CHAPTER XXVI

THE Allies had originally planned to occupy Archangel and the surrounding country in the middle of July, but later had postponed the move until August 2, 1918. Savinkov felt very bitter over this postponement, for somehow or other he had learned their original intentions and had timed the revolt at Yaroslav to coincide with the coming of the Allies, with whom he then expected to join forces.

Savinkov's force put up a gallant stand against overwhelming odds and held out sixteen days before they finally capitulated, though not before Savinkov had time to escape. I felt very certain that as soon as the Allies landed at Archangel the Bolsheviks would try to intern me, as I was not a member of Mr. Lockhart's diplomatic mission, and I prepared for this eventuality. It was decided that Sidney Reilly and I should remain in Moscow after the Allied Mission's departure. He was to carry on his work against the Bolsheviks, and I was to continue my activities in Ukraine against the German army and also keep my courier service going. I felt quite cheerful. Provided that the Allies landed in sufficient numbers at Archangel I could give them any amount of help and possibly even the chaotic situation which had been created by the Bolsheviks could be cleared.

I had of course forgotten that it had never been the policy of the Allies to land a sufficient force. I was thinking that with twenty to thirty thousand men we should have a fair chance of carrying out what we wanted to do. I leave it to the reader's

imagination what I felt when I heard that we were proposing to land for a start a force of just over a thousand men. I wanted the landing postponed until it could be effected with a sufficient force.

My sole means of communication with the Allied commander in Northern Russia was my courier chain through which it took twelve to fifteen days to get a message. My only hope of holding up the landing at Archangel was to see the General Officer in Command personally, and to reach him in time it would be necessary to go up by special train. The only person who could authorize a special was Trotsky, and I therefore decided to try to persuade him to give me the special. I explained that the business calling me to Murmansk was urgent and assumed that he would grant my request. Far from doing so he immediately suspected me of trying to escape. I undertook to give my parole to return to Moscow, and he laughed at me. I spoke of the many permits he had given me from time to time to do work for our common interest, and observed that I had never abused Soviet confidence. He looked at the passes which I held out to him, and said, "That is all over now," and tore them in half.

I said, "Thank you!" turned my back on him and left the room in a fury, slamming the door hard behind me. I had no sooner returned to my room at the Union Hotel than the telephone rang, and the voice of one of my agents in the Cheka came over the wire with the intelligence that an order had been given by the Minister of War for me to be arrested immediately and that a warrant was even then being issued.

I put down the receiver and with regret looked round my room and possessions. There were my

kit and sword, my photographs and favourite books, one or two prized decorations, various small things I had bought to take back to England and souvenirs which I had picked up. The Mauser revolver so recently acquired and my own Webley-Scott—all these things had to be left behind, shed so as not to encumber me in my new life as a spy.

I had already decided that I would not risk carrying a revolver, for nine times out of ten a revolver is of no earthly use and will seldom get a man out of a tight corner. On the other hand, however small it may be, it is a bulky thing and is easily found when one's person is searched; it was illegal to carry firearms. I had decided to take, just for my own comfort, my sword-stick, though I knew that under the circumstances in which I should live I would never use it.

Then I had a momentary but first-class attack of nerves; in half an hour I should be a spy outside the law with no redress if caught, just a summary trial and then up against a wall. What a fool I was . . . bound to be caught. Why take off my uniform? It was a crazy thing to do. What good could I do, anyway? "Steady," I said to myself, "you are bound to feel like this. It is just like going over the top, quite natural. Come on, get a move on or you will never go."

I did not risk taking the lift. The Cheka sometimes acted very quickly. Instead I ran down the staff-stairs and out into a yard. A few doors away from the hotel there was a very large apartment house with three or four entrances and many small flats. For the last two months one of these flats had been mine. Nominally an elderly Russian woman lived there and kept it tidy for me. She was a dear,

deaf old lady who had lost both her sons early in the war. She knew that I was doing some political work, but never asked any questions. I went to my room, changed into a suit of mufti which I had worn when going through Scandinavia, gave my kindly friend six months' rent and a sum in addition which would enable her to live for some time, and told her that she would not see me again.

I went out by a different entrance from the one I had used in entering, casually glanced round to see that I was not being followed, stepped into a cab and drove to the other end of Moscow. Here I scrambled on to a tram which was already packed to suffocation point and travelled by a roundabout way to yet another part of the town where I rented a small flat.

It was a flat which had been selected by the chief of my courier service. He was a Russian cavalry officer who had served with great distinction in the early days of the war, a patriot, fearless, a first-class judge of men and as good an organizer as I could have wished for. It was essential to have a place where the couriers could come on return from their various missions, where they would rest for two or three nights in safety and where he could visit them daily. One of his acquaintances was a lady, the wife of one of his brother officers who had been killed early in the war. For reasons best known to herself she had taken to the oldest profession in the world, and had been making quite a fair living on the Tverskaya Ulitza, the Bond Street of Moscow. But she was a patriot, and she gladly undertook to put two rooms of her four-roomed flat exclusively at my friend's disposal, for which naturally he paid her a good rent. The value of such a flat was enormous. Even under

the old régime she had been registered by the local police. Later she had duly registered her calling at the district commissariat, and the House Committee knew all about her. What was more natural than that unknown men should constantly be coming and going in and out of her flat? She was absolutely reliable and our weary couriers could rest in safety in one of our rooms there.

With a beating heart I rang the bell. A rather good-looking woman in a kimono answered the door. "I am Mr. Holtzmann," I said. This was the name I had arranged to assume when using her flat. "Ah, yes;" she admitted me and pointed to a door at the end of the corridor, and without more ado returned to her own room. I went into the room she had indicated, a small chamber with a bed and a telephone. First of all I called up the chief of my couriers. "I am here," I said; "come round at once." Then I telephoned Reilly, warned him that in all probability a warrant for his arrest would also be shortly issued and advised him to make tracks for his secret lodgings.

Then I put my hand under the bed by the pillow, and drew out a small trunk. In it was a complete change of clothes made to fit me. There were three or four dark blue Russian shirts which buttoned at the neck, some linen underclothing, a pair of cheap ready-made black trousers, peasant-made socks such as were on sale on the stalls in the market, a second-hand pair of top-boots and a peak cap which had already been well used.

I dressed myself hastily. I put my English suit, underclothing, tie, socks and boots into the stove; I laid a match to the kindling wood and shut the stove door. Ten minutes later my London clothes

were burnt. Presently Z., the chief of my couriers, arrived. He brought with him my new passport made out in the name of George Bergmann, the description on which tallied with my appearance. We had prepared and forged this passport some weeks before and tried it out by sending a volunteer with it from Moscow to Petrograd and back again. Thus recent seals and visas from the Cheka gave it an appearance of authority. It had taken me long to decide on my new name. I hated giving up the name of Hill, and finally decided to get as near to it as I could in German. That is why I chose Berg, the equivalent for Hill, and tacked on the "mann" to make it quite certain that I was of German descent. For, while my Russian was almost word-perfect, I did from time to time make mistakes, and it was much better for me to claim that I was a Russian of German extraction born in the Baltic provinces. It would be almost impossible for the Bolsheviks to verify such details even if they wanted to, for the Baltic provinces were then occupied by the German army.

Z. had brought a cheap mackintosh, a hundred Russian cigarettes, and the latest reports from various of our agents, which I put into the bag, and then I left the flat as George Bergmann, looking very different already from the Mr. Holtzmann that had entered less than an hour before.

Z. and I had agreed that it would be better and safer that he should not know my future headquarters, but we arranged two other meeting places in case our present rendezvous was raided.

Altogether I had eight secret flats or rooms in Moscow for the use of myself and my organization, as well as a small wooden country residence forty

miles away, which was to be a final retreat and refuge if Moscow grew too hot for me or any of my agents. Each one of the places had to be kept going and had to have a completely plausible and natural *raison d'être* for its existence.

Feeling rather awkward in my new clothes, but much happier within, I decided to walk to the house where my new headquarters were fixed. This house was in the Zamoskaretchye district, situated on the south bank of the Moskva River, in the poorer quarter of the town.

Weeks before, when I had first realized that I might have to go underground, I had discussed the matter with my very competent and devoted secretary, Evelyn, who was *au courant* with all the work I had been doing. Evelyn was partly English, but had been educated in Russia, and besides English and Russian she knew German, French and Italian perfectly. She was a brilliant musician and could turn her hand to anything which required skill.

We had decided that our best chance of success was to become people of the lower middle class and to live an entirely double life. She had immediately obtained a situation as a school-teacher in one of the mushroom schools which had been founded by the Bolsheviks. This gave her the necessary papers and also the very coveted ration cards from the Bolshevik organization; coveted because, without cards or enormous sums of money, it was impossible to get food.

Then, as a spinster teacher, she had rented a small four-roomed house, which she had furnished with the barest necessities, picking up sticks of furniture in the various markets of Moscow in the guise of a poor young woman. Everyone was selling furniture in order to be able to buy food.

It was essential that the people about us should be entirely trustworthy. Evelyn and I discussed the matter and decided to ask two friends of ours, girls of English birth but Russian upbringing, to join our organization. Sally and Annie both jumped at the chance. They had brothers, one in the machine-gun corps and the other in the tanks, fighting on the Western front. Both had been wounded, but were back in France and the sisters were aching to do something. Sally was one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen. She had raven-black hair, a peach-like complexion and the most sensitive, pale, transparent hands. Annie, her sister, was not so good looking, but was a plump, merry, good-natured soul.

We had decided that Sally should become cook to this establishment of ours, and do all the housework, cooking and buying what was necessary. Annie was to start a dressmaking business. She was clever with her needle and could knock up blouses and re-make costumes. At a dressmaking establishment it was only natural that there would be people coming and going. We wanted another ally to run messages for me and deliver the parcels to Annie's customers. After a great deal of thought between us we decided to enrol a young Russian girl we knew, an orphan who had just reached the mature age of seventeen. Vi was a tall blonde with blue eyes, and the most appealing ways, and time proved that she was also full of pluck.

The girls had taken up their residence about a month earlier; Evelyn went to her school every morning at 8.30 and returned at four. Annie was working up quite a good little business. Vi ran the errands, and Sally stood in food queues waiting her turn, scrubbed the floors of the house and did

the cooking. They all had forged Russian passports, and never spoke anything but Russian. They told me that they had to arrange to fine themselves when they first started, for they were constantly breaking into English. Whenever they broke the rule they would go without sugar for twenty-four hours.

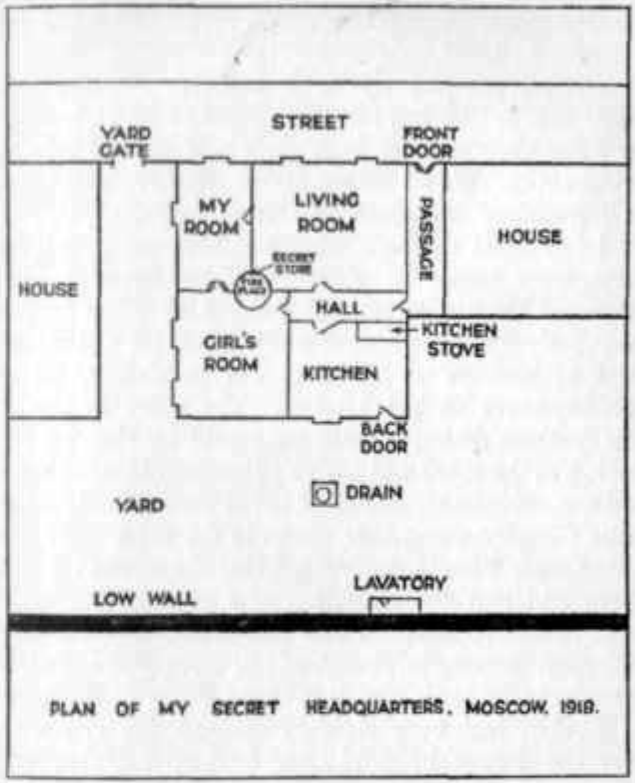
I was to take up my residence in this house as a lodger.

I had never been inside the house, but knew exactly where it was, had passed it many times, and knew all about it. It was a low, single-storied, white-walled building, in a block containing many other houses just like it. It had two great advantages, a front door opened on the street, and a back door led out into a large yard shared by the other houses around it, through which there was a separate entrance into the road. The wall at the end of the yard was low and, if necessary, one could easily slip over it.

I had decided to go in through the back entrance. As I reached the house and turned into the yard the light was already fading. Just before I reached the back door it was opened, a woman took three steps into the yard and then pitched a bucket of dirty water into a grated drain. I gasped. It was Sally, the beautiful Sally transformed into a barefooted slut who wore a begrimed white blouse and some sort of a skirt. Her hair straggled in a plait down her back, and her hands—her beautiful transparent hands—were red and swollen and the nails caked with dirt.

"Good evening," I said in Russian. "I am the lodger Bergmann, may I come in?"

"Yes," she said, blowing her nose in the way noses were blown before handkerchiefs were invented, and added, "I have a bad cold."



PLAN OF MY SECRET HEADQUARTERS, MOSCOW, 1918.

I entered a tiny dark kitchen in which was a long typical Russian cooking-stove. The kitchen led into a tiny windowless hall with four doors, the front door being on the right-hand side. Another door led into the living-room, which had two double windows looking out on the street, and communicated with a long, narrow, one-windowed chamber in which I was to live. A communicating door led from my room into the girls' room, which was also the dressmaking

establishment. From this room, too, a door led into the tiny hall.

Evelyn jumped up as I entered. "Girls," she called softly; "he has come!" Annie and Vi bounded in, Sally slammed the back door and rushed into the living-room. We all looked at one another and grinned, feeling excited, unnatural and rather foolish.

I explained to them what had happened, and then they were eager to show me the rooms. These were quickly inspected, and I chuckled when I found that Sally—to keep absolutely true to character—slept as women of her class did in Russia, on the cooking-stove in the kitchen. As soon as the fire was damped down, a mattress would be thrown over the top of the stove and with a pillow and blanket Sally's bed was complete. She slept in her clothes and had got quite friendly with other cooks in the yard. My heart rather sank when I discovered that there was no bath-room and that the sanitation was outside and of the most primitive kind. Little things like that are over-looked when one is planning big adventures, but oh, the misery of having to live under those conditions!

Evelyn had very cleverly smuggled a typewriter into the house in a clothes basket, together with the secret service codes. Two short floor-boards had been taken up along the inner wall of the living-room, and there the typewriter and codes were housed. In my room they had worked loose some tiles from the heating-stove, put our reserve of money in the cavity and replaced the tiles with putty.

"To-morrow," said Evelyn, "I will give your pass-port to the *dvornik* and tell him that you are suffering from malaria and will not be out for some days."

Dvorniks, or yard porters, combine the functions

of the French concierge, the American choreman, the English hall-porter, and act as a sort of subordinate police official. No one is allowed to stay in a house without the *dvornik* being informed and given the pass-port of the visitor or, as in my case, the lodger, which he takes to the local commissariat for registration. The Bolsheviks had complicated the existence of people like myself by forming House Committees which, under the guidance of the Cheka, pried into the doings and sayings of the people living in every block. The House Committees also issued the ration cards.

I partook of some food, not having eaten since a very hurried early morning breakfast, and then I analysed the reports which Z. had given me and wrote out dispatches to the War Office in London, a copy of which would also be sent to the British force at Murmansk.

Evelyn and I did the coding. The code had been invented by a genius at the Secret Service headquarters in London, and of the many I have seen was the easiest and safest for a secret service man to carry. It consisted of a pocket dictionary and a cipher which was on a tiny card and could be easily hidden. As soon as a message was coded the figures were typed out in duplicate. Evelyn had thought of every-thing. Common but heavy curtains over the windows and doors dulled the click of the typewriter. When coding messages we always observed the same ritual. The metal cover of the typewriter was turned upside down, with a large bottle of petrol at its side and the codes to hand. If the house was suddenly raided messages and codes were to be pitched into the type-writer cover, the petrol poured over them and set alight.

Our story to the *dvornik* about my malaria was

framed with the purpose of giving me time to grow a beard. I was very well known in Moscow. For the last six months I had been driving in a conspicuous car, dressed in a conspicuous uniform, and although I knew that my clothes made a big difference, any one of the people I had been meeting constantly would have no difficulty in recognizing me.

On the following morning, therefore, and for the first time since I started shaving, I did not use a razor. The next five days were a nightmare of torment. I could not go anywhere but was confined to the tiny house, a circumstance which almost drove me mad after the active life I had been leading. All news came to me second-hand, messages from my destruction gangs and from Z. being brought to me by Vi. I had sent my chauffeur a letter telling him that I had gone back to England, enclosing him six months' salary and asking him to hand over the "Pathfinder" to the British Consul. And then all I could do was to sit and wait patiently for my beard to grow. The growing of a beard in itself was a torment. First of all, the beastly thing was of a brilliant red colour. Now, my hair is a darkish brown, and has no red in it, and I took an instant aversion to this red growth. Then as the hairs sprouted they turned round and bit my face and covered my skin with a sore and irritable rash. I felt dirty and miserable.

What with inaction and beard-growing I became surly and bad-tempered and nearly drove poor Evelyn to distraction. I felt ashamed of myself, for the girls had all taken up their various parts without uttering a grumble. On the fifth evening that blessed woman Evelyn returned with a large box of Havana cigars—they were Bock's Rara-Avis—and a bottle

of old brandy. Never in my life have I smoked such perfect cigars or drunk such excellent brandy. At the end of a week I decided that if I kept to our part of the town it would be safe for me to venture into the streets. Luckily, quite close to our house was the Tretyakov Picture Gallery, and for hours I studied Vereshtchagin's wonderful war pictures and gloried in the portraits of Ryepin. He has a large picture depicting Cossacks of the XVIth century preparing a defiant letter to the Sultan of Turkey. This somehow or other brought me no end of comfort. A few days later I sent Vi to one of Reilly's girls, suggesting that he and I should meet and appointing a seat in one of the parks for our rendezvous. I shall never forget my first glimpse of him. He too had grown a beard, and he did look an ugly devil. I told him so and he returned the compliment. By this time we were both completely used to our Russian clothes, and walked up and down the garden very much at our ease. He gave me some messages which he wanted sent by my couriers to Sweden for London, and as we both intended to reappear freely in the streets we arranged to meet every day in one of the cafés of the town.

I went to a barber that afternoon and had my beard trimmed and part of my face shaved. This changed my appearance much more than the actual straggling beard I had worn before. I looked utterly foreign and even did not recognize myself when I looked in the glass. My face with a goatee beard was striking.

The next day I obtained a post at a cinematograph studio as a developer of films, and within a day or so my hands were coloured a deep yellow from the developing solutions. This work at the studio

entitled me to the ration cards of a worker, and moreover I joined the local Cinematograph Operators' Union. The hours suited me very well, for I came on at six o'clock in the evening and finished at eleven o'clock at night. For the rest of the day I was completely free to carry on my work.

At the end of three weeks I moved about freely all over Moscow. I used to meet people in the streets who knew me very well and not one of them recognized me. Once I collided with two members of Mr. Lockhart's Mission who passed me by without a word.

But I made mistakes—mistakes which could easily have cost me my life. One day Evelyn happened to be looking out of the window when I left the house and what she saw made her chase after me. "For goodness' sake don't walk like a British officer. You are striding along as if you were on parade. Your walk gives you away completely. No Russian of your class has ever walked like that." I was humbled and altered my walk.

On another occasion I met in the street a lady whom I very much liked, smiled and raised my hat —in Russia it is correct for the man to make the first greeting. The moment I took my hat off I knew I had given myself away, but luckily she did not recognize me and favoured me with a haughty stare.

Perhaps the worst mistake I made was after I had been living as a Russian for two months. Things were very bad both politically and economically in Moscow. We did not have sufficient food for our needs at the house and I had been worrying a great deal about my work. Walking down the main street I passed Eliseaves, the Fortnum and Mason of Moscow. The glass windows, which used to be filled with

delicacies to make your mouth water, were now empty. Just a few boxes of biscuits, some smoked fish, and some stale-looking chocolate was displayed; but my eye was caught by a notice: "We have fresh caviare and butter to-day."

"The very thing," said my tired brain, and I marched into the shop.

"Yes," said the attendant, "we have caviare," and named a price, equivalent to seven pounds per pound.

"Well, I will have two pounds please, and three pounds of butter, and a box of biscuits, and if you have any brandy I will have two bottles."

The order was given by a shabby-looking individual who had forgotten his part. I was behaving like a customer who was in the habit of giving such an order. The attendant gave me a searching look which brought me back to realities, and with a sick feeling, I, who should not have had a penny in the world, paid for my purchase and walked out of the shop carrying a large parcel. I was terrified lest I had given myself away, lest the attendant should tell somebody, lest I should be followed. With every step I took the parcel grew heavier and heavier but I stuck to it doggedly, boarded a tram and by a circuitous route made my way home.

I must confess that all this time I was constantly haunted by the fear of being caught, and always before my mind I had a vivid picture of the spies I had seen executed in Macedonia. I maintain that however stout-hearted a spy may be, if he has any imagination at all, the idea of capital retribution does get on his nerves, and at times affects his work. That is why in time of war I would always urge death as the penalty for espionage.

Evelyn scolded me for my folly in buying the caviare, but that night all of us thoroughly enjoyed our supper which Sally, true to her rôle, ate by herself in the kitchen.

One day we read in the papers that two of our couriers had been caught on their way to Murmansk and executed by the local Soviet. Two days later X. reported that another of our men, making his way to Archangel, had been captured but had managed to escape. At a wayside station he had been searched and the coded messages typed on paper and sewn into the lining of his coat had rustled when the examiner's hand had been passed down his body. From then on we typed all coded messages on strips of linen. It was tedious work and took infinitely longer than typing on paper. At the same time Annie put out a notice that men's clothes could be pressed. This enabled us to take in the coats of our couriers, unstitch the collars or the shoulders and sew in the strips of linen. Some of the couriers told me that they preferred not to know where the messages were sewn for when they passed through the control stations they did not feel their hearts jump into their throats as they did when they knew the exact place where the message was.

After the Allies had landed in Archangel Mr. Lockhart and his Mission were arrested. The other Allied Missions were closely watched. The French regular secret service had been caught to a man and the Cheka had made a visit to Reilly's old address and were making diligent inquiries as to his whereabouts. This made us very nervous.

With Evelyn I arranged a code signal to enable me to know on my return to the house if the coast

was clear. It was a simple device, a small Russian illustrated paper known as *The Copek* (that being the price at which it was sold) being carelessly placed between the double windows in the living-room. When I entered the house the paper was always taken out of the window. One afternoon I went off to see the chief of my wrecking-gang, and when I returned there was no paper in the window. Feeling rather dizzy I walked straight on. Half an hour later I returned, but still the window was bare. For the next two hours I walked the damp and muddy streets, depressed and wildly anxious, passing the house every half hour, not daring to go in.

The last time I passed I saw Evelyn come out of the front door and walk up the street. I followed her and when we were a safe distance away stopped.

"Where have you been?" she demanded angrily. "I have been worried out of my life about you."

"The signal," I said; "the signal is not in the window."

"But I told Vi to put it in," said she. "There has been no raid."

Vi had given me three very bad hours. She had just become interested in the paper and put it down somewhere, quite forgetful of its purpose. Dear Vi, she was a darling, irresponsible, forgetful person whom we had to be reprimanding constantly. She made many a long hour pass quickly for me, and at one time we gravely discussed having a serious affair. But on account of her extreme youth and some pig-headed streak in me we decided that it should not bud. I have often smiled at that decision, as only a few months later she married an elderly man whom she

divorced within a fortnight under the Soviet laws. Then for a time she lived with an operatic tenor, then married again, and then again before she finally settled down. In her fourth husband she seems to have found her true mate for from time to time I hear of her and in the last seven years she has raised a family of which she is extremely proud.

Meantime my wrecking-gang in the Ukrainia was going through a bad time and I took a trip to see what was wrong and to give them encouragement. The German secret service had grown very diligent, and had arrested and executed a number of our men. We decided on new methods of harrying the Germans. At one of the towns in Ukrainia near to the Soviet frontier we planned to blow up a gasometer as a demonstration.

We had not the proper materials to do this but collected a bundle of cotton-waste which we soaked in paraffin and then one of us placed it against the gasometer. There were eight of us in the party, and we took up our positions about a hundred and fifty yards away. At a whistle from us one of our number put a match to the waste and then ran for his life. We gave him just enough time to get away and then put three rounds of rapid fire into the gasometer about the height of the flame. There was a blinding flash followed by a terrific explosion and then a deadly silence. We staggered away. For hours afterwards my nose bled most violently and nothing I did would stop it.

I returned to Moscow and my wrecking-gang concentrated on destroying gasometers in the towns where the German troops were quartered in any numbers.

CHAPTER XXVII

On my return to Moscow Z. reported that things were not going well with the courier service. Six of our men in all had now been caught and executed. It is to the credit of these White Russian officers that not one of them gave Z's address away, nor did they ever betray for whom they were working or whither they were going. Everyone of them faced his end like a hero.

It took a courier a minimum of twelve and an average of twenty-two days to make the double journey from Moscow north either to Kemm on the Murmansk front or Archangel, and back to Moscow. Each message was sent in duplicate over both these routes. I originally thought that it would be possible to maintain this northern service with an average of twenty-five couriers. It was of vital importance to get the messages through, and finally we elaborated a new plan which meant that we would have to employ over a hundred men and replace casualties as they occurred.

The original courier service as I had planned it was for keeping communication with Northern Russia, and also throughout the territories occupied by the Austro Germans in South Russia. The southern courier chain worked very well, and the Germans did not catch one of our men. Naturally these couriers also acted as observation agents and each time they returned from a trip they would put in a report as to the conditions they had met with, and what they had seen; and they kept in touch with the destruction-gangs in Ukrainia.

The map reproduced in the end-papers of this volume shows the new courier service. Our southern organization remained unchanged, but it will be noted that the northern one now spread out in a fan-shaped formation from Moscow, with a chain service linked up to the centres. These centres are denoted on the map by ovals. At each of them was a group commander whose duty it was to organize his men, select suitable places for living, procure documents and passports, and control the funds for carrying on the work. Under this new system, instead of a courier going all the way from Moscow to the Allied lines in the north he took a short journey from Moscow—say to Vyatka—whence after a rest he would return to Moscow, while the message would be taken by another courier to Kotlas and from there be relayed by yet another messenger to the British lines. Each courier got to know his particular run, its pitfalls, dangers and dodges, and the strain was much less than would be involved in the entire journey. The chain of men near our front lines were also able to act as observers of everything which was happening along the front in the north and were of extreme value. Once this service was established all messages went in triplicate, and it took an average of five to eight days to get a message from Moscow to the Allied headquarters in the north. The experiences of these men would make an exciting story which would demand a book to itself. Every time one of them set out he did so at the risk of his life and the ways in which they overcame difficulties were miraculous.

One night the couriers' flat in Moscow was raided by the Cheka. Luckily none of my men was there

at the time and the lady in residence put up a very good excuse, but thereafter we did not dare to use the place. I looked around and found a good antique shop which was filled with all sorts of junk and treasures, as the better class people were selling their possessions for ready money. I bought this shop from its Armenian owner and put in as the owner one of my own agents whom I thought I could trust. Thereafter the couriers reported there and, if necessary, spent the night in the shop. It served as an excellent cover, for I could go in and see the agents there under the guise of having something to sell or wanting to buy something. I spent a lot of money in acquiring this business, but to my surprise it showed a very excellent return, and before I had finished it almost wiped off the purchase price. We bought things cheaply from the rich who had become poor and sold them at a high price to the poor who had become rich, the profiteers and dishonest commissars, of whom there were many.

One day four of my wrecking-gang arrived from Ukrainia. The Germans had made things too hot for them and for a time they had to lie low in Moscow. They were thirsting for revenge and so I gave them the address of one of the important German secret service centres in Moscow. One night my friends visited the place, popped a couple of incendiary bombs through the windows, and burned it to the ground.

The courier service, although working well, was not getting messages to the north quickly enough to suit me. I knew that the men were doing their best and that I could not in any way accelerate the service, and my mind began to cast around for other means

of communication. The obvious thing to do was to get hold of someone in the Moscow wireless station who would be prepared to send Marconigrams direct to England for the War Office, who could then, when necessary, relay them to the Allies in Northern Russia.

The wireless station was at the far end of the Field of Mars and some little way from Moscow, but it was possible to get there by tram. I knew the district well, for the Air Park at which I had worked was adjacent to it. Taking a tram, I went out to examine the station. I found that a screen of barbed wire had been erected all round it and that at the gates there was an armed Lettish guard. For two or three days I watched that entrance carefully and noted everyone who came in and out of the wireless station between the hours of seven in the morning and midday. I used my imagination and separated probable transmitters from the rest of the personnel. Then I weighed up in my mind all the men I had marked and selected the one whom I felt was the most likely to entertain my proposition.

I did not choose the weakest, but went for the strongest and smartest-looking man of the lot. We travelled back two or three times on the same tram to Moscow, and each time I made a point of nodding to him and passing the time of day. When I had established myself I asked him if I could have a talk somewhere privately with him. He looked at me suspiciously and said that he did not know me or where we could talk. I knew it was a big risk, but suggested that he should come to one of my flats which was empty at the time. Rather reluctantly he agreed. At first he would have nothing to do with

my proposition. All his business life he had been a telegraph transmitter, and had never done anything underhand, and although he was anti-Bolshevik he did not propose to undertake anything underhand, even in the difficult conditions under which he was living. He had not the least idea that I was an Englishman, but of course suspected that I was working as an English agent. In any case, he said he could not do the work as he was not transmitter during the hours when it would be possible to get a wireless message from the Moscow station to an English one.

"Well, then," I said, "introduce me to the man who is on duty," and paid him for his trouble. The man he sent to me was nowhere near such a good specimen or so highly principled as the man I had picked out, but he undertook to transmit messages secretly to England. I managed to get about ten messages through that way and then the German counter-espionage gave the show away. Their wireless service had detected that messages were being sent from Moscow to England. They asked their own secret service to inquire into the matter. Instead of doing so the German secret service went straight to the Bolsheviks and told them what was happening. The Germans scored certainly, for I was not able to send any further messages, but had they waited they could have easily caught me. The Bolsheviks promptly held an inquiry at the wireless station, but my operator was warned in time and in great fear came to me. I gave him sufficient money and directions for escape into Ukrainia. I had thought of sending him to the Allies in the north, but did not consider him sufficiently trustworthy.

I was seeing Reilly daily, and he kept me informed of what he was doing and of his plans for a *coup d'état* against the Bolsheviks. Reilly's plan was bold and masterfully conceived, its purpose being no less than to have the whole of the Bolshevik Executive Committee—including Lenin and Trotsky—arrested by the Letts, their own bodyguard. Had his plan succeeded it is impossible even to visualize how different would have been the history of the world since those fatal days of 1918. Bolshevism would have been wiped out, the directing machinery of the Communist party would have been destroyed, Russia would have been saved from civil war and famine, the world would not have been harried by the gadfly of Bolshevism, and the history of the last two decades might have developed on evolutionary rather than revolutionary lines.

The position of the Letts was peculiar. In the early days of the war special divisions composed of Letts were raised by the Russian army and sent as far away from the Baltic provinces as was possible. By their thought, religion, upbringing and language these men were entirely alien to the Russians; but having—for centuries before the cession of the province to Russia—been under the domination of German Baltic barons they disliked everything German infinitely more than they did anything Russian.

The personnel of the regiments which composed the Lettish divisions were men of splendid physique, well-trained fighters and disciplined by their own officers. When the Brest Litovsk Peace Treaty was signed the whole of the Baltic provinces were occupied by Germany. The Letts could not return to Latvia and would not if they could—and there they were stranded in Russia.

Lenin saw his chance. He made the Letts the backbone of Bolshevik power. To serve the Bolsheviks was the only resource left to the Letts. They were given good food and pay and housed in excellent barracks. Everything was done to make them contented with their lot. They guarded the Kremlin and the Government offices; a Lett was at the head of the Cheka; Letts were at the heads of the prisons and banks and railways; and whenever there was serious street fighting it was put down by Letts. At one time the sailors of the Baltic and Black Sea fleets were the predominant military power in Russia, but now they had been supplanted by Letts, and, indeed, Russian troops could only be relied upon to fight if they were coerced from behind by Lettish battalions. When at last the Letts fell from power they were replaced by Chinese mercenaries who, in their turn, gave way to the Red Army and the organized troops of the Ogpu.

As a people the Letts were smallholders. The ideas of Bolshevism were entirely alien to them, and it is to be noted that while the Lettish soldiers carried out the orders of the Bolsheviks, the majority of them never became members of the Communist party. After a time the rank and file of these divisions became dissatisfied with being used as policemen and executioners by the Bolsheviks, and it was not surprising therefore that their leaders should approach the Allied diplomatic representatives in the hope of being transferred to the northern front or otherwise used for the purposes of the Allies in Russia.

While these negotiations were going on the political situation in Russia had changed so rapidly that Mr. Lockhart's sojourn in Moscow obviously

might come to an end at any moment; he therefore put Reilly into communication with the Lettish leaders.

Reilly conceived the notion of arresting the Executive Committee of the Bolshevik party by the help of the Letts, during one of its sessions in the Kremlin. As soon as this was achieved a Provisional Government was to be formed, whose first object would be to summon the Constitutional Assembly which had been dissolved by force early in the year by the Bolsheviks.

Reilly's idea was that none of the Bolsheviks were to be killed if possible. He proposed to march them through the streets of Moscow bereft of their lower garments in order to kill them by ridicule, and then to intern them in a prison in Moscow from which they could not escape. The plan for the *coup d'état*, the establishment of the Provisional Government and a hundred and one other things for the change-over were worked out to the minutest detail. I was kept informed of all this so that if anything happened to Reilly it would be possible for me to carry on the work.

The chief representative of the Letts was Colonel Berzin. I never met Colonel Berzin or any of the Lettish representatives. Before I could do so the plot was given away by certain agents of the French secret service. When the blow did come my section was not affected, as Reilly and I worked in absolutely water-tight compartments and had quite separate organizations.

Early in August the British and most of the other Allied missions had been arrested and imprisoned by the Cheka. Mr. Lockhart himself was confined in the Kremlin, but released after a few days, and negotiations were now proceeding to enable him and the other members of his staff to return to England.

On August 28, Reilly told me that he was leaving that night for Petrograd, where he wished to discuss certain matters with Commander Cromie, R.N., the senior British naval officer at our Embassy there, and to make arrangements with other people in Petrograd. Reilly had no difficulty in travelling between Moscow and Petrograd, as he had obtained a position with the Cheka and had a Cheka pass.

The following day the first blow fell. The house of Colonel de Vertement, the head of the French secret service in Moscow, was raided by the Cheka. The raid was made with a view to obtaining evidence of the conspiracy, which the traitors in the French service had revealed to the Cheka. The Colonel himself managed to escape by way of the roof and across other house-tops into another street, but the Cheka found explosives and other material at his flat and managed to arrest half a dozen of his agents. This information was given to me by one of my agents closely connected with the Cheka. My informant further told me that the reason for the raid was the discovery by the Cheka of a gigantic plot to be brought off by the Letts at the instigation of the Allies. I at once instructed my go-betweens to keep absolutely clear of any of the French secret service agents and sent a courier to Petrograd to warn Reilly, but this man was arrested in the train.

On the following morning a Social Revolutionary, Dora Kaplan, attempted to kill Lenin as he was addressing a meeting at one of the larger factories in Moscow. She managed to wound him seriously with two shots, one of which lodged in the tissue of

a lung. Dora Kaplan was nearly torn in pieces by the factory workers and executed two days later by the Cheka. Lenin was not expected to live and had it not been for his superb constitution he certainly would not have recovered. On the same day Uritsky, head of the Cheka in Petrograd, was shot down and killed by another Social Revolutionary.

That evening and the following morning the Bolshevik press gave full details of these terrorist acts. In revenge for the shooting of Lenin the Cheka took five hundred of the most prominent figures of the old régime and shot them that night in Moscow, and they took the same number of citizens in Petrograd and shot them in revenge for the assassination of Uritzky. Next morning they published a list of the people whom they had executed. I do not think that I have ever read anything quite so terrible. The people they had seized were entirely innocent and came from every class. Imagine a similar situation in London. The death-roll would include all the prominent politicians of the opposition, commercial magnates like Gordon Selfridge and Sir Herbert Morris, newspaper men like Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere, the editors of most of the London daily papers, men of the theatre like Charles B. Cochran and Henry Ainley, women like Ellen Wilkinson and Lady Astor, prominent writers and many more humble folk.

The relatives of these unfortunate victims were allowed to take away the bodies for burial—the Bolsheviks wanted Moscow to see the actual funerals, *pour encourager les autres*. Then they published in Moscow and Petrograd a further list of seven hundred and fifty prominent members of each city who had

been arrested as hostages and would be shot if the life of a single commissar were attempted, whether the attempt was fatal or not.

A high official of the Cheka defined the principles of the Red Terror in two phrases: "Strike Quick," and "Strike Hard"; he might have added a third: "Strike Secretly," for arrests were carried out at night and the families of prisoners rarely had news until the unfortunate was either condemned or freed. Summary arrest, judgment and execution was the order of the day. The Cheka began to search Moscow systematically by day and night. Raids were made throughout the town. Whole blocks would be surrounded by the Cheka troops, and everybody systematically examined. Numbers of people were arrested at each of these raids, some simply because of their names or their positions, ex-officers, bankers and merchants being taken even if their documents were perfectly in order. Other people they would arrest on suspicion and woe betide him who had no documents or papers of identification.

On the afternoon of Saturday, August 31, the Cheka, in violation of all international usage, raided the British Embassy in Petrograd and murdered Commander Cromie. The remaining members of the British Embassy were thrown into prison. On September 1 Mr. Lockhart and his Mission at Moscow were re-arrested, and the Bolshevik Press stated that they were to be executed if Lenin died.

On the same morning the Bolshevik papers printed a full account of the Lettish conspiracy, which quite falsely and from political motives they attributed to Mr. Lockhart. They called it "The Lockhart Conspiracy," and cited Sidney George Reilly, Lieutenant

of the Royal Air Force, as his chief spy, printing the aliases under which Reilly had been working, together with his photograph. It was a horrible morning, for the newspapers gave publicity to a rumour that Reilly had been arrested in Petrograd, and I felt that I had lost a great friend and a brilliant colleague.

I sent Vi along to one of Reilly's girls with a verbal message to the effect that I would take over his organization. I expected her to be absent less than an hour; she did not return until seven p.m., and when she did she brought me most disquieting news. She had arrived about eleven o'clock in the morning at the house of Reilly's chief girl agent. It is still impossible for me to give her name and so I will call her E. E. Vi was carrying, as usual, a blouse wrapped in paper and she rang the bell of E. E's flat.

The door was opened and Vi found herself covered with the revolver of a Cheka agent. "Come in," he said. "Whom do you want?"

Vi was terrified. She gave E. E's name, but kept her presence of mind and added, "I have come to deliver a blouse. Is the lady in, and will she please pay for it?"

Vi was marched through into the living-room, where she saw E. E. being examined and put through what amounted to the third degree by three expert examiners. The two girls pretended not to know each other. Vi played up, burst into tears, and said that she had simply brought a blouse for the lady which she had made herself. This was a clever lie on Vi's part, for she realized that if she said it had been made by Annie they might come to our house for confirmation. As it was she gave an address

where she had been living before she joined us. She was the only one of us who was living under her own name and passport. Vi was thoroughly cross-examined, but the Chekists failed to break down her story, though one of them, holding a revolver to her head, said she was lying and urged her to tell the truth. After two or three hours the examining officers, having searched the flat from top to bottom, had found nothing incriminating, but decided to arrest E. E. nevertheless. Vi, they said, could go home.

E. E. burst into tears, and one of the examining officials told her kindly that she need not worry, for they had come to the conclusion that she was only one of Reilly's lady friends and most probably would be allowed to go. But alas! how unkind is Fate! As Vi reached the door to leave the flat the bell rang and a go-between called Marie, of the American secret service, walked in. She was bringing messages and documents to E. E. for transmission to Reilly. On seeing the Chekists she completely lost her head and began to scream. The officials seized her and after a moment's search had the documents in their possession. Vi kept her head and walked out of the flat, down the stairs and into the street.

Although she was trembling all over and feeling sick and dizzy her first thought was for the safety of our house. It occurred to her that she might be followed and therefore she walked all the way to her old house, but for the sake of the occupants did not go in, turning instead into a shop where she bought some cotton and trimmings, just as if she were a dressmaker. Then, still fearing that she might be followed, she went to one of the public baths, bought a ticket for the third-class section and spent two hours

in the women's bath-house. Only then did she venture back to our house.

If Marie had not lost her head E. E. would not have had to spend months in prison and stand her trial with many others of the secret service agents who were caught. It was owing to Marie that Kalamatiano, the head of the American secret service, was arrested that afternoon.

In the meantime, no arrests had been made in my organization and we carried on our work as usual. I visited the couriers, conferred with the head of my wrecking-gangs, coded messages and sent them off. The four girls were splendid, and were examples of the devoted bravery women will show in the most trying circumstances.

It was not until two days later that a girl came to my flat from Reilly, with the news that he was safe in Moscow. He had been temporarily put up by this agent, but the house he was in was liable to be raided at any moment. I immediately went to see him.

His experiences are set out in detail in a book recently published under the title of "Sidney Reilly," which to a certain extent recounts the days he spent during this time in Moscow.

Reilly's bearing when I met him was splendid. He was a hunted man, his photograph with a full description and a reward was placarded throughout the town; he had been through a terrible time in getting away from Petrograd and yet he was absolutely cool, calm and collected, not in the least downhearted and only concerned in gathering together the broken threads and starting afresh. He discussed with me the advisability of surrendering himself to

the Cheka in the hope that by doing so he would be able to clear Mr. Lockhart and his Mission from the charges which the Bolsheviks were making against them. I advised him not to do so, maintaining that it could be of no help to Mr. Lockhart, that the Cheka would only detain both of them and that, if he could get away, it was in the interest of the Service that he should do so. I urged that he should go into Ukrainia, where my organization could help him, on to Baku which had been recently occupied by the Dunster Force from Persia. However, Reilly decided that he would take the more dangerous route through Petrograd and the Baltic Provinces in order to get his reports to London as early as possible. It was necessary to get him new identification papers. As the matter was of great urgency I gave him my Bergmann passport. At the same time I managed to get a blank passport which I filled in for myself, and the chief of my couriers forged various visas on it.

Our great difficulty was to find a place for Reilly to stay during the next few days. Members of his own organization managed to put him up for three days, and on the fourth night I found him a place. It was in the room of a friend of the lady who kept our courier flat. This girl was in the last stages of the disease which so often curses members of her profession. I will never forget Reilly's reaction when I told him, for he was the most fastidious of men and while being caught by the Bolsheviks had little terror for him, he could hardly bring himself to spend the night on the couch in her room. It was a good thing that he did, for the place where he had spent the previous night was raided by the Cheka the next evening.

Reilly had a mane of jet-black hair and once or twice when he had been in my room before I went underground he had used my hair brushes. These brushes had particularly long and strong bristles and Reilly had always admired them. One day when we had been discussing his plans for the overthrow of the Bolsheviks he said to me, "Hill, the morning I turn the Bolsheviks out you will give me as a present your brushes." "Done," said I, "providing the Provisional Government give me the Rolls Royce used by Dzerjhinsky, the head of the Cheka." "Done," said Reilly, and we left it at that.

All arrangements were made for Reilly's journey to Petrograd. I made up a parcel of food for him, put in a bottle of wine and also one of my brushes, and went along to bid him farewell.

I told him that I thought he had come so near to achieving his purpose that he deserved, anyway, one of the brushes. It was the only time during these four days that he showed any emotion. We grinned at each other, shook hands, and he went off to the Nicolai station. After many adventures he got safely out of Russia; but I did not see him again for many weeks, when we met in the Savoy Hotel in London. A few days after this meeting I received a case with two silver brushes engraved with my regimental crest and the words: "In memory of Moscow, from S. T. I.," which was Reilly's secret service name.