crimes that Savinkov had committed were common knowledge. Indeed, from 1921 to 1923 Soviet state security organs had rounded up several of his groups and several major trials had been held completely exposing this man as an agent of foreign secret services. Unable to refute the charges laid against him, Savinkov said he fully repented and a week later, on August 27, was committed for trial by the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court.

In his testimony Savinkov stated that from 1918 on his organisations had been on the payroll of foreign secret services and that from 1920 to 1923 he had provided Polish and French intelligence services with espionage data about Russia, for which he had been duly paid. Repenting these grievous crimes, he declared that he had gradually come to realise that the White movement was spearheaded against the people and that foreign imperialists in backing and financing Russian counter-revolution were pursuing their own aims, aims that had nothing at all in common with the interests of the Russian people. In his final plea before the court Savinkov declared that he was categorically breaking with counter-revolution. "I unconditionally recognise Soviet power and none other," he said. "To every Russian who loves his country I, who have traversed the entire road of this bloody, heavy struggle against you, I, who refuted you as none other did, I tell him that if you are a Russian, if you love your people, you will bend down to worker-peasant power, and recognise it without any reservations." [1]

On August 29 the Military Collegium sentenced Savinkov to be shot. "However, taking into account that in court Savinkov had admitted that all his political activities since the October Revolution had been a mistake and a delusion, considering Savinkov's full disavowal of the aims and methods of the counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet movement and his exposure of the interventionists, and considering further Savinkov's profession of readiness to atone for his crimes... by serving the working masses of the USSR, the Supreme Court has decided to intercede with the Presidium of the All-Union Central

[1] "Boris Savinkov on Trial Before the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court", Moscow, 1924, p. 144.

The Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court meets to consider the Boris Savinkov case.

Executive Committee of the USSR to commute the present sentence." [1]

The presidium acceded to the Military Collegium's request and commuted the death sentence to a term of ten years of deprivation of freedom.

Yet Savinkov could not reconcile himself to his fate. Evidently he thought the Soviet people would at once believe his repentance, forgive him his crimes and set him free. On May 7, 1925, eight months after the verdict, he demanded in a letter to Dzerzhinsky that he be released at once. He wrote: "I was against you and now I'm with you. I can't be at a halfway house, neither for nor against, that is to say, stay in prison or become an ordinary inactive person... If you believe me, set me free and give me work, it doesn't matter what kind of work, even of the humblest nature. It may be that I too will

[1] "Boris Savinkov on Trial Before the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court", Moscow, 1924, p. 144.

be of use... But if you don't believe me, then tell me so, please, clearly and straightforwardly, so that I know exactly where I stand" (*Pravda*, May 13, 1925). The warder who took this statement told Savinkov it was most unlikely that the sentence would be revised, after which Savinkov, taking advantage of the unbarred window of the room to which he had been brought back from his daily walk, threw himself out to his death five storeys below.

The End of Sidney Reilly, "Ace of Spies"

In Britain this man was regarded as a second Lawrence of Arabia, the "ace of spies". Sentenced to death in absence by the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal for his complicity in the "Plot of the Three Ambassadors", Sidney Reilly in 1918 fled from Moscow to Britain, where he was decorated. In Britain he was a trusted agent of Winston Churchill and other enemies of Bolshevism, he was their adviser on Russia and right up to the close of 1925 he carried on unabated his espionage and subversive activities against the Soviet republic.

The OGPU did its best to render this dangerous enemy harmless. OGPU officers sent abroad in 1925, to masquerade as leaders of a pretended underground organisation, managed to gain Sidney Reilly's confidence and suggested he come out to see their "organisation" and take a hand in its activities. A gambler at heart, Reilly was only too amenable and soon proposed that he would like to see "these underground anti-Soviet leaders on the spot". On September 25, Reilly crossed the Finnish border with the masquerading OGPU officers and was escorted to Leningrad and subsequently to Moscow.

At a dacha outside the capital Reilly had a "conference" on September 27 with the supposed "political council" of the "counter-revolutionary underground", at which he set out his ideas on how to finance it and step up its activities. To this end he suggested burgling Russian museums of valuable works of art, which he would sell abroad, as he knew that he could soon get some 50,000 dollars for this purpose. Another way of getting money was by agreeing to collaborate with the British Secret Service. He was arrested right there and then but to conceal the fact on the night of September 28 a gun battle was acted out at the spot on the Finnish border where Reilly was supposed to cross.

Meanwhile, the trapped Reilly was giving evidence to the OGPU. A few excerpts from his testimony follow:

From the interrogation record of October 7, concerned with Reilly's activities after escaping from Moscow: "I was appointed Political Officer in Southern Russia and went out to Denikin's headquarters. I was also in the Crimea, in South-eastern Russia, and in Odessa, where I stayed until the end of March 1919, when I was ordered by the British High Commissioner in Constantinople to report to leading circles in London on the situation on Denikin's front and on the political situation in Southern Russia... In 1919 and 1920 I had close ties with representatives of Russian emigres of various party affiliations... All this time I was still with the secret service and my paramount objective was to cover Russia for leading circles in Britain. At the end of 1920, having become a rather close intimate of Savinkov's, I went to Warsaw, where Savinkov was then organising a foray into Byelorussia (this was a band sent in from Poland to conduct acts of anti-Russian sabotage and subversion—Ed.). I personally took part in the operation and was inside So-

viet Russia. Ordered to return, I went back to London. In 1923 and 1924... I contributed extensively to newspapers in Britain and continued to advise influential quarters also in America about Russia, as during these two years I often visited America and spent 1925 in New York."

From the interrogation record for October 9: "I was abreast of Russian affairs as I was provided with information from various sources, including British and American intelligence sources."

However, this was far from the full picture.

In 1922 the White emigre Commercial and Industrial Committee (Torgprom) set up a secret council in Paris to step up anti-Soviet activities. One of its members was a certain G. Y. Elvengren, a former junior captain of the Cuirassier Household Troops Regiment. Caught by Soviet counter-intelligence officers several years later in the spring of 1926 while attempting an illegal crossing of the border, he furnished an exhaustive account of his adventures and, among other things, of his ties with Torgprom.

According to Elvengren in 1922 Torgprom representatives suggested he use their resources to recruit a team to carry out acts of terror against Soviet Russia's politicians. He agreed and advised recruiting his old boss, Savinkov, with whom he had cooperated in the latter's organisation. The two men received the money promised and were told to arrange for the assassination of Soviet delegates to the Genoa Conference. In the meantime, Sidney Reilly, who had contacts with Savinkov, turned up in Paris. He supported the plan and said he would help the assassins in Berlin, where the Soviet delegates were to put up on their way to Genoa. Despite all their preparations assassins failed to carry out their dastardly designs.

Shortly before coming to Russia, on March 23,

1925, Reilly wrote in a letter: "To sum up, there are three methods (of fighting against Soviet power—Ed.), namely, an organisation, propaganda and terror... Terror directed from a centre, but carried out by small independent groups and persons against prominent individual statesmen. The purpose is of prime importance, to stir up the swamp, to end lethargy, to shatter the myth of the authorities' invulnerability, to light a spark... I am sure that a major act of terror would produce an astonishing impression and stir up worldwide hopes of the imminent fall of the Bolsheviks, and at the same time an active interest in Russian affairs." [1]

Such were the plans that the "ace of spies" had formulated when going out to Russia.

Only recently was confirmation received of Sidney Reilly's complicity in the notorious fabrication and exploitation in Britain of the so-called "Comintern Letter".

From 1923 to 1927 the capitalist world was virtually inundated with anti-Soviet forgeries. These alleged "documents" of "subversion" by the Soviet government and the Communist International were to "prove" that the Communists and the Soviet government were directing insurrections and plots throughout the capitalist world.

In October 1924 Britain's Labour government called for a General Election. During the election campaign, the rival Conservatives published the sensational "Comintern Letter of September 15, 1924", in which the Comintern had supposedly proposed to the Executive Committee of the British Communist Party that it prepare for an armed uprising and form "cells" in all army units and depots.

[1] Whiteguard Terror Against the USSR, Moscow, 1928, pp. 29-30.

The subsequent press clamour swung the vote by "proving" that the Labour government had "erred" in establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet government. The scared middle-class toppled the Labour government and placed the Tories in power. The Soviet government categorically rejected the British government's Note on this score, indicating that the "Comintern Letter" was the handiwork of white emigres and foreign secret services who sought to thwart peaceful coexistence between the USSR and the capitalist countries, and it called for a third-party inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the forgery. The British government declined, though suggestions were made in the media that the "Letter" was a forgery, even that it had been fabricated with Reilly's connivance. Soviet intelligence also said that it was a forgery, contrived on Reilly's instructions by a white emigre centre engaged in faking anti-Soviet documents.

On February 8, 1970, the London *Sunday Times* carried an editorial discussing new chances of unravelling what it named as one of the "most lurid British political mysteries of the century", the mystery behind the "Comintern Letter", which had caused such a great sensation in Britain at the time. It appeared that William Butler, a Harvard University's law research associate, had unexpectedly discovered in the vaults of the Harvard Law School the original copy of the "Comintern Letter", or rather four pages in Russian on photographic plates. His studies, which he published in the Harvard Library Bulletin, had led him to deduce that the "Letter" was a forgery.

The Sunday Times reproduced Butler's discovery and suggested that if anyone could identify the handwriting, this would possibly help to clarify why it had been accepted as an authentic "Comintern Letter", and exploited in "a vituperative 'Red Scare' campaign". The newspaper called on readers to help unravel this riddle. In subsequent developments historian Michael Kettle produced a specimen of Sidney Reilly's handwriting, noting that he had been struck by similarities between the writing and the Russian text of the "Comintern Letter".

The Sunday Times invited John Conway, an expert examiner of Questioned Documents and a Fellow of the British Academy of Forensic Sciences, to compare photostats of Reilly's handwriting and the Russian original of the "Comintern Letter". After a careful study he reported: "I have compared these two texts... they were written by the same person." (*The Sunday Times*, February 15, 1970.) This confirmed Soviet intelligence data on Sidney Reilly's complicity in the "Comintern Letter" forgery.

Towards the end of his interrogation Sidney Reilly was told that in accordance with the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal verdict of December 3, 1918, he was to be shot. Upon which Reilly offered his services to Soviet counter-intelligence. In an application to OGPU Chairman Dzerzhinsky of October 30, 1925, he wrote: "I agree to provide absolutely frank testimony and information on matters of interest to the OGPU as regards the organisation and personnel of the British Secret Services, and as much as I know about the American secret service, and also about persons in Russian emigre circles with whom I have had dealings." On November 3 the sentence of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal was carried out.

CONCLUSION

The drive against the forces of counter-revolution and the anti-Soviet underground movement assumed different forms, depending on the prevailing social and political situation in the country and abroad. It was complex and difficult. In the course of revolutionary construction and starting completely from scratch the Soviet people and their government had to evolve their own methods and establish and perfect their own institutions to safeguard the new regime, in short, they had to "learn to defend the revolution".

The basic principles underlying the structure and operation of Soviet institutions for investigation and the dispensation of justice and of the special organs for combatting counter-revolution were from the very outset those of democracy, humanitarianism and full reliance on the people. These organs and the entire Soviet people displayed unparalleled magnanimity towards capitalism's advocates who opposed the revolution. Arrested counter-revolutionaries were freed "upon their word of honour", the moment they promised no longer to take up arms against the new authorities; they were given suspended sentences, punished with public reprimands, social ostracism, short terms of deprivation of liberty and other penalties. But there were no death sentences, no executions.

But, after the enemies had unleashed the Civil War and foreign armed intervention, the Soviet people and their government were compelled to increase the punitive functions of the new state. Counter-revolutionary forces employed in Russia the full arsenal of every known cruel and harsh device in order to suppress the revolutionary people, they resorted to judicial and extra-judicial terror, pogroms and massacres, forced labour, banishment, exile, court martial and execution. In retaliation the Soviet government had to employ certain traditional means of suppression and punishment, such as corrective labour camps, banishment, exile, death sentences and the shooting of highly dangerous criminals on the spot. But, it was not vengeance that determined the forms and methods. Time and again, even during the Civil War, in short, as soon as the social and political situation permitted, the Soviet state eased punitive policies, abolished the death sentence, frequently announced general amnesties and extensively resorted to granting amnesties to individual counter-revolutionaries involved in plots and revolts.

Having "learned to defend themselves", the Red Army and the Soviet institutions for combatting counter-revolution upheld the gains of the October Revolution. Many highly dangerous conspirators, spies and terrorists went down on their knees before the Soviet people. The counter-revolutionary forces in the country, the illegal anti-Soviet movements, and the international experts in secret warfare all came a cropper.

The main reason why counter-revolution failed was that neither during nor after the Civil War did the anti-Soviet movement, the clandestine organisa-

tions or the secret war against Russia enjoy any popular backing. The aims of the counter-revolutionary forces reflected the craving of a negligible handful of exploiters whose interests were radically opposed to the feelings of working people. Its objectives were built on sand, were unattainable at a time and in conditions when the entire people unreservedly supported Soviet rule. On the other hand, the successes the Soviet state won in combatting counter-revolution were determined in the final analysis by the fact that all the working people of Russia upheld Soviet rule and were wholly against any restoration of the old bourgeois landowning system.

At the 25th Communist Party Congress General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev said: "The *state security organs* have reliably safeguarded Soviet society from the subversive activity of the intelligence services of the imperialist states, and all types of foreign anti-Soviet centres and other hostile elements. The activity of these organs is geared to the requirements stemming from the international situation and the development of Soviet society. Our Cheka men cherish and carry on the traditions initiated by Felix Dzerzhinsky, that knight of the revolution.

"The state security organs carry on all their work, which takes place under the Party's guidance and unflagging control, in the light of the interests of the people and the state, with the support of broad masses of working people, and with strict observance of constitutional rules and socialist legality. That is the main source of their strength, and the main earnest of the successful exercise of their functions."

The imperialist secret services have not abandoned their hope of reviving a counter-revolutionary underground movement in the USSR. But, the experience the Soviet state has amassed in combatting enemy agents shows that such attempts by imperialist reaction are doomed to failure. The experience gained in the development of world socialism indicates that any counter-revolution, any underground movement inimical to a people who have risen up to struggle for freedom, independence and social reform is doomed, provided the working people learn to defend their revolution.