CHAPTER XXII

We found that the Soviet Commander-in-Chief operating against the Rumanians was living in Odessa station. He was a renegade Colonel, by the name of Mouravioff, and our interviews with him were rendered very distasteful when we recognized in him the man who had thrown General Dukhonin's epaulettes to the crowd and had pushed him on the platform before he was murdered. Mouravioff's troops were not actively engaged. They were preventing supplies going into Rumania, with the idea of starving the country into revolution.

When we conveyed to him the resolutions passed by the sailors at Sevastopol, Mouravioff was furious. A meeting of the Supreme Council was called and we were to attend. Dr. Christian Rakovsky was the President of the Council. He was a short dark man, with intelligent eyes, and seemed to know most of the languages of the world with the exception of English. He was a Rumanian who had been born in Bulgaria and educated at the Sorbonne in Paris, and he nourished an undying hatred against the country of his origin. From his student days he had been a revolutionary and was a thorn in the flesh of both Rumania and Bulgaria. He seemed to have a personal grudge against the Royal Family and the military caste of Rumania, and was longing for the time when the Soviets would be established in that country.

Apart from Mouravioff and Rakovsky, the remainder of the Council were a shoddy collection of nonentities, one or two of whom could neither read nor write. It was strange to see Rakovsky at the head of such an assembly, and impossible then to visualize that one day, as Soviet Ambassador at the Court of St. James's, he would bring off a diplomatic victory against the British Foreign Office. But that is just what he did when he engineered the Anglo-Russian trade agreement, through which fell the first British Labour Government in 1924.

To Rakovsky we delivered the message that M. Bratiano had given us for Trotsky. We urged the cessation of hostilities. Rakovsky was adamant, but we gave him no rest, harrying him day after day and pointing out how completely the general situation had changed since the Bolsheviks declared war on Rumania in January. We pressed upon his notice that the Brest Litovsk negotiations had reached a complete deadlock, that the Germans were advancing on Petrograd and pushing into Ukrainia, and that the army which he was using against Rumania would be wanted for use against Germany.

At last Rakovsky agreed to hold a meeting for the discussion of the terms on which the Soviets would be prepared to cease hostilities. To make the occasion more impressive Colonel Boyle and I persuaded the British, French and American Consuls to attend. The conference commenced at ten o'clock in the evening. Boyle and I were already well aware of the general situation. Rumania, as I have shown, had temporarily to retain Bessarabia to safeguard her food supply. Rakovsky on the other hand was determined that she should not, because he had a

natural prejudice against yielding any part of Russia, and behind it all he wanted Bessarabia as a base from which the Soviets could pursue their propaganda against Rumania, propaganda which incidentally would have added force in a starving country. Rakovsky's first proposals, we knew, would have no chance of acceptance by the Rumanian Government, and all through that night we were urging, pressing, haggling, giving him not a moment's peace. After hours of negotiation we persuaded him to modify all the clauses but one. It was the clause dealing with Bessarabia. Rakovsky wished the Rumanians to evacuate the country immediately, and we on our side urged that they could not be expected to do so until they had been able to evacuate their stores.

Again and again we drafted that clause to suit Rakovsky's wishes as far as possible and yet safeguard the interests of Rumania.

It was not until five o'clock in the morning that he finally agreed to our wording. The document was drafted in duplicate and the signatures of the Supreme Council attached to it. It was then that I discovered that two or three of the members could neither read nor write. Only Rakovsky's signature was now required, and he could not be brought to make up his mind to sign it. He read and re-read the draft document, quarrelled with the wording, suggested alterations, procrastinated. But Boyle and I would not accept any modification. It was now six o'clock. The consuls and the Supreme Council were all tired out. Everyone was bored. At last Rakovsky gave way, and signed the document which, when countersigned by the Rumanian Government later, constituted the first Peace Treaty made during the Great War.

The credit of getting Rakovsky's signature rests entirely with Colonel Boyle. He had been watching his man for days and knew all his habits. He knew that Rakovsky was a very hard worker, that it was his practice to work all through the night, to retire to bed somewhere about five o'clock in the morning, and to rise again at ten. He made up his mind to wear Rakovsky out and succeeded in doing so. Rakovsky signed out of sheer physical fatigue.

At once we sent by wireless to the Rumanian Government the information that Colonel Boyle was bringing the treaty to Jassy and at the same time we arranged for a three days' armistice. It was impossible for 451 to go to Jassy since the railway bridge across the Dniester river had been blown up in the recent hostilities, and Colonel Mouravioff had promised to put a motor-car at Colonel Boyle's disposal on the following morning.

We waited patiently, but the promised car was not forthcoming. At half-past ten I went off to investigate, but all that I could discover was that a car had been ordered from the military garage and had left for the station. There were very few motor-cars in South Russia. Perhaps there were not more than a dozen in Odessa, and all of them were in use. At last we discovered what had happened to the car ordered for us. The chauffeur had driven up to the station and left the motor in order to report his arrival. Two of Mouravioff's soldiers, seeing it unoccupied, had stepped into it and driven off to a wedding. The chauffeur had rushed off after them and, forgetting all about reporting to us, had started to search Odessa for his car. Later in the morning he came across it standing outside a house, unoccupied. He promptly

jumped into the seat and started the engine. Somebody in the house where the wedding feast was in progress heard the sound and opened fire on him from the window. He returned the fire and killed two of the wedding party, was badly wounded himself but managed to reach the garage.

Another driver had to be found, and finally the car pulled up for Boyle still bearing traces of the conflict.

It was arranged that I was to remain in Odessa and, in the event of the expected German invasion taking place, to carry 451 out of harm's way. Meanwhile Boyle and the Major were to take the treaty to Jassy and return, if possible, within thirty-six hours. But I was fated not to see Boyle again until more than a year had passed, when we met at the Paris Peace Conference. The Rumanian Government were unwilling to sign Rakovsky's conditions and it was days before they finally did so. It was the Bessarabian clause to which they objected. Time has shown the justice of Rakovsky's fears of Rumanian designs on Bessarabia. Many years later I met Rakovsky again at a Genoa conference, and the first words he said to me were, "I still have the Peace Treaty with Rumania in my pocket, but the Rumanians have still got Bessarabia. You persuaded me against my will, and so it is your duty to put the matter right." Rakovsky's words were uttered in jest, but I have a feeling that one day that Peace Treaty signed in Odessa will play a part in an International Court. Sooner or later Russia will lay a serious claim for the return of Bessarabia and Rumania will find it hard to defend her title.

At last Boyle telegraphed that the Rumanian

Government had signed and sealed the treaty. He added he would be delayed for some days longer over some pressing work to which he must attend before he returned.

Meantime the German forces had occupied Kieff and begun to move on Odessa. The town was doomed, and the higher officers prepared to flee.

Colonel Mouravioff had an engine with steam up attached to his train and was ready to move at a moment's notice. I demanded an engine for 451 and went to the yard to make my choice. There I found and commandeered a brand-new engine, went along to the coal depot and saw the tender stacked high with coal, and did not leave until it was attached to 451. Naturally I made friends with the engine-driver and the mechanic, gave them a nice sum of money on account and made them part of my staff.

I commandeered a motor-car, too, in case we had to take to the roads, and adding an open truck to my train had a platform made so that I could unload the motor-car anywhere I liked. Every night with great pride I used to inspect my train. The large new engine with its well-stocked coal tender, 451 with its windows intact (few Russian railway carriages had any windows left in them) and its brass beautifully polished, and behind 451 an open platform on which every night the motor-car was loaded and carefully secured.

The pass I had from Mouravioff is an interesting document and the wording of the second paragraph rather quaint, for it reads, "Captain Hill is allowed to carry on him both cold (meaning steel) and fire-firing arms."

Then one morning I awoke to find that Mouravioff's siding was empty and his train gone. It meant that the Germans would reach Odessa at any moment. Mouravioff had slunk away without a word to me. Furiously angry, I drove into the town to see Rakovsky. He also was prepared for flight but he had not gone very far. He was on board one of the ships in the harbour. I went down and interviewed him. Yes, the Germans were coming straight to Odessa, and he did not think that I would be able to get away by train.

There was just one chance. The Germans might not yet have reached the junction from which the branch line ran to Sevastopol, and I climbed on the engine and we made a dash for the junction station. There was no sign of the Germans. Everything at the junction was quiet.

As a matter of fact it had been a false alarm. The Germans did not actually occupy Odessa for another week. But it was a false alarm which prevented me from joining up again with Boyle. He had, meantime, come back to Odessa with a copy of the Peace Treaty with the signature and seal of the Rumanian Government, and after interviewing Rakovsky had returned to Rumania.

Before he was able to get to Odessa once more the Germans had come down and occupied the town, and Boyle and I were cut off from each other.

Meanwhile, at a station near Nikolaev, I ran into something which might have proved even more fatal than capture by the Germans. The little station was empty and there did not seem to be a soul about. Presently the station-master appeared and from him I learned that Marucia Nikiforova, who had been

terrorizing the countryside, was expected at the station at any moment, and everybody had taken to flight.

This Amazon had collected a band of about two hundred cut-throats and had been operating on her own account along the railways. Her custom was to come into a station, seize all the ready money and anything else that took her fancy, confiscate food, shoot anyone who protested and then move on again. Marucia lived with anyone of her band who took her fancy, for she was a lady of catholic tastes and constantly changing her lovers. She had no political views and was just a common marauder.

Suddenly the station-master took to his heels. "Here she comes," he said as he disappeared into a hedge.

I raised my eyes and saw an engine with three or four carriages coming down the line. In a moment my train was surrounded by a horde of savages, one of whom, a giant of a man, demanded fiercely who I was and what I was doing there. I replied in terms equally polite, and he went off to report. A few minutes later he returned and said that Marucia wanted to see me. I followed him to the carriage and found the occupant to be a good-looking girl of twenty-three or four, with dark hair, rather sensuous lips and a fine figure. She was dressed as a man in soldier's clothes and top boots and carried a revolver on each hip. Her hands were well kept and she was smoking a cigarette, and altogether looked the most unlikely person to be at the head of two hundred scoundrels.

The giant and two other armed rascals had

followed me into the carriage. Marucia looked at them coldly. "What the devil are you doing here?" she said. "Get out," and they slunk away.

Then she offered me a cigarette and we chatted quite informally for a few minutes. Finally she asked me my business. I told her and gave all the news from Odessa. We were getting along famously together.

After a time her eyes fell on my beautiful new engine, and a look of greed came into them. I knew at once that she was going to try and get that engine from me.

"What a beautiful engine you have," she said.

I shook my head sadly. "All paint. It doesn't go very well. It is always breaking down and has deceived me cruelly."

It was a shame to slander that engine, but it had to be done.

It was getting very hot in the coupé and she unbuttoned her Russian blouse and quite unnecessarily exposed her throat and breast. I suddenly realized that the lady was making overtures to me, and I just got scared all through. I cannot be said to be a woman-hater—far from it—but I knew too much about Marucia to want to have an affair with her.

She put it to me quite bluntly. "I am tired of all these men and I rather like you. Let's join forces. Two engines are safer than one."

But I wriggled out. I told her a beautiful story about my passion for one woman and one woman only, and that I was one of those unfortunate men cursed with faithfulness when they loved.

"Besides," I said, "I am going to join Antonov.

I spoke to him on the telephone from the last station and he expects me to-night."

That frightened the lady. She had no desire to meet Antonov. She had not known that he was anywhere in the vicinity. For that matter neither did I.

We parted company very reluctantly on her side. I have often wondered what was the end of Marucia.

CHAPTER XXIII

At Elisavetgrad I overtook Mouravioff. Commissar Spiro also was there with a detachment of sailors. This was the chance I wanted. If I could persuade people like Mouravioff and Spiro to throw their detachments at the advancing Austro-Germans I could not only hold up the advance and make the enemy's entry difficult, but would also be able to aggravate the bad feeling which had grown up between the Bolsheviks and the Central Powers. The more intensively guerrilla warfare could be developed the better for the cause of the Allies. By telephone I got through to Antonov, who promised to put a cavalry division at our disposal, and I began to make plans to start a guerrilla warfare against the German Army.

For a few days I had hopes that we could make the Bolsheviks stand and put up a fight against the invaders. The detachments of Mouravioff's and Antonov's troops were in touch with the enemy and fighting had actually taken place. In one skirmish, it was reported, about thirty Austrians had been killed and the remainder of the detachment had retired. This information only reached me two days after the fighting had taken place. I could get no further details and I was most anxious to identify the regiments which were making the invasion. I explained the importance of this to Antonov and we drove to the spot where the fighting had taken place.

There were no wounded, the dead were already buried and the actual Soviet detachment engaged in the skirmish had moved off—no one quite knew where.

The only thing to do was to disinter the buried Austrians. Even then I did not get the required information. The Austrian soldiers had been stripped by the victors, their clothes and boots taken and the naked bodies buried.

Thereupon Antonov gave orders that all identification marks from clothes, tunics, cap badges and papers were to be sent under penalty of death to his headquarters.

But it was too late. In the next few days, on March 3, 1918, the Soviet Government had accepted the peace terms dictated by Germany. Antonov was ordered to cease hostilities. Before leaving I persuaded Antonov to damage the coal mine shafts and destroy the stores which we could not move, so as to prevent the Austro-Germans getting them. I must say that the irregular detachments excelled in destruction work, and I would back them against any professional demolition gang.

I had kept in touch with Boyle by wireless, but there seemed no hope of our rejoining each other for the present. Part of his amazing adventures after we separated are told in "Light and Shadow," by Madame Pantazie; part of them appeared in his obituary notices; part of them have never been told. It is not my purpose here, nor would it be possible to write an obituary; but for an epitaph these are the words which I heard a Russian say after one of Boyle's speeches, "Eh, brat, vot tchelovek!"—"Eh, brother, there's a man!"

A congress of all the Russian Soviets had been called to ratify the Brest Litovsk Peace Treaty at Moscow and I decided to attend. On arrival I found that the British Aviation Mission had already returned to England via Vladivostock, but fortunately it had left behind, safely hidden, two cars; one, a grey twelve cylinder "Pathfinder" two-seater, which had been a favourite of mine. To this car I promptly fastened a small silk Union Jack and put it into commission. The Allied Embassies had moved from Petrograd to Vologda; while the Soviet Government had left Petrograd, which was menaced by the German army, and had made Moscow the new capital.

I telegraphed to the War Office in London suggesting that there was still valuable work which I could do, and received orders to remain in Russia with a fairly free hand.

There was little difficulty in getting a permit to attend the Fourth All Russian Soviet Congress; the opening session found me in uniform among some hundreds of delegates. The sole topic of discussion was the Peace Treaty. Its ratification was almost a foregone conclusion. Lenin had won the People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party over to his way of reasoning.*

* The following is a chronological table of the principal events leading up to the acceptance of the German terms by the Soviet Government.

November 7, 1917, the Bolsheviks captured Petrograd and established the Soviet Government.

November 22, 1917, the People's Commissars sued for peace and dismissed General Dukhonin for refusing to transmit a request to the German High Command for an armistice. In Dukhonin's place they appointed Krylenko who made a request for an armistice.

December 5, 1917, Ten Days' Truce signed between Russia and the Central Powers (Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Turkey).

December 22, 1917, Soviet delegation headed by Kamenev (Trotsky followed later) went to Brest Litovsk, and the peace negotiations were

The Soviet Government could do nothing else, Lenin had so utterly disorganized Russia—her army, her industry, her food supply, that she lay defenceless before Germany.

Rumour had it that the Bolsheviks were bought by the German Government, that what had been going on at Brest Litovsk had been merely a comedy, in which each delegate had been allotted a part.

Lenin and Trotsky and the Bolshevik party in general were regarded by the Allied Missions in Russia as traitors and agents of the German

opened, Germany being represented by Herr Von Kuhlmann and General Hoffmann, Austria by Count Czernin. The Peace Conference did not sit after December 26, until

January 5, 1918, when the sessions were resumed. Little progress was made; the Bolsheviks discovered that the Central Powers intended to impose very stiff terms.

Very cleverly the Central Empires had separated the Ukrainian Rada delegation from the Soviet delegation and thereby weakened the position of the Bolsheviks.

February 6, 1918, the Central Empires signed a separate Peace Treaty with the Ukrainian Rada.

February 10, 1918, Trotsky made his famous declaration "No War, No Peace."

This was Trotsky's statement: "In the name of the People's Commissars, the Government of the Russian federated Soviet Republics hereby informs the Governments of the countries which are in a state of war with us, which are allied to us and which are neutral, that Russia while refusing to sign a peace of annexation, proclaims terminated, on her part, the state of war with Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. Simultaneously an order for the complete demobilization on all lines on the front is being issued to the Russian troops."

February 14, 1918, members of the German Commission in Petrograd prepared to leave as hostilities were to be resumed.

February 18, 1918, Germany declared the armistice ended at noon; immediately afterwards they captured Dvinsk and Reval and moved troops to strategic points on a wide front and against Petrograd.

February 19, 1918, Lenin decided to climb down and accept the German peace conditions if Germany still agreed to them.

February 24, 1918, Germany presented her new terms which were infinitely more onerous than her previous demands. Trotsky left Brest Litovsk.

March 3, 1918, Commissar Chicherin accepted the German conditions and the Peace Treaty was signed.

Government. The press in England, France, Italy and America for the most part took the same view.

It is true that after the 1917 revolution the principal Bolshevik leaders reached Russia in a special train which the Germans had allowed to come through from Switzerland, and cross the Russian front, and it is true that the Bolshevik party received large sums of money from Germany. But it is a mistake to regard Lenin and Trotsky as ordinary agents. They only carried out the orders of Germany when it suited their particular book. They did not regard Imperial Russia as their own Motherland and felt themselves bound by no obligation towards it. They were revolutionaries whose aim was to bring ideal conditions to the proletariat. The Bolsheviks would have been just as ready to take Allied money and Allied help if it had served their purpose.

I was convinced at the time, and nothing which has happened since has gone to alter my opinion, that the Soviet delegates did not act according to instructions from the Central Powers, and that Brest Litovsk was no staged affair.

I have never been a supporter of the Bolsheviks. Their whole doctrine is repellent to my nature. I dislike them for their tyranny, for their ruthlessness, for their hatred of the British Empire. But this dislike did not blind me to their ideals, nor has it blinded me to their influence, both for good and bad, on the rest of the world.

From the moment I arrived in Moscow to attend the meeting for the ratification of the Brest Litovsk Peace, I began to wrestle with Bolshevik institutions, trying to use them as factors against Germany, as

Germany was trying to use them as factors against us.

One of the clauses of the Brest Litovsk Peace Treaty stipulated that the Arctic Ocean was to remain mined and blockaded against the Allies. This meant that Germany would have a submarine base in the White Sea from which to menace shipping in the North Sea. The signing of this Peace Treaty meant that Germany could cut down her fighting forces on the Eastern front to a mere skeleton formation, and throw the whole of the troops so released on the Western front. It meant that Germany could penetrate into the Black Sea and get the coal, oil and petrol of which she was in such desperate need. It meant that the sorely depleted German granary would be replenished from the stores of Ukrainia for, under the separate Ukrainian treaty, Ukrainia was to give a million tons of bread stuffs per annum.

In fact the Brest Litovsk Treaty was a disaster for the Allies. The whole of my subsequent work, when I became a secret service agent and lived disguised as a Russian, was directed at the German secret service and German organizations.

There were other officers—like Sidney Reilly, who employed their energies against the Bolsheviks. They were working from a different angle; sometimes the lines on which our work ran were parallel, sometimes even linked, but it was against German activities that my work and energies were directed.

Lenin's prime object in accepting the German conditions was to preserve the Soviet Government and to gain time. His great hope was that the Soviets would be able to spread Bolshevism among the German troops and people.

At the Congress, Lenin made one of the most interesting speeches I have ever heard. His facts were naked; he told the whole bitter truth with no attempt at evasion. He told the delegates that it was not easy to be a revolutionary, and gave his reasons for accepting the German peace conditions in such a simple but such a forcible way that even a child could have understood them. His opponents showered question after question upon him, each one more cunningly phrased than the last. Lenin, calm, brilliant and with almost unnoticed irony forced his opponents from their every position. For each question he had an answer. He finished up his oration with the words: "We have signed this peace treaty, bitter as it is, and we will keep it." He looked at his audience squarely. His left eyelid dropped slowly over his eye; it was an unmistakable wink. "And we will keep it," he repeated.

I left the hall feeling that all was not yet lost.

I was living in 451 and was really attached to it. But the weather had become warmer and whenever the sun came out a thaw set in. At the platform where we stood there were quite a number of other saloon carriages in which people were living, and owing to the thaw and the sanitary conditions which exist in all railway carriages, the air around them was becoming, to put it mildly, far from sweet. I therefore jumped at an invitation which I received from friends of the owners of the Haritonenko House. They asked me to take up my quarters with them in order to protect their property. For, once I made my permanent residence there, the house would automatically become property under a foreign flag,

and have that small immunity which the Bolsheviks extended to the Foreign Missions.

Later Haritonenko House was to become the first Soviet guest house, where distinguished foreign visitors were housed and entertained, watched and spied upon while visiting Moscow. Later still it was rented by the British Government as the home of our Ambassador at Moscow. It was a beautiful building of palatial design and size and contained many priceless treasures. Two rooms were put at my disposal, one of which I used as a study. I managed to find a Union Jack, and while I lived there it was flown above the house.

Part of the family was still in residence, and I suppose some twelve or fifteen people sat down every night to dinner. My hosts, apart from being millionaires in Russia, had sufficient funds abroad to make them temporarily independent of the acts of nationalization passed by the Bolsheviks. The meals were cooked by artists, and the cellars were freely drawn on. Many of the hated bourgeois and aristocrats, such as the people with whom I was living, were far more broad in their democratic outlook and understanding than a rabid Bolshevik could ever hope to be, and in some respects they were even more radical and revolutionary than the extremists who wanted to wipe them out. Our hostess was a delightful woman. Night after night at table and long after she would keep the conversation going brilliantly. We teased and chaffed her, we played bridge and poker, we had violent arguments until three and four o'clock in the morning, and she was always the leader in everything that was done. The surprise of the house-party, then, can be imagined

when her husband came down on Easter morning and said, "My wife presented me with a daughter during the night." Not a single visitor in the house knew or suspected that such a happy event was even remotely possible.

The house was situated on the left bank of the river Moskva and looked right on the Kremlin on the other bank. The Kremlin fortress is surrounded by battlemented walls of pale pink with nineteen towers. Behind this palisade rise the domes of the churches, painted in gold, silver, or blue, the steep roofs of palaces and the squat tops of museums. Sunrise and sunset over the Kremlin is one of the most beautiful sights in the world and in its way equal to the grandeur of sunrise and sunset at the Grand Canyon of Arizona.

From the house one turned right to go into the centre of the town, and over a bridge into the Red Square, one of the largest squares in the world and for centuries the centre of Moscow life. It was the market-place, in the middle of which stands the tribunal, formerly the forum and place of execution. To enter the town one passed under the Ivernian Gates where, in a small chapel, the Ivernian Virgin had her shrine. The Bolsheviks were closing the churches as fast as they could and persecuting all forms of religion, but they failed to prevent the faithful from crossing themselves as they passed this sacred spot.

One morning I returned to the house to find it full of armed men, who announced that they were anarchists and had decided to make it their headquarters. Their leader was a crazy fellow, an ex-actor-manager of note (no crazier of course than

some actor-managers in London), by name Mammontov-Dalski, and between us there raged a verbal battle royal for about two hours. He maintained that there was enough room in the house for all of us, and I replied that there was not. He promised that I should not be interfered with; but, during the discussion, some of the anarchists purloined my "Pathfinder," and my man reported that a pair of my spare links had been stolen. It was a pair I prized very much, as they were left me by a friend who was killed early in the war.

These two incidents put my blood up, and I went off with a complaint to my old friend Commissar Muralov, and finished up by asking him, "Can't you keep order in Moscow?"

That put him on his mettle. Mammontov-Dalski was summoned to Muralov's office. He came, argued, and refused to move his anarchists. "Very well," said Muralov, and called up the garrison Commissar. "Send a battery of guns, four armoured cars, the second machine-gun brigade and a battalion of Lettish infantry to the Haritonenko House and surround it. If the anarchists who are occupying it at present are not out by 5 p.m. you are to open fire without further orders. I do not mind what damage you do to the house, but not one of the anarchists is to be left alive."

After a further discussion Mammontov-Dalski decided that he would consult with his confrères. I offered him a lift in my car, which he accepted, and when we reached the house we found that it was already surrounded and the troops in position.

This fact decided the anarchists to move on, and like a swarm of bees they descended on some other

unfortunate house. Some days later, however, they openly defied the Soviet authority and after a day's desperate street fighting were liquidated by Muralov. Mammontov-Dalski, however, escaped, but did not survive for long; some weeks later he was knocked down by a street car and killed.

CHAPTER XXIV

Soon after the anarchist incident I found it advisable to give up the Haritonenko House. For one thing its owners had decided to try and escape to Italy; for another the work I had begun against the German secret service necessitated my living in a place where it would not be quite so easy for anyone interested to keep account of my comings and goings. Moscow was terribly crowded and it was not easy to find accommodation, but by chance I heard of a suite of rooms which had just been vacated at the Union Hotel and hurried to take them.

Mr. Bruce Lockhart, the unofficial British representative to the Soviet Government, had taken up his residence in this hotel. He had been Consul-General in Moscow during the war, and no man could have been better fitted for the intricate work of the Mission. He knew every grade of Russian society inside out, spoke the language fluently and always had the courage of his convictions.

The revolution in Russia had brought about a collapse on the Eastern front, and the Brest Litovsk Treaty had enabled the Germans to transfer large forces from East to West, thereby rendering the position of the Allies in France more difficult.

There were great stores of war material accumulated at Murmansk and Archangel which would ultimately fall into the hands of the Germans unless protected. The Allies feared that if the Germans got possession

of Murmansk and Archangel they would use them as bases for submarines, and the occupation of these ports was obviously essential to the Allies. I think that one of the purposes of Mr. Lockhart's mission was to persuade the Bolsheviks that such an occupation was not to be interpreted as an unfriendly or an aggressive act.

This was no easy matter, as there was a school of thought which held that an Allied contingent landed in North Russia might hope to obtain assistance from all Russian elements dissatisfied with Soviet rule, and thus form not only an anti-German front, but also an anti-Bolshevik front throughout the northern provinces of Russia.

The British Government had not made up its mind what attitude to adopt towards the Bolsheviks. By my own department I was instructed to keep in touch with them, bearing in mind that they might come in on the Allied side. I therefore took an early opportunity of calling on M. Trotsky at the War Office. Trotsky knew all about the work I had been doing and received me well.

Lev Davidovich Trotsky, whose real name was Bronsky, was a man of about forty years of age. He was tall, dark and thin. He wore pince-nez, and fidgeted alternately with these and with the little tuft of a beard which sprouted on his chin. He was the son of middle-class Jews, born in South Russia and educated in Odessa. Behind him he already had a long revolutionary record. He was first arrested in 1898 and exiled to Siberia, whence he escaped to England. In 1905 he was prominent behind the street barricades of Moscow and proved himself a good leader of men. Again he was sent to Siberia

and again he escaped. He then settled in Switzerland where he became a pamphleteer, journalist, editor, author and war correspondent. During the war he was expelled from France and went to Spain, where he was arrested but allowed to proceed to America. As soon as the revolution broke out in 1917 he attempted to return to Russia but was arrested by the naval authorities in Canada. He was no ordinary man as can be seen from this very brief outline of his career. He was a brilliant orator, and though nervous and very highly strung gave remarkably little thought to the safety of his own person.

After our first talk he appointed me "Inspector of Aviation," and I was given extensive powers in that department. This brought me into close touch with the aviation personnel, gave me access to all aerodromes, and also linked me up with the Evacuation Committees. I was to give Trotsky advice on the formation of a new air force.

Two or three times a week I would spend half an hour with him discussing matters of aviation. He had marvellous powers of concentration, and the knack of putting his finger on the weak spot of anything and of scenting when information was not being given to him freely.

Apart from myself he had lessons every day from Russian experts on the subject of one military branch or another, and they all found in him the uncanny perception which I have mentioned. For four or five months Trotsky devoted all his time to the arts of war, and became a brilliant leader and founder of the Red Army—a queer fate for a man who had been for years one of the greatest anti-militarists in Europe.

Coming in and out of Trotsky's room I always had a few words with his most trusted secretary, Mlle. Eugenia Petrovna Sholopina. For brevity I will refer to Mlle. Sholopina as E. P.

E. P. was a very big woman. She must have been two or three inches above six feet in her stockings. At first glance one was apt to dismiss her as a very fine-looking specimen of Russian peasant womanhood, but closer acquaintance revealed in her depths of unguessed qualities. She was methodical and intellectual, a hard worker with an enormous sense of humour. She saw things quickly and could analyse political situations with the speed and precision with which an experienced bridge player analyses a hand of cards. I do not believe she ever turned away from Trotsky anyone who was of the slightest consequence, and yet it was no easy matter to get past that maiden unless one had that something. She was a glutton for work; morning after morning she would be at the office at nine o'clock and not leave it until well past midnight. It was no easy matter to get her to take a meal. One heard rumours of Bolsheviks living on the fat of the land. I dined (I mean ate at midday and midnight) with many of the prominent Bolsheviks, and I can honestly state that during the whole time I never had a really good meal. Their rations were the same as those on which the rest of the population of Moscow existed —poor black bread, cabbage soup, potatoes and tea—lots and lots of hot tea with possibly a lump of sugar. Meals were irregular, eaten while at work or just snatched between conferences.

One of the people with whom I was constantly in touch at this time was Mr. Arthur Ransome, the

correspondent of the *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian.* Ransome the essayist, novelist and successful defendant in the trial brought by Lord Alfred Douglas on his biography of Oscar Wilde, I had heretofore met only in print.

He himself interested me even more than I expected him to do. He had radical views which he never hesitated to express, and he was not exactly *persona grata* with British officials in Russia. This was partly due to a trick he had of entering into an argument and deliberately exciting the anger of his opponent—I suspect because he found that this was one of the easiest ways of getting at the truth, and Ransome was pre-eminently a journalist out for news. He was extremely well informed, intimate with the Bolsheviks and masterly in summing up a situation. He was a tall, lanky, bony individual with a shock of sandy hair, usually unkempt, and the eyes of a small, inquisitive and rather mischievous boy. He really was a lovable personality when you came to know him.

He lived on the same corridor as I did, but had no bathroom attached to his bedroom and so used to come in early every morning to take my suite. Our profoundest discussions and most heated arguments took place when Ransome was sitting in the bath and I wandering up and down my room dressing. Sometimes, when I had the better of an argument and his feelings were more than usually outraged, he would jump out of the water and beat himself dry like an angry gorilla. After that he would not come for his bath for two or three days, then we would meet and grin at each other, I would ask after the pet snake which lived in a large cigar box in his room,

and the following morning he would come in as usual and we would begin arguing again, the best of friends.

Lectures to Trotsky, theatre and supper parties did not interfere with the work I had planned. First of all I helped the Bolshevik military headquarters to organize an Intelligence Section for the purpose of identifying German units on the Russian front and for keeping the troop movements under close observation. Within a few weeks we had a complete net of agents working in all the Eastern territories occupied by the Austro-German army. Identifications came to me every day, and a copy of them was telegraphed to the War Office in London. Time and again I was able to warn London that a German division had left the Russian for the Western front.

Secondly, I organized a Bolshevik counter-espionage section to spy on the German secret service and Missions in Petrograd and Moscow. Our interception organization worked well. We deciphered German codes, opened their letters and read most of their correspondence without even being suspected.

Thirdly, the work that I was doing with Trotsky gave me power with the Evacuation Committee which was constituted for the purpose of saving war material from the threatened areas. The Bolsheviks had given orders that from the towns lying close to the area occupied by Germany military stores were to be systematically evacuated. For they feared that the Germans might find a pretext for making a further move into Russia, and securing the stores which they needed so sorely.

At first the evacuation proceeded without organization or judgment, and old limbers, wooden office

furniture, snow-shovels took precedence over machine-guns, ammunition and raw metals. However, once the Evacuation Committee was organized, we moved in three months thousands of tons of steel, aluminium, copper and other materials from under the noses of the Germans. Twenty-two aviation squadrons with machines and all spare parts were sent into the interior of Russia. The gold supply (part of which was afterwards captured at Kazan by the Czechoslovakians) was moved from Moscow to the Volga. In every one of these moves I had a finger. I cleared the Moscow Aviation Park and personally supervised the evacuation of one hundred and eight brand new Fiat 200-h.p. aeroplane engines.

All anti-Soviet sections of Russian society considered that the Bolsheviks had sold themselves to Germany, and those that were not pro-German became, merely out of hatred of the Bolsheviks, pro-Ally. For instance, the Social Revolutionary organization led by Kerensky's former Minister of War, Boris Savinkov, revived the Social Revolutionary and Terrorist centre which he had formed years before to combat Tsardom by assassination, and became a pivot of patriotic and anti-Bolshevik sentiment, eager to co-operate with the Allies and to nullify the effects of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk.

I have already mentioned that I had met Savinkov at Stavka, but it was at this period that I came really to know him. He was a short, dark man, whose penetrating eyes certainly had hypnotic qualities. In the days of the Tsar he had organized the Terrorist section and had personally planned and carried through nineteen successful political assassinations. He had never actually done the killing himself, not because

he was afraid for his own skin, but because he recognized that he was the brain of the group and therefore should not expose himself unless it was essential. Accordingly he always took up the second position, so that in the event of failure in the first instance he would be ready to hurl the second bomb or fire the fatal shot.

His pen name was Ropshin, and when not organizing assassinations he wrote many articles and a number of books of note. His best-known works are "The Pale Horse," dealing with the assassination of a Governor-General in the Tsar's days, and "The Black Horse," covering the period after the war when he was fighting the Bolsheviks from Poland. I had a long discussion with him on the subject of assassinations and asked him why it was that the Bolsheviks, who were so hated throughout Russia and were in such a minority, seemed to be safer from the attack of fanatics than the officials of the ancient régime? Savinkov maintained that it had always been easy to get hold of simple people and make them into fanatics. It was easy to instil the idea into their heads that they were carrying out a divine purpose by murdering representatives of the oppressors. But it was another matter to get conscientious revolutionists, however much they might dislike their political opponents, to use the weapon of assassination, for they would have tender memories of the many years during which they had worked with the Bolsheviks. Savinkov himself confessed that on two occasions he felt that it was absolutely necessary for the good of Russia to kill his colleague and leader—the Prime Minister Kerensky. But he could not bring himself to draw his revolver and do the deed,

and bitterly had he regretted his weakness since. On the other hand it was very difficult to use the so-called "White Russians," the officers of the Imperial army, who hated the Bolsheviks. From childhood they had been taught that murder was a sin and a crime; to kill anyone in cold blood was anathema to them. No matter how gallant and brave they were, men who had received decorations equivalent to our V.C., men who had calmly captured machine-guns single-handed or brought in comrades under heavy fire at the risk of their lives, could not bring themselves even for the good of their country to become assassins.

I never liked Boris Savinkov. My distrust of him was a matter of frequent contention between myself and Sidney Reilly, who had a blind belief in the man and spent a fortune in helping him to fight Bolshevism.

It is impossible now to know what was going on in Savinkov's mind. After years of waging the bitterest war against the Bolsheviks, in 1924 he went into Russia by arrangement with them and treacherously betrayed his cause. A trial was staged in which Savinkov solemnly recanted. He was condemned to death but the sentence immediately was commuted to a nominal term of imprisonment, during which he enjoyed all the privileges of a free man. He died in mysterious circumstances in 1925.

Savinkov's organization at the time of which I am writing had its own secret service, part of which was concentrated against the Germans in Russia. I was constantly in touch with this section. To be completely independent of the Allied Missions, the Bolsheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, I organized a secret organization of my own which was divided

into three sections; the first, for the identification of German and Austrian units, acted as a check on the information I obtained from the Bolshevik Military Section and the Social Revolutionaries; the second, a courier service, made me independent of the post and telegraph office. This was necessary because the Bolsheviks were controlling and watching all communications, and because I realized that it was only a matter of time before the Allied Missions and I myself would be completely cut off from Murmansk and Finland unless I had a special organization ready. The third was a special section of patriotic Russian officers operating within the German lines, arming peasants, derailing troop and supply trains on their way to Germany and generally harrying the Germans by every means in their power; this required arms, money, passes and, most of all, direction, with all of which I supplied them.

Quite naturally it was not very long before the German secret service had a fair inkling of my activities and the first attempt to assassinate me was made at the Moscow Aviation Park.

I was in the habit of driving up alone, practically every day, to see for myself how the evacuation work was going on. I had noticed that at the place where I left my car a man was always loitering and gradually the suspicion dawned on me that he was watching me. I always stopped my car outside a large, long warehouse with doors opening its whole length. Here the Fiat aeroplane engines were stored, and here they were loaded on trucks run in from the far side of the building.

Then one morning my watcher acted. I drove up to the warehouse as usual and leaped up on the plat-

form. At that instant I saw the watcher's arm go up and next moment a bomb had dropped at my feet. By the greatest good fortune it failed to explode, and I took to my heels down the platform with the bomber hard behind me revolver in hand.

I slipped into the shed. Alongside the door there was a large wooden cask packed with millions of match-sticks, and on the top of it was a large brick. I seized the brick and stood up against the door. As my assailant rushed into the door I smashed him full in the face, and he went down to the floor with the whole of his face a crimson mess. Into this mess with all my might I hurled the brick. By his side lay a Mauser-Parabellum revolver. I had long wanted one of these, but as they were only issued by the German army I had been unable to obtain one. I slipped it off its lanyard, detached its wooden case and then made off to my car.

I did not report the incident to the Bolshevik authorities. It would have only meant endless cross-examinations, inquiries and fuss, and I might have even found myself charged with the murder of my assailant. I never knew whether I had killed him or not, but at the time I sincerely hoped I had.

The whole incident had rather shaken my nerve and I was feeling far from happy. I needed recreation and that evening I took my troubles to the Bat. This was Balieff's famous cellar where the "Chauve Souris" made its bow to the world.

It was a long, narrow room, a converted cellar, at the far end of which was a stage with a number of boxes around. On the floor of the hall were tables and chairs, and meals were supplied to guests throughout the performance.

I have often seen the "Chauve Souris" since, in London, and Paris and New York, but I do not think that the company has ever been as good, or the production so ambitious and artistic as it was in the Moscow cellar. Balieff was not the *confrère* behind the curtain, as he has since become, but the genial host who was at one moment on the stage, the next mixing with his guests on the floor of the auditorium, and a moment later making an announcement from one of the side boxes. I knew him and all his company and always had a great reception whenever I visited them. It was the custom of Balieff to announce to the hall various visitors whom he thought to be of interest, and he did this in a whimsical and peculiar way of his own. He had no fear of the Bolsheviks and was running an open house, serving food and wine to anyone who could pay for it. The place in those dark, dreary days was always gay, and members of the theatrical profession who visited it were invariably called upon to give an impromptu turn.

That evening I took four great friends of mine to the Bat. When the sun had already risen, and my depression was left behind me, we drove home.

CHAPTER XXV

When half a dozen secret service organizations are working simultaneously in the same country and some of them happen to be Allies, curious coincidences, overlappings, misunderstandings, intrigues and funny things generally are bound to occur. During the war this was the case in France, America and in neutral countries. This was the case in Russia.

One of the most amusing I recollect was the intrigue over what are known as the Sissons documents. These documents purport to show the close liaison existing between the Bolsheviks and the German High Command. Many of them are natural communications between the German High Command and the Bolsheviks, but some of the more startling—those indeed upon which rested the whole proof of the alleged inspiration of the Bolsheviks by the German General Staff—are undoubtedly forgeries.

They were first bought at a very high figure by one of the Allied secret service organizations. It was felt that such irrefutable proof of Bolshevik knavery would be of the greatest value, and the documents were kept locked behind the stoutest safe door and only shown to the *élite*.

When Sidney Reilly had just arrived from England he and I examined them and brought a friend of ours into consultation on the question of their genuineness. An expert proved that most of these documents had been written on the same typewriter, which, as they purported to have come from various places many hundreds of miles apart, was distinctly odd.

It was no good holding them, but a great deal of money had been spent on them which bade fair to be lost altogether. Accordingly they were put on the market again and eventually bought by Mr. Sissons for the American secret service, at a price which repaid the other secret service organization in full.

The genuineness or falsity of these documents are still hotly debated questions, used differently by different people to prove the most contradictory contentions. I can say at once and definitely that the more important of them are forgeries, for afterwards, with Reilly's help, I succeeded in running to earth the man who forged them.

I first heard of Sidney Reilly as a cipher: and knew of him only as "S.T.I.," his secret service name. He had been sent out to tackle the new situation which had arisen with the advent of the Bolsheviks. Next I heard of him under one of his assumed names, and finally was introduced to him as Sidney Reilly. He was a dark, well-groomed, very foreign-looking man, who spoke English, Russian, French and German perfectly though, curiously enough, with a foreign accent in each case.

At our first meeting we took a liking to each other. I found that he had an amazing grasp of the actualities of the situation and that he was a man of action. Reilly knew of my activities. We were for all practical purposes in two separate departments, but agreed that whenever possible we would co-operate.

It had become obvious to us, after the Anglo-French troops had been landed on the Murmansk coast, in the spring of 1918, that there was practically no hope of the Allies reaching an understanding with the Bolsheviks. The campaign in the north must

not be regarded as an isolated part of the world war, but as a definite part of the Allies' plan for the defeat of the Central Powers. Lenin and Trotsky, however, were convinced that the expeditions of the British to Archangel and of the Japanese to Vladivostock were actually aimed at themselves, with the purpose of driving them out of power. A few days after the landing of the Allies at Murmansk an order was published by the Bolsheviks prohibiting Allied officers from leaving the towns in which they were living, and generally restricting the freedom of their movements and stopping the sending of code telegrams, diplomatic or otherwise. It was then that I put my courier service, already prepared, into action.

Savinkov had determined to raise a counter-revolution at Yaroslav, a town some two hundred and fifty miles north of Moscow, with a special detachment of picked troops, and I was kept informed of all his plans.

By this time I was living a double life. Part of the day I would be in uniform, going about my occupation in the "Pathfinder" and living as a British officer; the rest of the time I was dressed in mufti visiting my agents on foot. I was looking ahead, too, and beginning to organize secret quarters, which would be very necessary for me once the Bolsheviks attempted to restrict my activities.

Meantime I renewed the activities of my organization in Ukrainia. The German army was using the area as a sort of rest camp for their wearied divisions from the Western front, a sanatorium where for five or six weeks whole brigades were turned loose on the countryside, properly fed, and well looked after. Then they would be marched back to Germany by

easy stages and during the march drilled into efficient fighting troops once more. The more we could harry these men the better.

I had a splendid band of irregular troops composed of ex-Russian officers. We used to organize surprise night raids on German camps, fire volley after volley into the tents or billets and fade away before the Germans could organize a resistance.

The Germans promptly doubled their guards, and made the carrying of arms by any unauthorized person a capital offence. Gun-running forthwith became a most complicated and exciting undertaking. We armed peasants to resist the Germans when they tried to collect grain. The Germans retaliated with severe reprisals till the whole of Ukrainia became a seething cauldron of unrest. General Eichorn was assassinated in the streets of Kieff. Hundreds of patriotic Russians gave their lives as willingly and freely in the fight against Germany as did our men on the Western front. On one occasion I led a band of my men into Ukrainia carrying machine-guns and ammunition. When delivering our stores I heard that a raid on a German battery position had been organized and I was asked to go with them to see the fun. I was far from eager but policy demanded that I should accept the invitation. About twenty of us, dressed as peasants and taking with us two low wooden peasant carts, left our secret quarters in the forest and proceeded for about eleven miles inland. The peasant carts were covered with hay and beneath the hay were two machine-guns. As soon as the raid was over the carts were to be abandoned and the band would return under the shelter of the forest.

It was early morning when we came on the

German battery position. There were two or three sentries on duty, but the rest of the camp was still asleep. In two sections, each one carrying a gun, our party approached to within about seventy yards of the Germans. It seemed to me as if our guns would never come into action, but at last one burst out—rat-tat-tat-tat—and then stopped. It had jammed before the second had time to open fire, and I looked upon ourselves as lost. However, number two came into action and number one was cleared. We poured four belts into that camp, sprayed and damaged the guns and then, dragging our own machine-guns away, split up into parties of four and took separate routes back to the frontier.

Soon after this raid a second attempt was made by the German secret service on my life.

For the public and uniformed part of my existence I had taken an office quite near the Grand Theatre. One afternoon a Madame Hermann was shown in, and in a very nervous state sat down opposite me at my writing-desk. After much hesitation she told me that she had come to warn me that there were plots against my life, and to beg me to give up the work I was doing and to return to England. I laughed at her fears but asked for the source of her information. This, she said, she could not tell, and if I refused to take her seriously the only thing she could do was to go. So I rose from my table and escorted her to the door. As I sat down to my work again I pondered on what lay behind her visit, and the more I thought of it the less I liked it. Suddenly my attention was drawn to a steady ticking coming from the opposite side of my writing-desk, as if a cheap alarm clock had been left on the floor. I got up, went

round to the other side of the table, and peered into the well of the writing-desk. And there I saw a small attaché case from where the ticking was coming, and recollected that Madame Hermann had carried just such a thing with her when she arrived, nor did I remember that she had it when she went. I did not stop to investigate. I was pretty certain that it was some sort of an infernal machine. At the Lubianka I had a friend in the Cheka who was an expert at explosives. I ordered my assistant and my man out of the building and, jumping into the "Pathfinder," went round to find my friend.

He was delighted to make the investigation. "If it is a time-bomb," he said, "and she only left you twenty minutes ago, we ought to have anyway thirty or forty minutes to spare before it goes up." I told him that I would rather not trust to such a chance and flatly refused to go back to my office. In marched the brave man himself, opened the case, found there was a time-bomb, disconnected the mechanism, and came out with a broad smile all over his face.

"I think I am entitled to this as a souvenir," he said, and I was only too glad to give it to him. After that my man inspected all visitors closely before they were allowed to enter my room.

I was finding my work a constant strain on nerves and mind. At the end of each day, when tired and spiritless, I felt that the best I could hope for was imprisonment in the near future, or death in some violent form or other if I was not very careful. But a good night's sleep generally enabled me to take a more rosy view of life on the following morning.

The Bolsheviks had called the fifth All Russian Soviet Congress to assemble at the Grand Theatre of

Moscow on July 4, 1918. Important policies had to be ratified by the Congress and it was an occasion for a great parade of the Bolsheviks. The Diplomatic Corps were invited. The boxes on the left of the stage were reserved for the Allied diplomats; those on the right for the diplomats of the Central Powers. The Executive Committee of the Bolshevik party sat on the stage and speakers spoke in front of their table and came on and off from the wings. The vast auditorium was so packed that not only was there not a single vacant seat, but the gangways and all available standing room was filled. The air was electric. Everyone who entered the auditorium had his pass carefully examined and was thoroughly searched for firearms or bombs. The corridors were patrolled every few yards by Lettish guards armed to the teeth and carrying hand-grenades.

Comrade Sverdlov was chairman. I have never known a man better at the task. A small man with a tremendously deep bass voice, he was able in any meeting to command respect for the chair.

Outwardly the Social Revolutionaries were still working with the Bolsheviks and over half of the delegates in the hall were members of that party. From the very opening it was clear that the meeting was to be a battle royal between the Social Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks. Small fry from each party made uninteresting speeches, but each representative spoke until the feelings of the opposing side were lashed into a foam of fury. Then Trotsky made a masterful if somewhat technical speech which seemed to have the support of nearly everyone in the house. He was dealing with the achievements of the revolution, the need of a Red Army and the progress which had been made during the last nine months.

Opposite my box was the German Ambassador, Count Mirbach, with whom sat the Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish ministers. In the other boxes opposite us were their naval and military attachés, secretaries and other officials, among them Rudolph Bauer, head of the German secret service in Russia. I was sitting in Mr. Lockhart's box and he was surrounded by his staff. Above us was the French Ambassador, the American representative, and other representatives of the Allies, and in another box were the ministers of the neutral countries.

When Lenin took the floor a shiver of expectation ran through the packed house. He walked about during the whole time he was speaking, sometimes away from his audience, sometimes forwards, according as he wanted to make his point; sometimes he crossed from one side of the stage to the other—talking all the while—a trick which hypnotized his listeners into following every word he said. He was supremely arrogant in his attitude to his followers, contemptuous of his opponents and baited the representatives of the Allied and Central Powers alike.

One of the queer figures in that very ill-assorted assembly was Captain Sadoul, who, being a well-known socialist, had been sent at the outbreak of the revolution to join the French Military Mission. Sadoul had quarrelled with the head of the Mission, had defied his superior officer, taken off his uniform and was about to join the Bolshevik party. To attend this conference he had dressed with supreme care, and wore a silk hat, frock-coat and white kid gloves. As interpreter he had a Russian princess who was dressed as fashionably as he, and they certainly made a ludicrous sight among the poorly dressed proletarian horde in

the auditorium. Sadoul became a thorough Bolshevik and at one time directed Russian troops against the French at Odessa. A year later he was tried, in absence, by a French court-martial in Paris and condemned to death. For some years he kept away from Paris and then boldly returned and brought an action to set aside the verdict of the court. Naturally he was arrested, re-tried and condemned to death, but the sentence was commuted to banishment from Paris. Once again he defied the court and after a nine days' wonder returned to Paris and is living there to this day.

I always felt sorry for Sadoul and think he was tried beyond his strength. Nor can I understand why foreign governments feel that they are obliged to send as their representatives to countries who have gone through a revolution men of advanced views in their own country. The Bolsheviks never made that mistake; they have always sent sound Communists as their representatives abroad.

Spiridonova followed Lenin, and her speech was almost the means of overthrowing the Bolsheviks. Spiridonova was a slender, pale wisp of a little woman and looked utterly uninteresting. Yet she was the heroine of the day, one of the principal leaders of the Social Revolutionaries and a trusted spokeswoman of the Russian peasantry. As a young girl she had shot and killed a particularly brutal Governor General. The General's bodyguard pounced upon her and for some days she was ill-treated and terribly used by her captors. This was not denied by the old régime, who held a special court of inquiry into the treatment she had received. Horribly battered, she was tried, condemned to death, but because of the way in which she had been treated the sentence was commuted and she

was exiled to Siberia for life. There she fought tuberculosis and, at the outbreak of the revolution in 1917, she was still alive and made her way back to Petrograd. Her family put her to bed and thanked a merciful providence for returning their loved one to die at home. But Spiridonova had no intention of dying and within a few weeks was back on the political platform.

She opened her speech with an attack on Trotsky for having Admiral Stchastny shot after a farce of a trial in camera. Spiridonova was bitterly opposed to capital punishment and to trials in camera. Then she attacked the Brest Litovsk Peace Treaty and the terms which had been imposed on Russia by the Germans. She spoke in a low, monotonous tone without gesture or any kind of movement; she stood absolutely motionless and looked rather like a tired schoolteacher addressing a class of naughty boys. After a time the toneless voice penetrated into one's very marrow and made it an agony to listen to her. I realized then why it has sometimes been found necessary to cut a woman's throat to stop her noise. Suddenly, towards the end of her speech, she turned to the boxes occupied by the embassies of Germany and her allies and shook her fist at them, declaring that "Russia would never submit itself to become a German colony or a State dependent on Germany." It was an amazing sight; I was wild with joy and had the greatest difficulty in preventing myself cheering with the rest of the house, but to do so would have been a gross breach of etiquette. I must say that Count Mirbach and everyone in the boxes of the Central Empires took it remarkably well, and did not flicker an eyelid.

Spiridonova's speech really terminated the meeting

for the day. On the following afternoon, when leaving his house, Count Mirbach was assassinated by a Social Revolutionary, Savinkov started the revolt at Yaroslav and there was an insurrection of the Social Revolutionaries and four days' street fighting in Moscow.

On the morning of that fateful day there was just a short session. The house was as packed as it had been on the previous day. Suddenly there was an ear-splitting explosion, followed immediately by two others. The whole house rose in panic. Sverdlov crashed his fist with all his might on to the rostrum before him. "Order please, order please," boomed out his mighty voice. "Kindly take your seats. I must have order," and the panic was completely quenched.

It appeared that one of the Lettish guards, bored at standing in the empty corridor, had been making experiments with one of his hand-grenades. It had gone off. Two other guards, hearing the explosion and seeing pieces of the body of their friend lying about, hurled two other bombs down the corridor on the chance of someone being there.

Following this excitement the session was raised for an hour. I took the opportunity of returning to my hotel, where one of my agents told me of the assassination of Mirbach.

I jumped into a car and drove round to his house to confirm the story. All the blinds were drawn. There was ample evidence outside.

A couple of days later Arthur Ransome and I went round to see Radek, the brilliant Polish journalist. He told us with expansive glee that at last a suitable occupation had been found for Russian generals of the old régime. They would be formed

into detachments and trained to shed crocodile tears and follow correctly in the wake of the assassinated ambassadors of Capitalism. Radek was a queer-looking being, with a straggling beard which grew all round the side of his face and under his chin and down his throat—his upper lip and chin were hairless though they did not look as if he ever used a razor. This hair-effect always made me think of him as a sunflower. He had the most extraordinary ideas of dress and at the time was wearing a pair of very smart riding-breeches, leather top-boots three or four sizes too large for him, and an amazing tunic which did not fit anywhere. He was a consummate actor and a very clever mimic, and amused us with representations of the various members of the German Embassy as they would behave when protesting to Lenin about the Mirbach outrage.

I had called on Radek because of an article he had written describing the execution of some Communists by the British authorities in Murmansk. The article was pure propaganda and I ascertained from Murmansk by telegraph that there had been no executions.

Radek made little of my complaint, adding that if he had time he would put the matter right by a disclaimer. He then started speculating about my fate. Obviously the British were going to land at Archangel and he foresaw a debate in the near future as to whether I should be held as a hostage and at some time or other exchanged for a worthy Communist, or clapped into prison as a dangerous enemy, or executed to show Bolshevik contempt for officers of a capitalistic power. The joke was far too near probability for me to enter into a discussion with any feeling of enjoyment.