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A Riddle Wrapped in an Enigma: Sidney Reilly's Adventures and Ideology

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Abstract

A Riddle Wrapped in an Enigma: Sidney Reilly's Adventures and Ideology

Although Sidney Reilly (1874-1925?) was working for British Secret Intelligence Services within Imperial Russia and, after the Revolution, within the Russian Communist state, not much is known about his days in espionage before he went to the Soviet Union in 1918. In 1898 or shortly thereafter he joined the British Secret Intelligence Services, but he refused to work actively against Russia, since he was a native of the Russian Empire. The British still needed his services, and an arrangement was made between Reilly and the services. In the years leading up to the First World War he was sent to Revel, Germany, to gather intelligence on German naval developments so that the British Empire would not be surprised in the event of war breaking out. According to archival materials, his mission there was successful, but not flawless – he was able to get the blueprints for new German naval works, but due to tight time constraints he was unable to trace them. These facts are all the clear background, but to understand this figure one must understand his motives for what he did, and what he hoped to accomplish. Many personal revelations to this end came about during his account of the Lockhart Plot in the summer of 1918, but it is his association with the Trust which was to be Sidney Reilly's end, was an enigmatic organization which is to this day still not understood and likely never will be. Because of this, there are precious few resources to implement when seeking information about the Trust, and even fewer of those are reliable. However, it is still necessary to present the structure and development of the Trust still remains a great enigma. This thesis looks at the conflict of the accounts that surround his memory and offers a point of view which may unite the contradictory pieces of the puzzle.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Sidney Reilly's involvement with the Trust, one of the most mysterious organizations in the early post-Revolutionary Russia, came to a head in 1925, after the civil war was clearly over and the Bolshevik government was firmly in place. However, Reilly was active in Russia and the Soviet Union long before then, working for British Secret Intelligence Services within the Communist state, although not much is known about Sidney Reilly's days in espionage before he went to the Soviet Union in 1918. In 1898 or shortly thereafter he joined the British Secret Intelligence Services, and his first mission was to evaluate the nascent oil industry being developed at Baku (Kettle, 14-15). He refused to work actively against Russia, since he was a native of the Russian Empire, but the British still needed his services, and a formal, albeit secret, arrangement was made. In the years leading up to the First World War he was sent to Revel to gather intelligence on German naval developments so that the British Empire would not be surprised in the event of war breaking out. According to archival materials, his mission there was successful, but not flawless – he was able to get the blueprints for new German naval works, but due to tight time constraints he was unable to trace them. Instead he simply grabbed and mailed them to England via embassy post, tipping off the Germans that they knew about their new designs (van der Rhoer, x-xi). And thus began Sidney Reilly's career with the SIS in foreign espionage in the feverish years leading up to the First World War.

These facts are all the background of which one can be certain, but one needs much more clarity when dealing with a man of Sidney Reilly's caliber. His own narrative[1] is unreliable as a historical document, but it shows quite clearly what he did not intend to portray --his exaggerated view of himself. Thus, in order to enter into the world of Reilly's decisions, one must

[1] In 1933, Pepita Reilly, Sidney Reilly's last wife, published a series of events which allegedly happened to her and her husband. The first part of this book was Reilly's own account of the Lockhart Plot in 1918.

understand not only his motives for what he did and what he hoped to accomplish, but also to analyze the mask that he created for the world to behold, a mask that in the final account must have ensnared Reilly himself. Indeed, a considerable gap or a space of uncertainty lies between Reilly's perplexing historical personality and Reilly's subsequent myth, a space that no examiner of his life can overlook while approaching his involvement in the Trust and his subsequent return to Russia.

Ultimately the question that faces any investigator is that of why. Sidney Reilly, a cautious man, as we will see, must have had a compelling reason in 1925 to return and risk, and in the end give, his life. From how he presents his own character in his account of the Lockhart Plot, it may appear initially that he was doubtlessly directed by sheer vanity and ambition, the qualities that would eventually drive him into the arms of the Trust in Soviet Russia. However, as this thesis suggests throughout, it may have been much more than simple vanity that induced Reilly to take incredible risks – his involvement could have been encouraged by the chaos and uncertainty of the post-Revolutionary years, a chaos that could not help but fuel his already considerable self-admiration, a process resulting in an unrestrained self-aggrandizement that pushed him to believe in the lucrative promises of a major bountiful reward, and to follow an all-encompassing illusion of enormous political power over a vast amount of people. As this thesis emphasizes, this latter explanation corresponds more precisely to Reilly's supreme confidence in his own plots, evident in his own narrative, where he invariably views his success and rise to power as almost preordained; in Reilly's mind, indeed, this success seems both imminent and certain, and can reach no other end.

Different archival documents give different portraits of Russia during the Revolutionary and Post-Revolutionary period, and yet there emerges a general picture of a major societal

upheaval, an uncertain time when no one knew who would be able to govern the country, seemingly breaking apart. Fedor Stepun, a Russian philosopher and a Socialist revolutionary, who worked in Alexander Kerensky's Provisional Government and was forced to leave the country in 1922, gives a depiction of the country in crisis, a state resembling that of a decaying corpse: "The plague of corruption weighed heavily on the lungs of the young revolution and poisoned its soul. Hence the outbreak of the disease and the feverish delirium of the October revolt" (Stepun, 82). Whether or not Stepun's account of October is objective is beside the point; his picture corresponds to Lazar Fleishman's recent book dedicated to the Trust and Reilly's involvement with the organization, as Fleishman argues that the chaotic uncertainty of the times became an invitation for adventurers and self-appointed supermen, who believed that they should fill the role of a Nietzschean superman (Fleishman, *Operatsiia Trest I Russkaia Zarubezhnaia Pechat).*

In Fleishman's view, Nietzsche's philosophy was very popular in pre-revolutionary Russia and undoubtedly affected Reilly's upbringing, as well as his subsequent desire to live on the edge of life, as an "extraordinary man" (as Dostoevsky termed this phenomenon) – a man who seeks the greatest risk for even greater reward. Indeed, Nietzsche's influence can be clearly deduced from Reilly's account of himself, which offers the prism that makes it just possible to begin to understand the source of the double agent's motivation for his reckless and insane acts. However, delusional and insane self-aggrandizement does not alter the fact that considerable personal courage and capacity for heroism were also required by Sidney Reilly's feats. In other words, if one thinks of Reilly as a rational, regular person, then his exploits seem bizarre and naïve, and even suicidal. However, if one considers him as following the role models of the Nietzschean superman, or a literary hero of the caliber of Grigory Pechorin from Lermontov's

Hero of Our Time (whose time for heroism had finally come), then his risky life becomes an example as a kind of life-fiction, as a literary text that he created for himself.

To support further the idea of Reilly as a literary type manifested into reality, one can turn to the Soviet literature of the period shortly after Reilly's activities, the late 1920s and early 1930s, when the fictional narratives were rife with examples of Reilly-type characters. For example, ill-fated Ostap Bender, the adventurous con-artist of the novels of Ilya Ilf and Evgeniy Petrov, enters Russia as a "foreign impostor," and Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* famously introduces Woland, the "foreign consultant" who turns society on its head through his eccentric, highly individualistic, and yet well-meaning actions. It is noteworthy that Van der Rhoer, when writing about the improbability of a monument to Reilly being erected next to Felix Dzerzhinski's, reinforces the fictional allure of Reilly's myth: "[p]erhaps the existence of a monument to Sidney Reilly in that location [next to *Detsky mir*] would be appropriate compensation to the bogeyman about whom Soviet children have read in their schoolbooks for so many years" (van der Rhoer, 234-235). Reilly's actions have elevated him to the status of a legend, much as he would have hoped, and they have overshadowed the reality of a real, flesh and blood individual.

While scholars continue to discuss his allegiances in the post-Revolutionary struggle, my work addresses the peculiarities of his life that constituted his personal mask and the strategies of provocation that this role-playing necessitated. This approach explains why Reilly's classification of unreliable narrator of the events at the end of his life, when he was writing his memoirs, steps into the field of outright delusion. Nor has this delusional self-assessment of his last actions been lost on Christopher Andrew and Vasiliy Mitrokhin, who cut straight to the chase when they conclude: "Reilly had become a tragicomic figure whose hold on reality was

increasingly uncertain. According to one of his secretaries, Eleanor Toye, 'Reilly used to suffer from severe mental crises amounting to delusion. Once he thought he was Jesus Christ'" (Andrew and Mitrokhin, 34). It is likely that this predilection toward fantasy contributed to his downfall, making him believe that he could overthrow the entrenched Bolshevik party single-handedly and through the efforts of his own willpower and planning.

The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is not to determine the true Sidney Reilly, because there is not enough of a "real" Sidney Reilly to find: he is covered under a self-made mystique and shrouded in uncertainty even 85 years after he was most likely shot. Nor does this thesis resolve the debate as to whose side he finally chose. According to many accounts, Reilly's post-Revolutionary goal was to topple the Bolshevik regime after it came to power in 1917 in one grand gesture, sweeping the Communist movement under the rug. In all these accounts, however, it is difficult to conclude whether he sought to do this for the betterment of his country, as could be attributed to Boris Savinkov, or for his own personal gain so that he could become the master of Russia, as he so often said. On the other side of the debate, Brackman claims, for example, that Sidney Reilly was actually a Cheka agent provocateur working to further compromise Bruce Lockhart and the English diplomatic mission during 1918 (Brackman, 156), and Brackman is not alone in this view. From the materials collected and examined in this thesis, however, a somewhat different view emerges: Sidney Reilly could have not chosen to follow anyone else's ends, except his own; he was first and foremost a product of his times and of the overbearing philosophies of living which colored them and placed him precariously balancing on the edge of life and death, playing a double or even a triple game, whose victory was to ensure Sidney Reilly's advantage, fame, and glory.

To establish this view of Sidney Reilly, this thesis focuses upon three phases of Reilly's post-Revolutionary activities. **Chapter One: The "Lockhart" Plot** collects the data of what is known about Reilly and his character during 1918, a period culminating in Reilly's involvement with the Lockhart Plot, when his ambitions are more clearly written, and the surviving eyewitness accounts establish the context for understanding his later actions. This chapter also begins addressing Reilly's visions of himself, evident in the memoirs which his wife published posthumously after adding her own account of Sidney Reilly's last days, and this examination will continue when appropriate in subsequent chapters. **Chapter Two: The Trust Itself** addresses the surviving data concerning the Trust, which was to be Sidney Reilly's end – an organization still not understood to this day. **Chapter Three: Reilly, Savinkov and the Trust** continues to describe the relationship between the Trust and the conflicting goals of the Russian émigré society in order to give a picture of the environment which conspired to snare a man reputed to be the greatest spy who ever lived. The force of these three chapters helps to undermine the myth of Reilly as a master spy and proposes an alternative approach to his adventures, goals, and the enigmatic recklessness of his last years.

Chapter One: The "Lockhart" Plot

"Эсер без бомбы уже не эсер" – Boris Savinkov

As far as Sidney Reilly's espionage in Russia was concerned, he certainly entered with a bang. On May 7 1918 he approached the Kremlin and demanded to see Lenin, the new "master of Russia" (van der Rhoer, 2). Reilly claimed he had been sent by Prime Minster Lloyd George to speak with the Bolshevik leaders and discern their goals and ideological outlooks.[2] Unfortunately Bruce Lockhart, the British attaché at the time, knew nothing of this directive from the Prime Minister, and only found out about it when Lev Karakhan, an official with the Soviet Foreign Office, phoned Lockhart and told him about the incident.[3] Naturally Lockhart was furious, and had to suppress his initial impulse to dismiss Reilly as either deranged, or an absurd Russian impersonating a British officer. Lockhart conferred with Ernest Boyce, the chief of British SIS in Russia, about this strange personality, and learned that, indeed, it was a British subject named Sidney Reilly. Reilly tried to explain his way out through creative lying, claiming that Karakhan's story concerning Reilly's arrival at the Kremlin was quite untrue, but Lockhart was a canny fellow. Though ready to send Reilly home for this transgression, Lockhart abstained for the time being, anticipating a use for someone as gutsy as Reilly. This is the first example of Reilly's preference for great deeds; his role in the Lockhart Conspiracy required not only daring and deception, but also a formidable combination of delusion and self-deception which fueled the intoxication of risk of the affair.

Though he was intended to be involved primarily in propaganda work against the nascent Bolshevik government, as evidenced by his specific assignment in South Russia during 1919 and

[2] While there is no doubt that Lloyd George had never even heard of Reilly, there is some speculation that Reilly had been captured during the war, during which he acted in the capacity of an arms dealer, and recruited as a Cheka agent under a name he would later use, Relinsky. He was then assigned to introduce himself to Lockhart (Brackman, 156).

[3] With good reason – no such directive from Lloyd George existed and Reilly simply made it up in order to get an audience with Lenin.

several testaments from his superiors that he was an incredibly talented propaganda agent, he did not often abide by these boundaries to his activity.[4]

From all these frequently unconfirmed and disjointed facts, Reilly's capacity to pursue his own ends in the middle of the most dangerous game emerges with clarity. In fact, there are instances of him concocting plots to overthrow the Bolshevik government while the regime was still weak, and many ideas hatched to undermine Soviet foreign policy initiatives. There is little evidence that any of Reilly's plans were sanctioned by his superiors; rather, there is considerable evidence to the contrary. On the whole, however, there is a disagreement between authors and sources whether Reilly had approval from his superiors to go ahead with his plans is.[5]

It is certainly true that the Allies wanted to entice the Bolshevik government to rejoin the war against Germany after the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, and that they were willing to employ any means to do it. On the other hand, the Allied leaders were willing to conduct peaceful relations with the Bolsheviks in order to reach their own ends. Allied leaders at this stage were most concerned to weaken German's war effort (Lockhart, *British Agent*, 278-287).[6] The only way to achieve this would have been through the placing of a credible threat within Russia, whether it be armies raised by the Allies or the Bolsheviks themselves. For several months Allied delegations tried to convince the Bolsheviks to allow a peaceful Allied intervention, so that Allied soldiers could harry German soldiers stationed in eastern Poland and

[4] An overview of Reilly's time in Southern Russia can be found in Kettle, on 52-68.

[5] The incident in question, Reilly's infamous Zinoviev Letter in 1924, caused a trade deal under consideration by the British Labor government at the time to fall through and caused Reilly's ultimate dismissal from the SIS (Kettle, 11). More complete accounts on Reilly's creation of this forgery are found in Kettle, 116-130 and van der Rhoer, 174-176.

[6] Following the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Germans occupied vast amounts of arable land in the Ukraine, as well as many other valuable resources which came with the land. Additionally, since the threat from the Russian Empire had been neutralized, they were able to move several divisions to the Western front for the impending Ludendorff Offensive in Spring 1918 (Strachan, 287-289).

Ukraine, and advised the Bolsheviks destroy their Baltic Sea fleet in case the Germans should capture Petrograd.[7]

It did not take long for it to be clear that Lenin, the Bolshevik head of state, and Trotsky, officially the Commissar for War, would never allow any such intervention on part of the Allies. The duo had promised peace at any cost to the Russian citizens, and Lenin had a plan to go about achieving this.[8] On October 26 Lenin read his "Proclamation to the Peoples of All the Belligerent Nations," calling for an end to the war. Conveniently this Decree on Peace would remove the threat of the Germans advancing on the weak Soviet government, since the army had been destroyed in revolutionary zeal (Figes, 537-538). Unfortunately for Lenin none of the Western powers took him up on this offer, and the Allies began planning an intervention, with or without the assent of the Bolsheviks, to keep pressure on the Germans and protect Allied stores in Russia. Three of the British chief policy advisors for Russia – General Poole, who led the landing at Archangel, Thornhill, who was in Murmansk, and their charge de affairs in Petrograd, Lindley, were all in favor of unilateral intervention, with only Lockhart opposing these plans (Lockhart, *British Agent*, 278-287).

Indeed, the plans underlying the appearance of "peaceful intervention" were intricate. While the Allied armies were landing, the foreign missions wanted an internal movement against the Bolsheviks as well. They considered Boris Savinkov, the well-known anti-monarchy terrorist who had briefly served as Minister of War in Kerensky's Provisional Government. Ultimately though they were British, and decided that the best man for the job would have to be

[7] The British conferred endlessly on this plan, and actually got Trotsky to agree to their plan. He ordered the Baltic Sea Fleet to be destroyed, then later discovered the idea was the result of British machinations. Understandably he was angry, and had the commander of the fleet arrested as an enemy of the people (Kettle, 21-28).

[8] Lenin calculated that once the Bolsheviks came to power, they would hold peace conferences with every other belligerent nation, thereby putting the onus for prolonging the war onto them. The proletariat would then become outraged and overthrow their native governments. Surprisingly, this plan failed (Lockhart, *The Two Revolutions,* 115).

a British subject. The task of finding such a man was given to Lockhart, despite his strong misgivings against any intervention at all, including one which would use Russian forces merely armed by the Allies. Lockhart believed, and the rest of his account bears this out, that the "loyal" Russians would rise up and overthrow their Bolshevik masters if they were merely led by Allied officers and supplied with Allied weapons and munitions. Crucial to success, he said, would be a large Allied force around which the Russians could rally (Lockhart, *British Agent*, 286-287). As if to contrast what he had been saying, the landings at Vladivostok, Murmansk, and Archangel were pitifully small, around twelve thousand soldiers, and led by incredibly timid commanders.[9] Nonetheless, it was up to Reilly to rally native Russians to the cause and throw Bolshevism out in advance of the Allied forces.

It seems, therefore, that Reilly was both promise and yet denied firm support, and that the British uncertainty did not prevent his own zeal to influence the situation and possibly to make up the mind of his superiors by creating a coup from within Russia. Reilly's main involvement was in an attempted coup against the Bolsheviks in Moscow in the Summer of 1918, often called the Lockhart Plot, but here referred to as the Lettish conspiracy.[10] The Lettish conspiracy, in 1918, came unbelievably close to reaching its ends, which would have arrested the Soviet government in a quite literal sense before World War I even ended. This plot, if it had succeeded, would have involved paying the Lettish riflemen, which the Bolshevik government was using as their mercenary army in the wake of the Russian army's collapse in the summer of

[9] The number which had been decided upon for landings in preliminary meetings had been two divisions, which though division size varies by nation, should have been around thirty thousand (van der Rhoer, 67). The final force consisted of 4,500 Americans, 5,000 British, 700 French, 700 Polish. Additionally 5,000 Russians were integrated as were 12,000 Provisional Government volunteers, but these were unreliable (van der Rhoer, 71-72).

[10] Later the Soviets would claim that the Lockhart, or Ambassador's, plot was entirely a provocation engineered by Dzerzninski in order to root out counterrevolutionary enemies (Dziak, 43-44). I find this version of events difficult to believe, and is likely the Soviets trying to claim, years after the fact, that there had never been any serious threat to the regime.

1917, to arrest Lenin and Trotsky during a Party Congress and impose someone else, most likely himself, at the head of the Russian government. Source material from this era shows Reilly as a highly ambitious agent who thought very highly of his own plots and abilities, with a self-assuredness reflecting his overbearing egotism.

As observed earlier, a tangible nuance of self-admiring egotism can be sensed in his recollection of these events in *Britain's Master Spy*, co-written with Pepita. Throughout his retelling of events, Reilly takes frequent breaks from the narrative to share his thoughts about the possible future of Russian government, history, and how he feels his plot is proceeding. Invariably, his conclusion is that the future of Russia is with him as its master, reflecting not only his admiration of Napoleon but of himself, and his wish to be exalted above all. He refuses to believe that various people, Orlovsky and Berzin especially, are agent provocateurs, displaying a naivety shared by the majority of the British mission in Russia at the time. This refusal for introspection and tendency to cast blame for his failure on other people demonstrates that, in his mind, he is infallible, and that the only thing standing between him and his rightfully-deserved glory is the bumbling of other people.

The Lettish Rifleman Conspiracy

Reilly believes, and states explicitly, that this was "…the most promising plot ever concocted against the Bolsheviks…" (Reilly, 63). It could be that he is right in this, but it is quite impossible to know for sure. However, there exist several questions about the Lettish conspiracy as it concerns Reilly, not the least of which is how he expected to successfully overthrow the Bolsheviks. What were his intents with desiring to overthrow the Reds with a plan of his own hatching? At some points he seems resigned to die in the name of the cause,

while at others he seems assured of an easy and unscathed victory which results in him becoming the "master of Russia" (Reilly, 45).[11] These are the questions which will be investigated in this section.

In addition, there are numerous discrepancies between narratives. Reilly is an unreliable narrator at best, leading Ferguson to declare that "[his] 'experiences' are mostly fiction" (Ferguson, 23), though his account is useful for establishing a chronological backdrop for the story as it proceeds and introducing new people into the plot. That said, he is often in disagreement with Lockhart, who attempted to be somewhat more objective, but was writing fifteen years after the fact. This contributes to the inevitable mistake on occasion, such as a misremembered date or name, and also has the benefit of hindsight; it is easy to proclaim oneself in opposition to an action which had catastrophic results after the fact. His retelling of events is often in agreement with van der Rhoer's second-hand account, which makes since considering van der Rhoer used Lockhart's, Reilly's, and several other people's memoirs for his book. However there are times when these two disagree as well. In all cases, Reilly's account of events will be presented first as an overview and the other two will follow, allowing all versions to be accounted for.

Officially, Reilly's mission in Moscow was to gather intelligence about the Bolshevik movements on the fronts where they were fighting the Whites and the Allied interventions. At this he succeeded fairly early, but the downfall of the Lettish conspiracy was born in his associates to this end as well. In this he was aided by an association of his friend from before he left Russia, Alexander Grammatikov, who put his friends and family at Reilly's service while he was working towards this end. Among these was Maria Friede, sister to the head of the Red

[11] The contrast between Reilly's statements of confidence on pages 63 and 45 are in diametrical opposition with his remarks during the planning stage, on page 33, when he notes the importance of himself and other conspirators carrying grenades as well as their deaths being acceptable.

Army's Military Communications division. Since the Cheka presence in Moscow was virtually inescapable, Friede smuggled the documents in her portfolio case. Until Friede made a grievous mistake, it was a fairly efficient system, as "many… a highly confidential document… was read in England before the original was in the hands of the officer to whom it was addressed" (Reilly, 19).

Grammatikov had been Reilly's friend in Petrograd since before he left Russia, but they had not spoken since he had left. Reilly describes him as "a scholar and a thinker … a man of character" (Reilly, 9) and considers his loyalty above suspicion. He was anti-Bolshevik in thought, and saw that Russia was now ruled by criminal classes and people who had been freed from the prisons so that they could run wild.[12] It is likely that he was genuinely dedicated to his friend's cause, and put his offices and his family at Reilly's disposal. He gave Reilly a letter addressed to his niece, Dagmara K., whose apartment, which she shared with two other women, was to become Reilly's primary safe house in Moscow.

Reilly had known Dagmara K. since before he left Russia as well, but like Grammatikov had not seen her since leaving Russia in 1898. Dagmara K. was an actress at the Moscow Fine Arts Theater, and shared an apartment with two other actresses from her troupe on the Cheremetov Pereulok. Ladykiller that he was, Reilly quickly charmed the ladies of the apartment, securing them as allies in his effort to overthrow the Bolsheviks. Additionally he was able to use their apartment as a sort of base of operations, and stored the large sums of money which he received from Lockhart in filing cabinets. It was also the place where he met with Maria Friede, an actor herself and sister of A. V. Friede, head of the Red Army Communications

[12] The first thing the Bolsheviks did when they seized power was open all the prison doors, releasing not only political prisoners, but also habitual violent criminals (Power, 68). Many of these newly-freed criminals enlisted in the Cheka, which did not have literacy as a job requirement (Katamidze), 10), a fact which helped Reilly escape on more than one occasion.

Adminstration, who would bring him documents from the Soviet Military Communications bureau. Friede was one of Reilly's most important intelligence contacts within Russia.

With that under control, Reilly turned to the matter of the complete overthrow of the Bolshevik government. He believed it would be a fairly simple matter, as the non- Bolsheviks greatly outnumbered the Bolsheviks (Reilly, 18), and simply needed a person to unite and lead them. He figured himself to be the man to lead all of Russia to freedom, comparing himself to Napoleon.[13] Since at this time the Red Army was in full desertion and the only units remaining under firm Bolshevik command were the Letts – natives of Latvia, which was under German control – he figured them to be the natural vanguard for his anti-Bolshevik coup. They were non-Communist, and served only because they had no homeland to which they could desert.

Reilly's comparison of himself to Napoleon is not incidental by any means. Lockhart says that Reilly had always considered Napoleon a hero of his, and at his apartment in London Reilly had accumulated a large collection of Napoleonic art. Nor is it accidental, considering the circumstances in which he found himself and Reilly's particular viewpoint. Napoleon had come from relative obscurity to overthrow the chaos implemented by a tyrannical regime, became master of that country (Reilly describes himself as the next "master" of Russia several times), and kicked out the invading Germans, thus securing the future of his nation. His fixation on Napoleon does not seem like the view of a man interested in restoring a representative government to his country, but rather one focused more on the idea of personal power.

After achieving a position in the Cheka, which he was able to do under the pseudonym Relinsky with the help of Grammatikov, Reilly set about recruiting conspirators for his plot. He

[13] Reilly frequently compares himself to Napoleon, and had great admiration for the emperor. In fact he had a great collection of Napoleonic art, which he would later, albeit reluctantly, sell to fuel his organization schemes.

claims to have assembled 60,000 White officers into his scheme (Reilly, 24),[14] organizing them into cells of five to avoid disaster in the likely event of Cheka infiltration. General Judenitch was allegedly set to take command of this army when it became active, and would coordinate with Boris Savinkov, who was selected by Reilly to become Prime Minister, to encircle what remained of the Bolshevik forces. Once the Bolshevik government had been toppled, he would implement a provisional government which, in his estimation, would be four people – Alexander Grammatikov as Minister of the Interior, his old friend Tchubersky would be Minister of Communications, Boris Savinkov as Prime Minister, and General Judenitch, all of whom would work to suppress the anarchy following the revolution.

Boris Savinkov was one of the more prolific people among the opposition during the Tsarist times, and continued to hold this role after the Bolshevik seizure of power. He had briefly served as Minister of War in between June and November in Kerensky's government, and immediately began resistance once the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government. His anti-Bolshevik actions were on a much larger scale than his previous anti-Tsarist actions; he now had an army at his disposal, albeit a small one, and used it without fear. In the summer of 1918 his small cadre of warriors seized Yaroslavl' and several other cities just outside of Moscow, and he was in frequent contact with the British General Poole and the French on the subject of the Allied landings, and planned his capture of Yaroslavl' for July 6th, which was supposed to coincide with the intervention.

It is not exactly clear whether Reilly even asked Savinkov to be Prime Minister, or if he simply decided that would be the fact. Savinkov had hated his time in the Provisional Government, and showed his distaste for it whenever he could. Savinkov hated even references

[14] This number, while absurd, may not be entirely a product of Reilly's imagination. While writing he may have conflated another fiction with his own: an agent provocateur, Steckelmann, had met with Cromie during this period, and reported that he had 60,000 followers in his pay in Finland (Occleshaw, 222).

to totalitarianism; one incident, which filled him with disgust for Kerensky,[15] was during a tour of one of the tsar's palaces for some foreign dignitaries. Nervously, Kerensky kept plucking at a button on the tsar's uniform in a cupboard. Savinkov said this was "disgusting," and that "familiarity even with the uniform of a dead tsar cannot be tolerated." As a terrorist and assassin[16] he preferred the comfort of opposition, since that was what he had been for his entire life, and saw nothing wrong with employing mass violence in order to bring it about.

Winston Churchill, who met Savinkov after the war, describes him in the most flattering way possible: "Small in stature; moving as little as possible, and that noiselessly and with deliberation; remarkable gray-green eyes in a face of almost deathly pallor; speaking in a calm, low, even voice, almost a monotone; innumerable cigarettes" (van der Rhoer, 39).

With the officers organized and the skeletal provisional government decided upon, Reilly began gathering support from the Letts and funding from Lockhart and various other British Intelligence sources to buy them off. The question of money was readily solved, since anti-Communist sentiment throughout Moscow was difficult to miss and in "a short space of time" (Reilly, 26) hundreds of thousands of rubles were gathered in Reilly's base of operations. At this time, he was approached by Colonel Eduard Berzin, who was one of the Lettish commandants. He was already working with the Allied Secret Service and de Vertremont, an agent attached to the French embassy in Moscow. Though Reilly did not know de Vertremont, he was aware of his actions through Captain Hill of the British embassy mission. Reilly now had the connections and the money to carry out his plot.

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[15] Despite Savinkov's stated distaste for Kerensky, he still unambiguously supported Kerensky in discussions with Kornilov (Kerensky, 213).

[16] Boris Savinkov played an integral part in the assassinations of Minister of Interior Vyacheslav von Plehve and Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, deeds for which he was arrested in 1906. The stories behind these undertakings are contained in his memoirs (Savinkov, 9-117).

The above is Reilly's version of events, which does not mesh with those given by Lockhart and later by van der Rhoer. In Lockhart's version, Berzin approached him in the embassy along with another Lettish man named Smidehen, the latter of which brought a letter from Captain Cromie, and the former doing most of the communication. Cromie thought that, since by this time the Allied missions had decided on leaving, they might as well "bang the 'dore' before [they] went out," and that the Letts, who were serving as the Praetorian Guard for the Bolsheviks, would be the perfect candidates to aid in this. Berzin explained that the Letts had no great love of the Bolsheviks, and wanted nothing more than to go home to an independent Latvia. Since an Allied victory would be the best way to secure an independent Latvia – by Berzin's estimation there was no way to have an independent Latvia while there existed a strong Germany – he wished to arrange a surrender of the Lettish units to General Poole's forces in Archangel. Neither Smidehen nor Berzin made a mention of helping to overthrow the government, only that they wanted to go home without getting shot at.

Since Lockhart and the other consulate generals were already on their way out, he arranged for Berzin's introduction to Reilly, who was planning to go underground after the British mission departed. On August 17 Reilly reported back to Lockhart, saying that "his negotiations were proceeding smoothly and *that the Letts had no intention of being involved in the collapse of the Bolsheviks* [emphasis added]." Nevertheless Reilly suggested the possibility of employing the Letts in a counterrevolution plot once the rest of the Entente representatives departed. His suggestion was rejected immediately by all three representatives he met with, and he was warned explicitly "to have nothing to do with so dangerous and doubtful a move." It is unclear how Reilly got from that to building a counterrevolutionary plot around the Letts.

Van der Rhoer's story is similar, but just different enough that it is difficult to produce an accurate picture of events. In his version, Reilly had been seeking contacts with Latvians and, upon receiving a summons from the British Embassy in Petrograd on July 29, went straight there to meet with Captain Cromie. Indeed he was to be put in contact with two Latvians, named Shmidken and Sprogis, who had deserted their regiments because of hostility to Bolshevism, though they remained in touch with their former comrades. In this version Shmidken is the talkative one, elucidating the political stances of his fellows remaining with the Lettish regiments while Sprogis sips his brandy. Shmidken, emboldened by President Wilson's Fourteen Points[17] and the promise for national self-determination for ethnic groups, reports that his former comrades had been misled and believe the Bolsheviks to be the only people capable of guaranteeing Latvian independence. Upon being pressed, he admits that the other Latvians would almost certainly not fight the Entente, and if push came to shove, they would side with the Entente against the Bolsheviks. Reilly then gave Shmidken a letter to deliver from Cromie to Lockhart, and arranged a meeting for later.

At Shmidken and Sprogis's meeting with Lockhart on August 13, the Latvian duo made the same promises Shmidken and Berzin made in Lockhart's version, the very same promises that they had made to Reilly a few days before – the Lettish commanders had no wish to fight the Entente, and wished to defect. Shmidken then told Lockhart about Berzin, whom he would attempt to get into contact with Lockhart the next day, August 14, as reported by Soviet news source *Pravda*. At his meeting with Berzin and Shmidken, Lockhart's and van der Rhoer's

[17] Wilson's Fourteen Point Plan was his roadmap to a lasting peace in Europe after World War I. Among the main ideas was that of national self-determination, which would advocate for countries to be set up for each ethnic group, allowing ethnicities to govern themselves. This is responsible for the creation of various Central and East European states, and was a hope among people living in the former Russian Empire (Strachan, 318).

versions match – the Latvians only wished freedom for their country, they would not fight the Entente and would be willing to fight the Bolsheviks, etc.

Unfortunately for the intentions of all involved in the Lockhart Plot, the participants lacked the benefit of knowing what we know now, as well as the foresight necessary for self-preservation. On the whole, they displayed an unfortunate tendency to lose suspicion when approached by people claiming to be hostile to the Bolshevik regime. The entire idea of involving the Lettish riflemen, the backbone of the army defending Soviet Russia at this time, was a ploy invented by the Cheka in order to prove that the Western envoys were colluding in order to overthrow Lenin. Schmidken's real name was Yan Buikis, a Cheka agent, and Berzin was chosen specifically by the Cheka as well. While claims vary as to the amount of money the British paid directly to the Cheka through these men, the range of the estimates is not all that wide: from 1.7 million to 1.9 million rubles. More importantly, what Reilly would later claim to be the most promising plot against the Bolsheviks was, in fact, a trap for Western conspirators, and, his vision of reality was never adjusted (Occleshaw, 223-224; Andrew and Mitrokhin, 25).

However, Lockhart omits the next step in Reilly's contact with Berzin and the Latvians. Once Berzin and Shmidken left, Lockhart met with General Lavergne and the Consul General Grenard, both French. In the ensuing discussion, the three agreed that it would be beneficial to use the Latvians in a counterrevolutionary coup against the Bolsheviks, and should set about sounding them out immediately for this task. Lockhart and the two Frenchmen agreed that large sums of money would be necessary to ensure any such tasks, and Lockhart would be more than willing to provide it. They would turn over the task of maintaining contact with Berzin to Reilly, since the three of them would soon be departing from Russia.

The following day Lockhart, Grenard, Lavergne, Reilly, Shmidken and Berzin all met to discuss the probability of Lettish defection to the Allied landing in Archangel.[18] The two Latvians affirmed they would be willing to do this, since the Entente was going to win the war and Russia would have no say in the peace process. Berzin is unsure whether the Latvians will support the overthrow of the Bolsheviks however, until he is pressed by Reilly in the following exchange:

> Reilly: Can you Latvians remain neutral? If the Bolsheviks are fighting us, you'll have to decide whether to support them or fight against them. There's no middle way.
> Berzin: We won't fight against the Allies.
> Reilly: Will you fight *for* the Allies?
> Berzin: If it comes to a choice between Latvia and Russia, we choose our own country. (van der Rhoer, 76)

Reilly then asks if a new Russian government which hasn't been discredited by a separate peace with the Germans would be more favorable to the Latvians, hinting at the counterrevolutionary plot. Berzin found this plan agreeable, but would have to confer with his other commanders to see if they would find it palatable as well. From van der Rhoer's telling of events, it appears as though the Latvians were intended for use in the counterrevolution, and Lockhart, Grenard, and Lavergne were agreeable to the idea, in contrast with Lockhart's version, where nobody agreed to it.

At his meeting with Eduard Berzin, Sidney Reilly discussed in earnest the plot he was concocting, having already "sounded out" Berzin and ascertaining that Berzin was on the level. Reilly emphasized the ludicrous amounts of money which would be going towards the Letts if they jumped ship, to which Berzin replied that it would be enough to guarantee the loyalty of his men. He assured Reilly that the task ahead of them would be easy, and that the Letts already

[18] On August 4, the Allied interventionist force had landed at Archangel. The numbers for this have already been given, but needless to say they were pitiful and could have used the boost from the Latvians, which were purported to be excellent shots.

loathed their Bolshevik masters intensely. Reilly had a strong feeling for Berzin and put the hopes for success of his plot on him. This was unfortunate, since everything Berzin had told Reilly about the Latvians was an outright lie in an attempt to trap the foreign plotters.[19]

Soon thereafter, the German ambassador von Mirbach was assassinated by two members of the Left SRs[20] who had opposed the Brest-Litovsk treaty and wanted to get back into the war against Germany. The foreign missions, which were regarded as a hotbed of revolutionary activity, began to be targeted by frequent Cheka raids, and were blamed for arson activity throughout the city.[21] Several of the foreign missions, including the British, wished to withdraw at this point, but Captain Hill remained behind to assist Reilly with his work, as well as de Vertremont and the American agent Kalamatiano. A meeting was arranged for Reilly between de Vertremont and himself. Despite Reilly's misgivings he attended the meeting, where he met the even more unsavory M. Marchand. At this meeting Reilly explained some details of his conspiracy to de Vertremont, trying to remain out of Marchand's earshot; Marchand was able to surreptitiously approach and overhear a large part of what Reilly said to de Vertremont, though.

Reilly, of course, does not give the whole story. Von Mirbach was in fact killed by Yakov Blumkin and Nikolai Andreev, Chekist agents and members of the Left SR political party allied with the Bolsheviks. As previously noted, the Left SRs had opposed the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and wanted to get the country back into war with Germany

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[19] That Berzin was a plant by the Cheka is all but accepted as fact. Debo makes a convincing case in "Lockhart Plot or Dzerzhinski Plot?" and several other sources, including the Mitrokhin archive, support him. Van der Rhoer argues differently however, arguing the fact that E. P. Berzin is a common name among Latvians and attributing the status of a Chekist plant to him could be in error (van der Rhoer, 242-243).

[20] The Left SRs, or Left Social Revolutionaries, had formed a coalition government with the Bolsheviks in 1917. It was the only coalition government in the Soviet Union.

[21] A large fire occurred around the time of von Mirbach's assassination at a train station. This incident was blamed on the French mission in an effort to drive the French foreign mission out of Russia (Reilly, 29-30). Ironically, the French may have had something to do with it after all.

(Rabinowitch, 291).[22] By their conception, if they were able to murder the German ambassador, the German Empire would be overcome with outrage and resume the war with the new Bolshevik state.[23] Keeping in mind the complete moral collapse of the army under the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks' tenuous control over their own military, this may not have been such a wise idea, but they figured it to be the best way to create trouble for the Bolsheviks while endearing themselves to the West.

Van der Rhoer's account of von Mirbach's assassination is more detailed than Reilly's, which gave the impression they merely shot him while walking down the street. These two Chekists approached the German embassy on June 4 (June 6 according to Rabinowitch and other sources, enough to suggest that van der Rhoer is wrong on this account), declaring they had a message which they could only share with von Mirbach. When they finally were able to meet him, instead of withdrawing the document the assassins had wanted to discuss, one of the conspirators withdrew a Browning automatic pistol (Hafner says revolver) and shot at von Mirbach and the two embassy assistants sitting on the other end of the long table, missing with all three shots owing to range. As von Mirbach attempted to escape, the second conspirator withdrew his own pistol from his pocket, took careful aim at the ambassador, and shot him straight through the back of the head, placing the exit wound squarely on his nose. The two assassins each then threw a grenade they had brought in with them to cover their escape and hopped out the window.

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[22] The Allies, for their part, were also pushing for Russia to rejoin the war with Germany. Reilly reports that there was celebrating in England upon von Mirbach's assassination (Reilly, 28), and Lockhart reports a general feeling of disappointment when the Germans resumed diplomatic relations with Russia (*British Agent*, 267).

[23] The Left SRs were very explicit that they did not want to overthrow the Bolsheviks, and instead wanted to encourage an 'uprising' against the German occupiers in the Ukraine (Hafner, *The Assassination of Count Mirbach and the "July Uprising" of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries in Moscow, 1918).*

Seeing as how Blumkin and Andreev had murdered a foreign dignitary and nearly thrown the country back into a war which it would almost certainly lose, they were immediately hunted down and arrested by Dzerzhinski himself. Knowing that they were under the protection of the VCheka's main military force, a unit led by Left SRs, Dzerzhinski initially was under the impression that the two assassins had been acting on their own initiative, however, while searching for them at VCheka military headquarters he found many top Left SR leaders. They informed Dzerzhinski that von Mirbach had been assassinated on orders from the Left SR Central Committee, which intended to take full responsibility for the act (Rabinowitch, 292).

Reilly's plan was now complete and ready for implementation, and it was simply a matter of waiting for an opportunity. He did not have to wait long, as on the August 28 there was to be a central committee meeting which would include Lenin and Trotsky. Berzin and he conferred about what would be the plan, and came to an agreement: Reilly and a small group of conspirators would take positions behind the curtains, while the Letts would seal the doors and arrest Lenin and Trotsky (Reilly, 33). They would then parade the two Bolshevik leaders, who to Reilly personified Bolshevism, through the streets in their underwear.[24]

There developed, however, a slight hitch, which may be premature to attribute to a deity. The conference was delayed until September 6, which to Reilly seemed advantageous, as it would give him more time to confirm his plans and close some loose ends. To accomplish this Reilly went to Petrograd with Berzin, since most of the work they had done personally at this time had been concentrated in Moscow. Still confident in the power of his own planning he went to see Orlovsky, the head of the criminal police branch of the Cheka (as opposed to the secret

[24] Though this detail may seem childish, it was one possibility Reilly had considered. His other preferred option was outright murdering them, which would have been much more effective.

police, led by Dzerzhinsky), and confirmed that Reilly's alias Relinsky was not suspected of anything.

Vyacheslav Orlovsky, also named as Veneslav Orlovsky by Reilly, hailed from Poland, and had become acquainted with Alexander Grammatikov in the Tsarist era, when Grammatikov was a barrister and Orlovsky, then going by Orlov, was a judge presiding over espionage cases. How he had become head of the Cheka-criminal, Grammatikov did not ask, nor did he want to know.[25] It was from him Reilly received his pass into the Cheka, so it was a safe bet from Reilly's point of view that he was at the very least sympathetic to Reilly's efforts to overthrow the Bolsheviks, though he was certainly just giving Reilly enough rope with which to hang himself and his cadre. In fact Reilly had wanted him to become minister of criminal affairs in the government which was to replace the Bolsheviks. However, it is not definite whether Reilly's trust in Orlovsky was fully justified – it is entirely possible that Orlovsky was merely trying to allay his suspicions and have him lower his guard.

It is important, I feel, to explain from where Reilly learned about the delay for this congress of the Soviets as an example of his character. At the first party congress he attended, back on July 4 1918, Reilly became accustomed with a typist working for the Central Committee named Olga Dmitrievna Starzhevskaya. She was an attractive though naïve woman, who was attracted by Reilly's dashing looks, which van der Rhoer mentions at this point as being reminiscent of the later Humphrey Bogart, well-tailored suit, and the position he declared he occupied, which was a post in the Narkomindel. Over the course of the next month they became extremely close, at least in Olga's eyes, and Reilly promised marriage despite the fact that he

[25] Though ignorance is bliss, Grammatikov probably should have tried to find out. Orlovsky was former Okhrana and worked with the Cheka for ten years, a stint which included spying on the Whites during the Civil War and time with the Trust (Brackman, 156).

was already married to two other women and had no intention of following through.[26] Regardless, he was able to get a future safe house out of her through his cynical actions, and on the night of August 21, when he was fishing for information about the upcoming congress meeting, she let slip that the plenum had been delayed a week. While I understand the necessity of deception and a variety of contact styles in intelligence work, this deliberately taking advantage of Olga Dmitrievna seems to go beyond what is necessary. I feel this reveals about his character some egotistical qualities which can be seen in other means, such as his frequent comparisons of himself to Napoleon and his desire to be the "master of Russia."

Orlovsky's assurances to Reilly that he was under no suspicion as a result of his activities were not entirely true. Reilly had been shadowed during his time in Petrograd, and went to his meeting with Orlovsky mainly to give the impression that he was unaware of the tail. Berzin had by now returned to Moscow to make sure everything in that city was in order, and Reilly phoned Grammatikov to check how the business was proceeding. They spoke in a commonly used code, describing their plot as a patient, the conspirators as surgeons, and their actions as an operation. It was clear what Grammatikov meant when he said, "The doctors have operated too early and the patient's condition is serious" (Reilly, 41). In person Grammatikov elaborated: a sympathizer to their cause, though he had no connection with Reilly or Lockhart, had shot dead Uritsky on the morning of August 30, another conspirator had been arrested, and reprisals were sure to follow. For the moment the most important thing was for Reilly to get back to Moscow, as insane as it might have been to go into the lion's den, and see what, exactly, the damage was.

Since the assassin was no doubt executed long before Reilly's account was published it is unclear why he does not give a name. Both Lockhart and van der Rhoer identify the man who

[26] This is not an unusual statement for Reilly. While working in Revel, in order to get out of a sticky situation with the family he was staying with he promised to marry the daughter of his landlord, whom he had compromised.

shot the head of the Petrograd Soviet as a Russian Junker named Kennegeisser from the Baltic. However, neither Lockhart nor van der Rhoer mentions that Kennegeisser was a sympathizer of theirs beyond sharing a common cause.[27]

Further, it seems downright strange that Reilly uses the term "another conspirator" to refer to Dora Kaplan, also known as Fanny or Fania Kaplan the woman who shot Lenin in the chest and throat on that same day. This would have been a much more driving reason behind the Red Terror which broke Reilly's organization than the assassination of Uritsky. Uritsky's assassination, though damaging to the Bolshevik presence, would likely have been responded to in a manner similar to von Mirbach's assassination. An increased instance of Cheka raids on foreigners, stricter patrols on the streets, etc. would have been expected to result from that; sequestering and expulsion of foreign embassy staff and near-prohibited travel in and out of Moscow could only be the result of a much larger event than the assassination of an official, admittedly highly placed.[28]

Before embarking on a quite likely lethal journey, he set up a meeting with Captain Cromie of the Naval Attaché at the British Embassy. When Cromie was late, Reilly got curious and decided to visit the embassy himself. He arrived to find a sort of carnival sense in the air, and the Reds conducting a raid. A line of Bolshevik soldiers was laid in front of the building, the door had been battered down and the flag removed. He found a familiar face, and found out what exactly had happened. In search of Reilly, the Reds had stormed the embassy, and met harsh resistance from the British subjects within, and Cromie had been shot to death, but not

[27] Kannegeiser, a Jewish poet, said he was carrying out the assassinations of all Jews who worked with the Bolsheviks, and that he blamed them for signing the traitorous Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (Butler, 34).

[28] A few weeks after the assassination attempt on Lenin, one Chekist was reporting that he had killed 800 revolutionaries by firing squad, and injured 6229 more. Lenin endorsed this killing, and urged more public executions "to make people tremble for miles around." This is quite different from his attitude after Uritsky's assassination, after which he refused to break off any planned engagements as suggested to him by Yakov Sverdlov, and generally opposed violent reprisals in this case (Butler, 34-36).

before he was responsible for the line of dead soldiers outside the door. Orlovsky's claim that Reilly, under his aliases, was not under suspicion may have been true, but there was definite suspicion about his activities, enough to warrant storming an embassy and murdering people.

The above account was written in Reilly's personal memoir which, according to Ferguson, is "almost complete fiction" (Ferguson, 23). In this case Ferguson is almost certainly correct, since every other secondary source gives a radically different version of the Bolsheviks storming the British embassy and Cromie's death. For one, there are no mentions of a line of bodies, nor are there more than a few casualties on the Bolshevik side; Cromie was prepared but reluctant to use force to defend the embassy, and by the time he had resolved to use lethal force the Bolshevik forces were already firmly inside the lobby, where they could take cover from his shots. There is also no mention of a Browning automatic in any of the others, but rather it is specifically noted that he used a revolver. This is perhaps an understandable mistake since, as it was the same pistol used to assassinate von Mirbach according to some sources, it seems to have been a fairly common firearm at the time. Thirdly, Ferguson's account, which is the most detailed, says that Cromie was shot from behind a single time, the bullet piercing his skull and killing him almost instantly. This is supported by van der Rhoer's version, which paints a drastically different image from him being "riddled with bullets."

It is not entirely clear as to why Reilly writes a progression of events so distanced from actual events that it might as well be fictional. He certainly did not forget details of that day; he writes about a specific conversation he had just prior to entering the embassy, and surely even for someone who had seen as much as Reilly this scene would create an indelible impression on his memory. Most likely he merely wanted to present Cromie in a better light than being shot from behind a single time would. That is not the sort of death which Reilly idolized and sought

for himself. He thought of Cromie as a friend, after all, and the ignominious death which he received simply would not suit his own image of his friend. However, the version of events so far divorced from reality lends credence to Ferguson's claim that Reilly's "experiences" are nearly fictitious.

Regardless of the veracity of Reilly's account of events, it was objectively clear that Reilly's plot to overthrow the Bolsheviks laid in ruins and the British mission in Petrograd had been utterly destroyed, leaving Reilly with no support. He returned to Moscow once more, traveling part way by rail and then by wagon to avoid Cheka patrols, using Grammatikov to act as a sort of barometer for the situation and the likelihood of his making it into the city unmolested. The trip, he felt, was completely necessary. Even though he would, by Grammatikov's estimation, almost certainly be captured, Reilly still needed to check on the remains of his operation in Moscow, figure out what had gone wrong and who was compromised. Further, Reilly figured he could use himself as a bargaining chip for those who had been captured, claiming himself as the sole instigator of the plot.

Though the details of Sidney Reilly's infiltration into Moscow are incredibly exciting and no doubt written with intent to make himself appear as dashing as possible, the topic of focus is what he actually did upon entering the Soviet capital. Reilly quickly sought refuge in some tertiary safe houses, and one night he just happened to stay at the same one to which Dagmara K. came to seek shelter from the incessant Cheka raids being conducted under the auspices of the Red Terror. She relayed to him exactly what had happened while he was in Petrograd, and how his primary safe house with the theater workers had been discovered and broken. Apparently during a routine check, at least as routine as they were during this period, two of the ladies and Dagmara (the other two are not named) were able to avoid discovery by stashing away the large

sums of money given by Lockhart which Reilly had stored there for paying off the Letts. They would have gotten away just fine, according to her, were it not for Friede choosing that moment to bring her portfolio case, full of sensitive Red Army communications documents, up to the apartment. She was found in the stairwell, had her portfolio case inspected, and was promptly arrested.

Reilly remarks, "And so had the most promising plot ever concocted against the Bolsheviks been broken down by the folly of Mlle. Friede… Our plot had ended in a fiasco" (Reilly, 63). There is no effort at all on Reilly's part to hide his contempt of Friede after this, and he lays the blame squarely on her shoulders for his plot failing. He has a bit of a point, admittedly – the Cheka had long since commandeered every automobile in the city for their usage, and his operatives had been instructed explicitly not to enter a house if there was a car out in front of it, since that was a tell-tell sign that Chekists were presently conducting a raid. However, Reilly says, "poor Mlle. Friede had become so used to danger in the two months, during which she had acted as my agent, that she had neglected *a most simple and elementary precaution*" (Reilly, 63, emphasis added). It could be that Reilly is being too hard on her for a simple slip-up, but considering this little mistake caused his entire operation to be broken, led to the arrest of three trusted agents, forced him to evacuate the country in the most hectic way imaginable, and cost him the potential title of "master of Russia," it is understandable he may be somewhat bitter when writing about this.

Reilly fails to remember, perhaps out of embarrassment or his still firm belief in the loyalty of Eduard Berzin, not only that Marchand had heard practically all of Reilly's meeting with de Vertremont, but that Reilly had apparently kept a list of names and addresses for most of his agents in Moscow in his Petrograd apartment, the address for which he had given to Berzin.

Sometime around August 25 Berzin presented this list to his superiors at the Cheka. The subsequent assassinations of Uritsky and attempt on Lenin provided the Cheka with the pretext needed to begin full-scale raids (Long, *The Lockhart Plot in Russia*).

Throughout his account of events, Sidney Reilly gives the distinct impression that he feels that he is entitled to greatness, while demonstrating a strong sense of self-entitlement. He often goes beyond the scope of orders given to him in order to fulfill his own personal vanity, as can be seen in this cable from Colonel C.N. French, liaison between the Secret Services and Foreign Affairs offices in Britain in November 1918:

> Reilly has been warned most specifically that he was not to get into any official position or to get mixed up with politics; therefore when it became apparent that he was doing so, a wire was sent ordering him to proceed to Siberia to report on German Prisoners of War Camps – this with the idea of getting him away from the Political atmosphere in which he was being involved. (Occleshaw, 226)

From this we see how Reilly deliberately avoided his orders and got involved in a plot which he thought would enrich himself and fulfill his grand ambitions. Though he could have played it safely and helped to undermine the Bolsheviks by going to Siberia, as the Secret Intelligence Services commanded him, he chose instead to increase the risk involved in his activities by following the plans that would permit him the possibility of supplanting the Bolsheviks himself. This is consistent with the line of thinking of a Nietzschean superman; clearly the enlightened, extraordinary man knows better than the ordinary men who are giving him orders.

Further, despite Reilly's high opinion of himself, he betrays within himself an undeniable naivety in dealing with agent provocateurs. Despite assurances that he "sounded out" Eduard Berzin, he missed altogether the reality that the Latvian colonel was in the employ of the Cheka, and it is significant that Reilly actively denies this fact even in his own memoirs years after the plot had been broken. Additionally, Reilly trusts Orlovsky unconditionally, and simply states

that he did not want to know how Orlovsky attained a position at the head of the Cheka-criminal. One would expect that a trained espionage agent, frequently referred to as “the best” or “greatest” would be more suspicious of people promising him the world.

Chapter Two: The Trust Itself

"A fool and his money are soon parted." - Proverb

Any scholar is bound to insist that it is impossible to be entirely clear about the real status of the Trust, its organizational structure and history, due to the lack of available sources on these topics and the unreliability of those sources which exist. Though recently several documents and accounts have come to light which reveal information about the foundations of the MUCR, especially the Mitrokhin archive,[29] it is still unlikely that the full history will be known for quite some time. The Russian secret services archives are routinely closed to people who would desire to study them, and there would be little to find in the British or American archives – the West simply did not learn very much about the Trust while it was in operation. The main source, a confession from Opperput, an OGPU agent who defected in 1927 (Grant, 263), is what is used by van der Rhoer and Kettle, however this material is also problematic. Opperput was a false defector, who offered useless or outright incorrect information to whatever service took him in while gathering information of his own.

Nonetheless, a few things are so simple and straightforward that there is either very little reason to doubt them, and there are facts that are commonly accepted or found sufficiently credible to be not worth disputing. The Trust was originally founded as the Monarchist Union of Central Russia, a counter-Bolshevik organization working within the Soviet Union (Leggett, 297). Its leaders were Eduard Opperput, alias Eduard Ottovich and Alexander Yakushev, who had shared a cell in the Butyrki prison while undergoing OGPU interrogation in 1922 (van der Rhoer, 204). Mostly the Trust operated with the pretext of distrust towards various White

[29] From 1972 onward, Vasiliy Mitrokhin, a KGB archivist, began compiling archived material from the KGB. At first he saved only small scraps, but over time worked his way up to entire typed pages. Over the course of several visits in 1992 which culminated in his defection on November 7 he brought thousands of pages into the British embassy in an unspecified Baltic republic, and then London itself (Andrew and Mitrokhin, 9-13).

Russian organizations in exile and various Western services working against the Bolsheviks, saying that these opponents of the Soviet regime "might do more harm than good, as they had no real knowledge of the ever-changing situation, and might act at cross-purposes with the anti-Bolshevik groups inside Russia" (Kettle, 108). Since the Trust would accomplish most of the work itself, it tried to discourage other anti-Soviet organizations from interfering in Soviet affairs while accepting generous financial support.

The Trust first became known to the West in later summer 1921, when Alexander Yakushev, a senior Bolshevik official, traveled to Revel while en route to a lumber conference in Oslo. He met with Commander Boyce of the British SIS Russian section, and claimed that Bolshevik officials, like himself, were really bitterly opposed to the Bolshevik regime, and that under their influence Bolshevik rule was changing. Boyce was impressed with the idea and immediately informed a friend in Berlin about this. From there word spread to the various Russian émigré communities, and from there word made it back to Moscow. Unbeknownst to Boyce the quick spread of this information, as well as Yakushev's unusual route – not many people traveled to Oslo via Reval – had raised suspicion about Yakushev, and he was thrown in prison upon his return to Soviet Russia. In prison he was tortured and sentenced to death by Kiakowski, an OGPU officer and friend of Dzerzhinsky, but had his sentence commuted when Kiakowski and Dzerzhinsky realized they had a use for such an organization with such high regard from Western intelligence services, and introduced Eduard Opperput into Yakushev's cell. Yakushev was almost certainly part of the Soviet "White Line" operation, during which Soviet agents infiltrated émigré groups, including all of Savinkov's operations and stole from the archives of Vladimir Orlov, the head of the White Russian émigré organization (West and

Tsarev, 6). The story about Yakushev being sent to prison and interrogated is definitely a fabrication on Opperput's part.

Little reference is made to Opperput and his career before his involvement with the Trust, except that he was almost certainly an OGPU agent from the very beginning, introduced to Yakushev with the purpose of bringing the Trust into the orbit of Soviet counter-intelligence operations. He was a German who was born in Latvia, had served in the Imperial Army during the war, and came from a wealthy landowning family with strong ties to the old regime. While acting as Minister of Finance for the Trust he engaged in a farcical debate with Yakushev over whether or not they should use violence to support their goals – neither supported implementing violence to overthrow the Bolsheviks (unsurprising, since they were both paid by the Bolshevik regime (Kettle, 108)), and the debates over policy were simply to weed out those who could be characterized as actually dangerous to the regime. Opperput's role in this convoluted story is, thus, hardly a mystery. It was Opperput who had supposedly cajoled out Yakushev's true plans for the Trust, and appropriated its use for Bolshevik plots. He would also tell a variety of different stories to different people with whom he came in contact.

It is necessary to say what, exactly, the OGPU was. The OGPU (Обьединенное Государственное Политическое Управление) was the figurative child of the Cheka, supposedly formed to act with more restraint than its hot-headed father organization formed primarily from freed criminals in the initial days of the Bolshevik government.[30] It kept most of the same personnel, including its head, Dzerzhinsky, and assumed most of the same operations. In addition to domestic security, it handled foreign security affairs, much like its latter forms in the NKVD and KGB, including intelligence and counter-intelligence operations. Intelligence gathered and misinformation distributed by the OGPU was responsible for a multitude of leaks in

[30] See previous chapter for details on the formation of the Cheka from Katamidze.

British Secret Intelligence Services operations, and the snaring of several anti-Bolshevik agents which included, among countless others, Sidney Reilly and Boris Savinkov.

Unlike its veiled origin and alleged initial purpose, the Trust's outward operation is hardly an inscrutable mystery. Under Lenin's New Economic Plan, General Zayonchovsky[31] set up the Moscow Municipal Credit Authority (MMCA) to conduct supposedly legitimate business abroad. In reality the MMA served mostly to attract money from foreign governments and émigré organizations, and did not in fact act as a financial institution. Yakushev and General Potapov, the Minister of Finance and Chief of Staff of the Trust respectively and its founding members, went abroad to various governments and made this function of the organization well-publicized, as well as spreading the opinion that the Trust members are in urgent need of money, but do not require additional plots to support its work. Additionally, Yakushev and General Potapov proposed to the Western governments and émigré organizations a series of "windows" which would allow their agents to cross the Polish and Finnish frontiers and arrive safely in the Soviet Union for whatever operations they may want to carry out.

The series of windows which would be set up on the borders is described by van der Rhoer in the following manner: "the intelligence services would control the 'windows' on their side of the border; the Trust, using its agents in the Soviet border guards, would control the Russian side of the border" (van der Rhoer, 164-165). To the Poles and Finns this was a highly beneficial arrangement, and they accepted the proposal almost immediately. Moreover, these windows became operational within a very short time after the proposals were made, and various foreign intelligence services sent liaisons to the open countries to facilitate their agents through the border. Not only intelligence services, but émigré groups also benefitted from using these

[31] It is noteworthy that neither Zayonchovsky's name, nor any other transliteration of it, appears in either Wrangel's memoirs or Luckett's book on the White generals. In fact he is only mentioned in one scholarly article. Yakushev picked the perfect White general as the head of the Trust.

openings, and the ROVS, a combat division in exile led by former White General Kutepov, quickly established a liaison with the different cells in Russia, using his connections with Finnish intelligence. In no time ROVS agents were also going between the Finnish and Soviet border, along with representatives from various other foreign services.

General Potapov served as a general under the Imperial Army, but switched to the Bolshevik side almost as soon as they seized power. When the MUCR formed under him, it seemed as though he may have been having second thoughts about his most recent choice of allegiance (van der Rhoer, 164). Since he was part of the organization from the beginning, it is possible his anti-Bolshevik sentiments were actually genuine. Opperput, however, claims that Potapov was, along with the rest of the Trust leadership with the possible exception of General Andrei Zayonchovsky, an OGPU agent. In a letter to Kutepov, a letter signed by Potapov said, "that the OGPU had struck at the Trust, arresting many of its people, but that Yakushev and [Potapov himself] were safe and the organization continued to function. All those who had little or no connection with Staunitz [one of Opperput's aliases] … were also safe" (van der Rhoer, 207). This insistence seems awfully suspicious, and almost certainly confirms Opperput's assertion. However, this does not negate the possibility that Potapov did not approve whole-heartedly of his OGPU masters.

The OGPU trap worked wonders from the start. The ROVS, or Russian Armed Services Union, was formed almost entirely to co-operate with the Trust in response to a meeting General Klimovitch,[32] a prominent general in exile, had with Yakushev in June of 1923. General Peter Wrangel,[33] the leader of the Russian monarchists-in-exile, ordered Klimovitch to keep in touch

[32] Klimovitch was the former military governor of Moscow, and was in charge of police forces during the evacuations in the Crimea (Luckett, 360).

[33] Wrangel was a dedicated Monarchist of the highest degree. He had tried to organize resistance to the February Revolution, and fought viciously against the Reds under General Kornilov (Luckett, 109).

with Yakushev and establish a close relationship with the Trust. Shortly after, Wrangel organized all of the White Russian veterans to create the ROVS in order to maintain a proper military organization in exile. Yakushev had complained in spring of that year of timidity in the White Russian émigré community in sending an agent into Bolshevik Russia, and said this "was causing a deplorable impression in the underground movement" (Kettle, 109), presumably in a reference to the MUCR.

Grand Duke Nicholas, the presumed most likely person to retake the throne in the case of a Monarchist victory, appointed Kutepov to conduct an on-going liaison with the Trust in Yugoslavia. This indicates further (as if further indication were required) how convincing the Trust was as an organization, or how willing the community in exile was to believe in it. Indeed, Grand Duke Nicholas, Kutepov, and Klimovitch all believed implicitly in the genuineness of the Trust. With Kutepov as their liaison, all White Russian messages were sent to the Trust in Moscow, and Grand Duke Nicholas himself received Yakushev. Through Klimovitch, Yakushev was able to establish further links with Western intelligence services, for whom the Trust supplied much information, though of dubious reliability, and from whom the Trust received considerable amounts of money (Kettle, 110). As noted before, the ROVS, through Kutepov's connections with Finnish chief of staff General Wallenius, was frequently and eagerly sending agents through the border windows in Finland to further rendezvous with Trust agents in Russia.

General Kutepov was an old hand in the White Russian movement, and it is hardly surprising that he was chosen as a leader for a branch of the ROVS. He had served as a Colonel during the First World War and then as a General when most of the officers of his regiment, under Klimovitch, had been wiped out. During the February Revolution he sided with the Tsar, and favored restoring order over the protesters. In the Crimea he served as General Wrangel's

second-in-command, and went with him as the army traveled through Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. After the incident with the Trust was finished, Kutepov did not last much longer. On January 26 1930 he was kidnapped by OGPU agents on the street and taken to the docks, most likely to the ship *Spartak*. From there it is not certain what happened to him, but he was most likely executed (Luckett, 389).

Opperput's Confession

This is the point at which it becomes impossible to be sure of the veracity of anything relating to the Trust's history or organization. However, there exists a source of possible (albeit still debatable) veracity from within the Trust which shared intimate information about the history, structure, and personnel of the Trust. This is the information given privately by Eduard Opperput to Maria Schultz, whom I will speak about later, prior to his defection to the British. In this private confession he laid out what, exactly, the Trust was, what its aims had been, who staffed it, and why it was being shut down. Apart from this surviving recollection, there is little else to go on for someone wanting to investigate the inner workings of the Trust.

There is an important factor which makes one accept, however cautiously, Eduard Opperput's confession to Maria Schultz even if he would later become a false defector. This factor makes the confession important and even permits one to accept some parts of his formal confession during his so-called defection. The timeframe in which he shared his confession with Maria Schultz is highly significant, for at this point in 1927 the Trust had succeeded in removing what the Bolsheviks saw as their two biggest threats – Boris Savinkov and Sidney Reilly – as well as several other foreign agents, and collected large sums of money from émigré groups. Secondly, there was suspicion growing in foreign nations which had agreements with the Trust, most notably in Poland. There, Jozef Pilsudski had become wary of the Trust in 1926, and

demanded the Soviet mobilization plans from Alexander Yakushev. Yakushev's failure in producing these led to Poland cutting off all ties with the Trust, including the closing of the very important windows on their border, which led, in turn, to suspicions in other collaborating agencies (van der Rhoer, 196-197). On a more anecdotal level, the spread of suspicions is confirmed by Kutepov's warning to Pepita Reilly against going into the Soviet Union in search of her husband (van der Rhoer, 199). Because it would be difficult to accomplish its goals under such suspicions, and not wanting to overplay its hand with the Trust, the OGPU had decided to shut down the Trust Operation following Opperput's return to the Soviet Union with Maria Schultz.

> Opperput had long been an OGPU agent," van der Rhoer relates, "but he was not alone. Yakushev, Potapov, and other Trust leaders were also OGPU agents. In reality the OGPU had controlled the Trust almost from the beginning and placed its men in all the key positions… It had been different at first when General Zayonchovsky founded the Monarchist Organization of Central Russia. Zayonchovsky had brought Yakushev into the organization, and at that time Yakushev sincerely believed in the MOCR's aims and purposes. Then Yakushev made his visit to Reval and incautiously talked about the MOCR to his friend, who immediately sent a letter with the wonderful news to the monarchist center in Berlin. An OGPU agent at the center secretly obtained a copy of this letter and sent it to Moscow, where Yakushev, who had in the meantime resumed his foreign trip, was arrested at once. (van der Rhoer, 202-203)

What this means, in short, is that in the years of the operation of the Trust, from 1921 to 1927, there was very little time when the Western powers could have been in contact with a genuine Monarchist organization operating within the Soviet Union. Though it was founded by a true believer, and presumably maintained the leadership of Zayonchovsky until it was dissolved by the OGPU, the OGPU undoubtedly called the shots from the time the Trust became known to the West. Further, though it would be irresponsible to say that Yakushev's meeting with Boyce was the sole reason behind the immediate and thorough infiltration of the Trust by the OGPU – there is a great possibility that a large influential organization accumulating vast sums of money and

with extensive ties to émigré and foreign governments would have been discovered in short time anyway – thus Yakushev's meeting and Boyce's subsequent letter were the crucial factors in the OGPU's discovery of the Trust at such an early stage. Indeed, perhaps if Yakushev had not spoken at such length about the Trust, it could have operated for several years undermining Soviet endeavors with only small amounts of help from foreign sources. Regardless, the West was never truly in contact with a genuine Monarchist, anti-Bolshevik organization in the Soviet Union outside of Boyce's initial contact with Yakushev.

Van der Rhoer summarizes the process by which the OGPU brought the MOCR into OGPU orbit. He reveals how, through introducing a sympathetic voice into Yakushev's cell during the process of interrogation, he was able to make the MOCR a tool to be used by the OGPU for the purpose of catching foreign spies and agent *provocateurs*. The lower echelons of the MOCR would have no idea that they were being manipulated by OGPU agents, since they would be allowed to continue their anti-Bolshevik activities. However, their agitation would be ultimately pointless, and serve only to create the illusion of a functioning anti-Bolshevik organization in order to deceive the Soviet Union's enemies in the West.

> Yakushev sat in jail while the OGPU conducted an interrogation aimed at identifying his accomplices and decided what to do with him. In Yakushev's case [treason], death by shooting was the normal sentence in those days, when *any* organized opposition to the Soviet regime had to be mercilessly eliminated… But someone in the OGPU conceived a different idea about the tiny monarchist group with which Yakushev was associated, and this idea had a direct bearing on Yakushev's fate.
> "That 'someone' may have been Artur Kristianovich Artuzov,[34] chief of the OGPU Counterespionage Department… Artuzov discussed Yakushev's case with Dzerzhinsky. One of the two men came up with the idea of using the MOCR as a cover for the OGPU's counterespionage operations. The OGPU would place its own men in all the leading positions while the rank-and-file MOCR membership continued to believe that the MOCR was an anti-Communist organization. Under proper discipline, the members could engage in their activities without danger to the Soviet state. They would be permitted to participate in meetings and organize occasional actions, such as writing and distributing anti-Communist leaflets. The MOCR would not only function as a lightning

[34] For additional information on Artuzov, see Leggett, 443.

> rod that would attract and help to identify elements hostile to the Soviet regime *inside* Russia, but also channel émigré and foreign intelligence activities based *outside* Russia toward the MOCR, where they could be carefully controlled and monitored by the OGPU. (van der Rhoer, 203)

Thus, while the OGPU had control of the Trust, the latter was still able, or rather allowed, to conduct activities which could be construed as anti-Soviet so as to appear to be a valid opposition to the outside world. However these activities, few as they were, were still heavily controlled by OGPU agents, and enforced by discipline from above.

Allowing these activities to continue and grant the MOCR an air of legitimacy was very important if it were to serve its primary purpose under Artuzov's direction, acting as a "lightning rod" for internal and external threats to the Soviet Union. In this there is no doubt that the Trust succeeded, since several people who had long been considered enemies by the Soviet Union had been successfully caught and killed before the OGPU decided to disband the Trust: the list included Sidney Reilly, who was was *persona non grata* in the Soviet Union since the Lettish Rifle conspiracy and had a warrant for his arrest or murder should he ever be spotted on Soviet territory, and Boris Savinkov, who had the same sentence against him after his escape. Artuzov's vision for the Trust, as an enormous trap for the Soviet Union's enemies, succeeded beyond even his wildest dreams when he first proposed his deal in Yakushev's interrogation chamber.

Opperput's confession goes further, detailing Yakushev's time under interrogation and his own introduction into the scheme:

> Dzerzhinsky approved the plan. As a first step, Artuzov set out to recruit Yakushev as an OGPU agent and use him to facilitate the infiltration of OGPU men into the monarchist organization. While still being subjected to severe physical and mental pressure, Yakushev acquired a cellmate, none other than Eduard Opperput, who told Yakushev that he had been arrested because of his anti-Communist activities.
> Obeying Artuzov's instructions, Opperput, who had wormed out of Yakushev the tale of his misadventures, pointed out that the émigrés were all old women who preferred to gab

> and conduct petty intrigues among themselves rather than to undertake real actions. The émigrés were disunited and could agree on nothing, and if they ever returned to power they would restore a regime with all the glaring weaknesses and stupidity of the old regime. They had proved their unreliability in the way they betrayed Yakushev. Despite the obvious faults of the Soviet regime, the Bolshevik program only needed to be properly implemented. Perhaps it was necessary to get rid of the Bolsheviks in order to make the Soviet state live up to its own program: 'Soviets without Communists,' as the Kronstadt sailors had demanded. The best way to achieve such a goal was to work *within* the Soviet regime toward the required changes. (van der Rhoer, 203-204)

From this and other instances it is clear that Yakushev was an unwilling collaborator with the OGPU and would have preferred to continue working with the variety of émigré groups scattered throughout Western Europe at the time. Under the stress of imprisonment, and with a seemingly sympathetic voice in the form of the planted Opperput, he recanted his idea that the restoration of the old regime would save Russia, or that it was even desirable, if he wished to see an even somewhat effective governance of the Russian people. However, he did not give up on the possibility of getting rid of the Bolsheviks, and his echoing of the Kronstadt sailors, "Soviets without Communists" (Mett, 53) shows that on the deepest level he was still anti-Communist.[35] However, after his release he would no longer work in tandem with émigré groups toward restoration of the monarchy, and would instead seek only to undermine the Communist regime.

Moreover, once Opperput had softened Yakushev up a little, Dzerzhinsky moved in to bring Yakushev fully on board, comparing what happened with Austria-Hungary with what would likely happen should the old regime retake power in Russia,[36] and offering him an honored position so that he could influence the policies of the regime. Opperput's confession to

[35] "Soviets without Communists" would also become the rallying cry of Boris Savinkov's later organization in exile. (Andreyev, 115).

[36] After the First World War, Austria-Hungary was completely broken up into several states, with Austria and Hungary being the primary successors and receiving only land from Austria-Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Serbia receiving significant amounts of territory from the shattered empire (Strachan, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War,* 299-300).

Schultz discloses further about the effect these sort of appeals to Yakushev's nationalism had on the unfortunate prisoner:

> This kind of persuasion… 'brought Yakushev to his senses,' as the OGPU might have said. Yakushev agreed to assume the role of the OGPU's principle agent in the MOCR. Since the news of his arrest had been kept secret…Yakushev soon resumed his normal activity, including his participation in MOCR work. At the same time he was joined by a new colleague, Eduard Opperput, who rapidly made himself indispensible to the monarchist organization.
> Everything went well – so well, indeed, that the 'capping' of the MOCR with OGPU agents succeeded beyond the most extravagant hopes of Dzerzhinsky and Artuzov. The MOCR rank-and-file members went about their work, never suspecting the truth, and when, in due time, they expanded their contacts with the anti-Communist emigration – Savinkov's group, General Kutepov's Combat Organization, and others – their genuine devotion to the anti-Communist cause as well as the vigor and decisiveness of their actions convinced even the most hardened cynics among the émigrés and foreign intelligence officers, with only a few exceptions. (van der Rhoer, 204-205)

The OGPU's infiltration of the MOCR was practically flawless. There were no questions raised by members of the organization itself or foreign intelligence communities, and the Trust's members' continued zeal for action helped to convince everyone who had dealings with the MOCR that it was still a powerful anti-Communist organization operating within the Soviet Union. Likely, Yakushev himself remaining within the organization, rather than executed as he would have been otherwise, helped give them an air of legitimacy, considering his previous relationship with Commander Boyce and how forthcoming he was with information about the MOCR at their meeting in 1921. It was the perfect compromise for all parties involved – the rank-and-file members got to continue their anti-Communist agitation efforts, Yakushev got to feel like he was helping his country and stayed out of prison, and Dzerzhinsky and Artuzov got the perfect bait for people who wished to conspire against the Soviet Union. All of this was possible without there ever being a real threat to the Bolshevik regime.

Opperput's confession to Schultz concerning the foundation and structure of the Trust concludes by speaking about the efficiency of the operation's efforts to deceive foreign observers.

> Before long, Yakushev established formal relations with a number of foreign intelligence services and began supplying logistical support for their agents in Russia…as well as intelligence supports from alleged Trust sources.
>
> In this manner the OGPU was able to identify its enemies, learn about their plans, and feed them misleading information. But, above all, the OGPU succeeded for several years, from 1923 to 1926, in monopolizing the intelligence channels into and out of Russia.
>
> The foreign intelligence services were so favorably impressed with the Trust's reports and logistical support that they liberally provided funds to the Trust. These funds proved to be sufficient to finance all of the OGPU's counterespionage Department's projects and many operations of the OGPU Foreign Administration, which conducted espionage abroad. (van der Rhoer, 205)

Through the use of this clever ruse, Soviet counterintelligence operations were able to keep tabs on the movements of nearly every single foreign agent within the Soviet Union. Not only that, but the Western powers willingly gave this information to the OGPU through the Trust, and then rewarded them with large sums of money for largely falsified reports, as is borne out by Pilsudski's altercation with Yakushev upon Pilsudski becoming suspicious. And the Western powers thought they were helping to undermine Soviet power the entire time! Every transaction towards the Trust was like a gift to Soviet counterespionage, funding their projects, which likely included the infiltration of Western intelligence services with its own agents – if that were even needed and Trust agents weren't welcomed into their organizations in the name of co-operation to defeat the Bolsheviks! This is the extent to which people believed in the Trust, not only because they wanted to, but because the Trust put forth such a convincing external show it was difficult to see the truth under it. It is possible that this ruse convinced even Boris Savinkov and Sidney Reilly in their desperation, and allowed them to be lured in for their executions.

The Trust Operation was started as an OGPU plot to lure in enemies of the Bolshevik regime, and through its work the OGPU quickly infiltrated foreign governments and intelligence operations. It was not entirely the skill of the OGPU which led to the Trust's complete acceptance by the Western intelligence community, but rather Yakushev's convincing pitch to Boyce about it, and Boyce's immediate dissemination of information about the Trust to the various Russian émigré groups living within Western Europe. When in full operation, it became one of the OGPU's most effective organ, luring in millions of dollars which could have otherwise been used in opposition to the Bolshevik regime as well as two of the regime's most ardent enemies, Boris Savinkov and Sidney Reilly, by appealing to their ambition. However, once those two had been neutralized, it was no longer prudent to keep the Trust Operation running due to overplaying its hand and the organization could be safely shut down; Opperput could then trade information about the now-defunct organization for knowledge about various Western intelligence operations, and then return unmolested.

The Trust was an imminently successful operation for what it aimed to do, and the OGPU implemented it at precisely the right time to make the best use of it: the West was seeking an avenue into Russia which would not require undue risk to themselves, émigré communities were frustrated with the lack of action on the parts of Western governments and sought a viable alternative, and once trust in the Trust had developed they were able to entice, through an indirect denial of other avenues, action on the part of either Reilly or Savinkov. Additionally, the most effective way to discredit the Trust – the capture and disappearance of Sidney Reilly – only strengthened the Bolshevik position, since it gave the regime a great propaganda victory and removed a persistent thorn in the regime's side.

Chapter Three: Reilly, Savinkov, and the Trust

"Finita la comedia!" – Lermontov, *Hero of Our Time*

The Green Movement

In the wake of Sidney Reilly and Boris Savinkov's failure to depose the Bolshevik regime in Russia, they fled to the west, with Reilly returning to England in the fall of 1918 and Savinkov settling in Paris. Though Reilly, throughout most of 1919 had not yet left the British Secret Service and still fulfilled an assignment given to him by the British government to disrupt Bolshevik plans on the Southern front of the Civil War[37], Savinkov decided to form his own faction to better combat the Bolsheviks on his own terms. Reilly joined him in this endeavor in 1920, and together the two campaigned throughout the capitals of Europe, asking both the Russian émigré communities living within those cities and the anti-Bolshevik governments, for their assistance in combating Communism before it got to strong within their own countries. What they needed most, of course, was money. Savinkov called this organization the Green Revolution, in reference to the peasants it was aimed at assisting. It was, in his opinion, the best plan to overthrow the Bolsheviks, as it would be entirely under his control and would not rely on the pro-Monarchist émigré groups.

Savinkov, an anti-Monarchist and career terrorist while he lived in Russia, was naturally distrustful of the other émigré groups which sought to overthrow the Bolsheviks. It was natural that they would try to restore the Monarchy should they succeed, even after the murder of the Romanov family, and this was in direct opposition with Savinkov and Reilly's aims with their anti-Bolshevik plots. When questioned by Alexander Grammatikov about where the Romanovs would fit in to his new regime, Reilly responded, quite simply, "They wouldn't" (van der Rhoer, 186). This is not to say, of course, that Savinkov would have turned down donations from these

[37] For more details on Reilly's assignment in South Russia, see Kettle, 52-67.

groups, nor that he was unwilling to collaborate with them. However, it was clear that in his plans for the future of Russia, his own views of the future of Russia were to play a supreme role: Russian future, in his mind, would include a representative form of government. His statement prior to execution bears out his dedication to the betterment of his homeland.[38]

Naturally, Savinkov's distrust of the Monarchist groups in exile cut both ways, and they were just as wary of him gaining too much power. They were more inclined to work with the Allied governments, which had helped facilitate the evacuation of Wrangel's men through Gallipoli and the island of Lemnos following their collapse during the Civil War, and saw them as being more stable than Savinkov's organization. Because General Wrangel's organization was made up of nearly 150,000 men, women, and children (van der Rhoer, 157), and his soldiers had maintained their organization in military cadres, it was impossible to ignore when Savinkov made any significant plans to proceed with a plot to overthrow the Bolsheviks. Unfortunately for him in 1921, when he planned his Anti-Bolshevik Congress in Warsaw, Wrangel refused to send any delegates. Shortly after, in 1923, the Monarchist groups were put in contact with the Trust and subsequently formed the ROVS.[39] Since the Trust was purportedly a Monarchist organization, there was almost no chance of General Wrangel supporting Savinkov once the Trust was in the picture.

Another sticking point for the Tsarist generals in addition to Savinkov's personal history was the character he envisioned for his counterrevolution. Savinkov sought to empower the countryside and incorporate the peasants as the primary movers against the Bolsheviks, using the

[38] "I am more of a revolutionary than you Bolsheviks. When you were hiding underground in Russia or talking Marxist ideology in the cafes of Geneva or Paris, I carried out the shooting of Tsarist governors and smashed Grand Dukes to pieces with bombs…I do not ask your mercy. I ask only to let your revolutionary conscience just a man who has never sought for himself, who has devoted his whole life to the cause of the Russian people." Boris Savinkov's statement at trial (van der Rhoer, 170).

[39] For description of the ROVS and the circumstances surrounding its founding, see previous chapter

anti-country, pro-city message of the Bolsheviks to gild his message. Peasant uprisings within Russia in 1921 in response to this Bolshevik message seemed to confirm his idea, as did the Kronstadt uprising in that same year,[40] which urged "Soviets without Bolsheviks" (Pollack, 13-14). In the West Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) was seen as a means to placate these factions, for it was going back on his earlier promises toward collectivization by introducing private property. Savinkov considered that, if a peasant rebellion could be raised, it would echo within the army as it did during the February Revolution in 1917,[41] when the Petrograd garrison refused to fire on its own countrymen.

Despite the suspicion leveled at him by the Monarchist organizations in exile, Savinkov received a great deal of moral and monetary support from the French, which is where he and Reilly first went in an effort to drum up funds. That was where Savinkov had lived during the early war years, and the French were the ones to whom Savinkov appealed to support his "Union for the Defense of the Fatherland and Freedom" in 1918. To the French Savinkov personified their wartime ally and they romanticized him as a terrorist and an intellectual. Savinkov saw himself in a personal duel with Lenin, further adding to his mystique as a romantic personage, and said to W. Somerset Maugham, "Between me and Lenin it's a war to the death… *One thing I can tell you is that I shall never run away*" (van der Rhoer, 151, emphasis added). Reilly was readily able to use his own contacts with French Intelligence to gain support for Savinkov's enterprise, and in April 1920 Reilly and Savinkov got a major breakthrough courtesy of the French.

[40] For greater details on the Kronstadt uprising which gave Savinkov such hope and created such a problem for the Bolsheviks, see Pollack and Mett. Surprisingly, Lenin was not too opposed to the ideas of the Kronstadt sailors, at least in his writings at the time.

[41] Details on the February Revolution are in Strachan, *The First World War*, 261-262.

This windfall came to them in the form of the Russo-Polish War, which saw a large increase in the amount of recruits for Savinkov's operation and the reactivation of many members from his former organizations. Marshal Pilsudski, the head of Polish military operations during the war, was a friend of Savinkov's, and allowed him to operate within Poland and Belorussia for the purpose of harassing Russian forces. Throughout the course of the war, from April 1920 until March 1921,[42] Savinkov and Reilly, with the help of Paul Dukes from British SIS, were able to recruit over 30,000 partisans for this purpose (van der Rhoer, 151) as well as infiltrate his own agents into the theater.[43] While this was going on Savinkov re-established contact with the former second-in-command of his League for the Defense of the Fatherland and Freedom, Colonel Sergei Pavlovsky, who was still in hiding in Moscow.

Though Savinkov's operation in Poland and Belorussia was fairly sizable, most of the administration was left to Dukes and his successor, Maclaren (no first name given), while Savinkov and Reilly stayed for the most part in Paris. The crowning success of their operations in Poland was the aforementioned Anti-Bolshevik Congress in the summer of 1921. This event gathered White anti-Bolshevik forces from all over Europe, including some who came out of Russia itself[44], for the purpose of plotting against the Bolsheviks. Ultimately though the congress was hamstrung by the lack of support from Wrangel's forces, which refused to send a delegate as a result of the mistrust Wrangel felt toward a known and unrepentant terrorist, as was previously noted. In the end the Anti-Bolshevik Congress succeeded to some degree in coordinating efforts toward an underground struggle, though even this was ultimately hampered by financial problems which would soon come to dominate the lives of Reilly and Savinkov.

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[42] The story of the Russo-Polish War can be read in Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star*.

[43] Anti-Bolshevik sentiment, as well as details on Pilsudski's friendship with Savinkov and the Green Revolution's operations within Poland, can be found in Pilsudski's own story of the war, *Year 1920*.

[44] It is not stated, and probably impossible to know, how many of the delegates who came out of Russia were actually Bolshevik agents. However it is probable that several of them were.

The financial problems within the organization were apparent to the people who had taken part in the Congress. After the three-day Congress disbanded, one delegate wrote to Reilly that the most important factor at this juncture was money. It was without a doubt the most vital ingredient to their efforts, and would be the lifeblood of any underground organization. He expressed apprehension that people would hear their message and, acting on what had been discussed among the Congress during those three days, would rise up and begin the fight without support. The people and presses were ready, he said, but the lubricant of armies still had much to be desired. Though the peasants awaited liberation and agents were more than willing to assist them in this regard, without a fully planned-out series of actions, the operation would be hopeless. Thus, the letter received by Reilly was frank and very direct:

> I will tell you frankly that I felt ashamed to associate with people who had come to attend and would return to Russia full of hope and would risk their lives in their work-whereas we are unable to give them help to continue the struggle…I repeat for the umpteenth time that it all depends on money. The press is ready, the peasants away liberation but without a fully planned organization, it it hopeless. Our chief trouble is that it may not be possible to prevent abortive or premature riots… Even Boris Savinkov will not be able to go there owing to insufficient financial aid. In other words – money, money, money! (van der Rhoer, 154)

It was at this point, during the preparations for the counterrevolution in 1922, that the financial problems became particularly acute for the co-conspirators, Reilly and Savinkov. The financial donations which they received prior to this point had never been considered sufficient by either of them, but they were able to keep the organization on its feet so long as it did not engage in any large affairs. Savinkov still received funds from the French government and Reilly had appealed successfully for aid from the Czechoslovak government, and even moved the headquarters of their Polish operation to Prague in anticipation of the peace treaty which would be signed in between Russia and Poland in 1921, but these sums were simply still not enough. Reilly had

recently fallen on some significant personal financial problems, and Savinkov was too occupied with the administrative duties required of him to seek additional funds. The best way to demonstrate the dire financial straits in which the organization found itself is with this message from Maclaren to Reilly in June 1921 sent from Warsaw: "The position is becoming desperate. The balance in hand today amounts to 700,000 Polish marks, not even sufficient to pay the staff their salaries for the month of July." (van der Rhoer, 153)

For the years 1920 to 1922, the Green Revolution organization founded by Boris Savinkov and assisted in maintenance by Sidney Reilly saw only marginal success in coordinating underground resistance to the Bolshevik regime. However, there were problems which rendered all their efforts impotent in the final tally, owing to both situations out of the control of Reilly and Savinkov as well as to their personalities. As already pointed out, Savinkov's history as a radical and a terrorist alienated Wrangel and the ROVS from the Green Revolution, sending them over to what they thought of as a more viable organization, the nominally Monarchist Trust operating within Russia. However, their inability to garner sufficient financial aid dealt the most significant blow to the organization and, as without adequate funding they were be unable to finance any uprisings or even pay their employees. Still Reilly maintained that Savinkov's organization was the most viable, writing to Paul Dukes in October 1922, "Savinkov was, is, and always will be the only man outside of Russia worth talking to and worth supporting. Everybody else is dead as a doornail" (van der Rhoer, 156).

Sidney Reilly's Financial Problems

As noted previously, Sidney Reilly himself was in dire financial straits at the very same time as Savinkov and Savinkov's entourage, resulting in a disastrous lack of funds for their joint anti-Bolshevik operation, the Green Revolution. For the state of his affairs Reilly bears a considerable responsibility: his dearth of funds at this time was primarily a result of his extravagant lifestyle over the past two decades which was now catching up with him, and a poorly thought out business deal made during the First World War. It is noteworthy that Reilly did try to mitigate his substantial losses at this point by selling off personal assets and collecting on a long-overdue contract, but these efforts fell through or were simply not sufficient to recoup his fortune. Finally, his problems were exacerbated by a development in his personal life; in December 1922 he met Pepita Bobadilla, soon to be his third and final wife.

It is undeniable that the lack of money was the single most important cause of the Green Revolution's failure; both of the co-conspirators, always able in the past to find a way out of any impossible situation, were singularly caught between a rock and a hard spot. They were unable to receive money from external sources, and their own funds were rapidly depleting. Reilly's joint efforts with Boris Savinkov to raise what would be considered a sufficient, nearly unlimited in fact, amount of money for the continuing fight against Communism in Europe failed, but this was not yet the end of their enterprise. Since in Europe there was already considerable strain on the resources going toward combating Communism in each country, the pair of revolutionaries decided to look across the Atlantic to the United States, setting their eyes on the pockets of wealthy American industrialists. The main person they singled out as a potential benefactor was Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company who had become fabulously wealthy from the wide distribution of motor vehicles. Reilly also looked to the Baldwin Locomotive Company,

with whom he had a previous contract as a result of his commissions from when he acted as an intermediary between the tsarist government and the company during the war, and supposedly had half a million dollars coming to him. In the end, however, neither of these contacts worked out for Reilly's benefit.

This already entangled state of affairs was further complicated by Reilly's ill-timed *affaires de coeur* with Pepita Bobadilla, his third wife. Pepita Bobadilla was an actress born in South America who met Sidney Reilly in Berlin while she was traveling after her previous husband's death. She was by all accounts an attractive blonde woman, who moved with great grace and poise, and was able to command the attention of everybody inside a room whenever she entered it. When she first met Reilly she was in the prime of her life, and appeared as though she were among the most beautiful women – Reilly, of course, was unable to resist her charms or his instincts to conquer yet another beauty: at their first meeting they both were irresistibly drawn to each other. Even though Pepita had no intentions of marrying Reilly, at least not so soon after her husband's death she could not resist, when he proposed marriage within a week of meeting her. They were married in May 1923, just five months after they met. Pepita too needed money to continue with her extravagant lifestyle, so Reilly's next move was inevitable.

Among the first things the couple did together was sail back to America so that Sidney's lawsuit against the Baldwin Locomotive Company could be decided; Reilly's additional intention was to disrupt Soviet agitators in America seeking to drum up support for a loan. Since Sidney Reilly had acted as a mediator for the Tsarist government and the Baldwin Locomotive company, working on ammunition deals upon the outbreak of the First World War, he believed that he had a considerable fortune which was still due to him. Apparently in 1914 a friend of Reilly's had asked him to cancel the contract so that the deal could be made with a British firm,

assuring Reilly in the process that he would be compensated to the amount of half a million dollars. Reilly, thinking they had a gentleman's agreement, tore up the contract, and was assured that he would receive his payment later. Here he was to be tragically disappointed. According to Pepita Reilly, the defense preferred instead to speak about Sidney Reilly's intense anti-Bolshevik work, rather than to stick to the issue at hand, and, as a result "the case was judged before it was heard… Not another court in the world would have returned such a verdict" (Reilly, 162). The case dragged on however, and for over a year there was no improvement in Reilly's case or his finances. After a year, with no resolution achieved, he was summoned back to Paris by Savinkov to deal with more pressing matters in their fight against the Bolsheviks.

With Sidney Reilly's failure to receive a favorable decision on his lawsuit, the counterrevolution was still running on sparse funds which had to come from somewhere, and Reilly was becoming less discerning as to the source for these potential funds. Though this may not have helped a whole lot, it certainly would helped matters and dispelled the atmosphere of a fast approaching crisis if Reilly had agreed to live a less ostentatious lifestyle once he had committed himself to the life of a counterrevolutionary living abroad. He, however, took quite some time to abandon his lavish apartment at the Albany in London, and threw money around without care to pay for food, drink, and entertainment (van der Rhoer, 154). Additionally, in his attempt to fundraise, he conducted a good amount of business at expensive nightclubs in Prague and Paris, putting on a good show for potential investors while betraying no hint as to the personal troubles in which he was embroiled.

This was also the time at which he decided to settle his previous marriages to Nadine and Margaret. He had never been officially married to Nadine, since he had not actually divorced Margaret, and through Alexander Grammatikov he sought to make a significant payment to her

so that she would accept the marriage had ended. However, he did not seek a divorce. A similar situation arose with Margaret, whom he did not divorce; instead he paid her a large sum of money to get her to leave England (van der Rhoer, 152-155). At this time he also seemed to be taking some preventative measures to stop the constant hemorrhage of his money. He did sell his expensive apartment at the Albany, and even began to sell his vast collection of Napoleonic artifacts on the art market. This did allow him and Pepita to continue living and traveling, including making one more trip across the Atlantic , but it did not raise a significant amount of funds for the Green Revolution.

Based on all these events, Reilly's financial needs, which dictated a series of highly questionable and poorly-thought-out transactions, did not lessen his intense desire to stop the Bolsheviks. If Reilly's financial actions throughout remained ill-timed, lacking both caution and precision, he seemed more clear-headed about his counterrevolutionary activities. Thus, while Sidney Reilly was selling off his extensive art collection to fund his own travels, he was also making inroads with various industrialist firms, intending not only to secure funding for the Green Revolution, but also to assist in rooting out Communists outside of the Soviet Union. While in the United States he sought out the help of Henry Ford, and he also was openly courting the British financier Sir Henri Deterding and the German Fritz Thyssen, whom he considered would be more than willing to give money to an anti-Communist organization; however he was able to make serious progress only with the Ford Foundation before he returned to Russia. During this time it is alleged that Reilly had working connections with the Foundation, and drew up a list of all possible Bolsheviks working in America (van der Rhoer, 163). According to Pepita, through trailing a man he believed to be a Soviet agent in New York City, he was able to find a list of financiers for Bolshevism in the United States and beneficiaries of their activities, as

well as what they intended to do (Reilly, 170-171). There is also evidence that Sidney Reilly, under the assumed name Sidney Berns, was moving within American intelligence circles during his stay in the United States. It is likely that he was motivated in this to keep British intelligence from knowing he was collaborating with the Americans to root out possible Communist infiltrators (van der Rhoer, 164). Regardless, his efforts to ensnare Communists in the United States bore much greater fruit than his financial pursuits, yet Reilly did not reap any support from governments in the United States or Europe.

Between 1922 and 1924, Sidney Reilly sought a variety of means to garner additional funding for his and Boris Savinkov's Green Revolution so that they could more effectively combat Bolshevism in the Soviet Union and throughout Europe. These alternative venues were necessary, since Reilly felt they had better not "exhaust the patience of friendly governments" in the form of the French, Polish, and Czechoslovak governments (Reilly, 116) and it was clear that there would be no funds forthcoming Boris Savinkov himself[45]. Though most of these ventures failed to gather the money he needed, and often failed to gather anything at all, he was successful during this period in rooting out Communist agents in the West, particularly in the United States. Despite these successes, however, he and Savinkov were seduced by the Trust, not only because of their desire to be associated with a functional anti-Bolshevik organization, but also from the promises of abundant funding which could be available.

[45] Sometime in the early 1920s Boris Savinkov developed a formidable morphine habit. This had come about as a result of Savinkov's increasing desperation and depression when considering his prospects in ousting the Bolsheviks even after Lenin's death (van der Rhoer, 166).

Savinkov and Reilly Return to Russia

In 1924 and 1925, Boris Savinkov and Sidney Reilly reached a state of hopelessness that called for a decisive action. They were unable to secure funds anywhere near the amount they needed to keep their Green Revolution running, and the émigré groups, which never wanted that much to cooperate with the pair in the first place, was beginning to look to a different organization to effect change within the Soviet Union. This new organization was of course the Trust, which was appealing to personalities such as General Wrangel because it was an established organization which did not require much effort on the side of the exiles (indeed, they insisted on just having money sent their way); it also posited itself as operating successfully within Russia and had apparently already infiltrated the government, and perhaps most importantly to the White Army remnants – the Trust was Monarchist. Of course all of these admirable qualities, aside from its entrenchment in Russia, were fabricated by the Trust itself.

In the backdrop of their organization going down the drain, Reilly and Savinkov decided to return to the Soviet Union to settle accounts of their own, and were planning these trips for different reasons. Their decisions were not easy, and they had to take into account various happenings which occurred in the two years leading up to Savinkov's return. Reilly, at least, was under near-constant surveillance while he was in the United States, and Savinkov was subject to at least one alleged kidnapping attempt,[46] as was Reilly's wife. Additionally, while Reilly was in America he witnessed first-hand how Soviet intelligence was able to deceive a person for the purposes of luring them back to Russian soil for their elimination. It also seems clear that Reilly, much more than Savinkov, was aware of the danger inherent in stepping back

[46] Pepita Reilly reports that, upon her first meeting with Boris Savinkov, M. Dehrental, his lieutenant, says that Savinkov was subjected to an attempted kidnapping just the night before. Reilly says that she does not believe this attempt ever existed, and expresses disbelief at the amount of security given to Savinkov compared to her husband. Considering that she also shows great distaste for Savinkov in general, it is quite likely that these feelings toward him affected how she felt about the kidnapping attempt (Reilly, 113).

into the Soviet Union; he gave a strict warning to his wife never to go to Russia, and yet he still followed Savinkov following the former terrorist's capture. All of this is to say that Reilly was acutely aware of the danger associated with going back to Russia, even in dealing with the Trust, and went there anyway to pursue his own agenda.

Pepita Reilly tells the story of how one night, upon waking up from a nightmare, Sidney Reilly made her promise to never go into Russia, even if he himself should write and beg her to join him. He explained that such a plea would undoubtedly be the work of the Cheka, and that if someone should fall into the clutches of the Cheka, there would be no hope for getting them back out. In her recollections, Pepita Reilly laments how he forgot his own warning and went in anyway, giving himself up to the Cheka for little apparent gain. His exact warning shows just how aware he was of the danger associated with going back. There is further evidence about his psychological state at the time. According to a doctor's opinion he was on the verge of a breakdown, but this alleged strain needs to be juxtaposed with his clear-sightedness demonstrated in the conversation with Pepita, which signaled his acute awareness of the danger associated with either of them going into Russia. He was also clearly cognizant of the variety of means by which the OGPU would try to lure someone they consider a powerful enemy into the country so that they could administer whatever punishment they saw fit.

> Whatever happens, however great the temptation, however plausible those that ask you, whatever promises are made. Even if I myself should write, asking you to come to me there. You must disobey. They are devils in the Cheka… By one way or another they will get whom they want into their clutches, and, once there, no hope for him. *Never be tempted into Russia.*" (Reilly, 119, emphasis added)

When Pepita asked Reilly for what reason he demanded this promise, he responded;

> There are two or three people left, to be revenged on whom for services rendered the Bolsheviks would give their eyes. There are two or three people during whose lifetime the Bolsheviks will never sleep at peace. General Kutepov is one. Then there is Boris

> Savinkov. There are two or three others. The Bolsheviks will get them back to Russia if they can… .” (Reilly, 122)

Clearly, one of the others he references here is himself, as his wife became aware later.

As if to punctuate Sidney Reilly’s concerns over people trying to lure him and his family back into Russia, roughly a week after he had this conversation they were visited by a Mr. Warner – Drebkov – who pleaded with Reilly to come back to Russia to lead the anti-Bolshevik movement. Drebkov had nothing but praise for Reilly’s aborted Lettish rifleman conspiracy,[47] and insisted that what they needed in Russia was a strongman, “a dictator if you like, as Mussolini is in Italy, a man who will compose the feuds which disunite our friends there with an iron and will weld us into the weapon which will smite the present tyrants of Russia to the heart” (Reilly, 125). In fact Drebkov makes much of the need for a dictator in Russia, so that the White opposition forces will be united against the Bolsheviks and be able to resist the urge to fall into old conflicts. For his part Reilly seems excited by this, as his wife describes it; “I saw Sidney’s eyes kindling as the stranger spoke… he was obviously deeply stirred. Excitement was surging up within him” (Reilly, 125-127).

Following all his talk of bringing in Sidney Reilly as a dictator to organize the White forces, Drebkov mentions that he is the head of a White Russian organization in Moscow, almost certainly the Trust. In order to further ingratiate himself with Reilly, Drebkov presents a series of documents intended to confirm the legitimacy of his claims to be in charge of the White organization in Moscow. Among these documents were a forged British passport claiming him to be a British subject named Warner, a voucher handwritten by Savinkov which Reilly confirms, two letters from unnamed individuals, and a forged Bolshevik passport for a Cheka

[47] In fact Drebkov claims to be the man responsible for Sidney Reilly’s escape from Russia upon the failure of his conspiracy. He says that the reason the Dutch smuggler was able to get him out was because Drebkov paid off Reilly’s former barber to protect him. While this is a dubious claim, it suggests an intimate familiarity with Reilly’s operation in Russia at the time.

officer named Sergei Ivanich Konovalov. Drebkov then shows Reilly a letter addressed to him from people in Russia imploring him to return and lead a successful coup attempt against the Bolsheviks and says, "Russia is crying for you to come and lead her out of captivity… come and be our leader. A whole great country is yearning for you to return" (Reilly, 128). Reilly responds that he cannot possibly return to Russia at the time owing to health reasons, but the entire situation may as well have been orchestrated to demonstrate to his wife the sort of tricks the Cheka will employ in order to lure someone into Russia.[48] It is significant that at this time Pepita understood nothing of the possibility of a double game.

Following their first encounter with Drebkov, Pepita Reilly recounts a somewhat fantastical story of an attempt to kidnap her while waiting at the train station to go to Paris, likely again to demonstrate the lengths to which the Cheka would go to bring Reilly back onto Russian soil. According to her account, a disguised Cheka agent approached her as she waited, and reported that her husband had been in an accident and was badly injured. The agent led her to his car, which was conveniently located just outside, and told her that her husband had already been taken to the hospital, but he would take her there if she got in the car, and said that the hospital was quite close, without actually naming the hospital to which Reilly had been taken. The chauffer did not wait for any directions on where to drive, and all of the shades inside the car had been drawn, rendering the occupants unobservable to the outside world. Once again, Pepita, even if she was concocting this story to bring more action to the narrative, draws herself as being incredibly unaware of any implications associated with Sidney Reilly's identity, for she completely overlooked these suspicious conditions, and did not believe she was being kidnapped

[48] This would not be the Reillys' only encounter with Drebkov. They would meet him again on a train as they headed to Paris to meet Boris Savinkov, though his appearance was quite altered, and again when they were on their way to the United States. In the latter event he was acting in the capacity of surveillance on Reilly, working as a decoy for the person who was actually assigned to watch him (Reilly, 144, 156).

until the car turned sharply, throwing her off balance and one of the Chekists in the car with her tried to inject her with a hypodermic needle. Apparently the only reason this brilliant attempt at kidnapping failed was because, as Sidney Reilly explains, the hypodermic needle missed her arm and only penetrated her sleeve (Reilly, 132-136).

In other words, even though this account is likely exaggerated, it cannot be said that Pepita Reilly included it to display the great cunning of the Chekists in their methods to lure Sidney Reilly back into Russia, even though their cunning methods can be equated to someone trying to kidnap a small child. Their goal apparently was to kidnap Sidney by sending him after where Pepita was held, and keeping her away for a couple of hours would have been sufficient to capture him. Between this incident and the attempt by Drebkov to entice Sidney Reilly to return as a future leader of a successful coup, it is sufficiently established that the Soviets were willing to employ a variety of means, either forceful or otherwise, in order to bring Reilly back into Russia and execute the death sentence which had been placed on him back in 1918.

A final instance of which Reilly could not have missed happened in 1925, after Savinkov's disappearance into Russia: it concerned a Russian émigré, Madame Schovalovsky (no first name is given anywhere) to whom he had rendered help in the past.[49] While the Reillys were in New York, where Madame Schovalovsky had settled, they found that she was still living in mortal fear of the Cheka and refused to assist them in any anti-Bolshevik work for the duration of their stay. She was a woman marked for death just as surely as Sidney Reilly, and was rightfully afraid of venturing back into Russia for any reason whatsoever.

Then, in 1925 the Reillys received a call from her. Apparently her father, who worked as a professor of languages in Moscow, had recently fallen gravely ill, and sent her a telegram

[49] A detailed account of how Sidney Reilly helped Schovalovsky emigrate from Paris to the United States can be found on page 143 of Mrs. Reilly's narrative.

imploring her to return to Europe. Since she was concerned about her father, and he was apparently concerned that he might never see his daughter again before dying, she reached an arrangement with Reilly; she would go to Berlin to meet his associates, and from there wait for her father to be brought to her. The important aspect of their agreement, stressed many times by Reilly, was also its simplest part: under *no circumstances* was she to go farther east than Berlin. Upon arriving there however, she was told that her father was still too ill to come to Berlin, and they had to go to Warsaw, which would be easier for him. Naturally, upon arriving there he was still too ill to meet her, so she was conducted to the frontier, quite likely by agents of the Trust, and never seen again.

So here again we have an example of the Soviets manipulating family members in order to bring their enemies back onto Soviet soil in order to deal with them. Sidney Reilly lists three possible methods the Cheka may have employed in this mastermind plot to bring one of their most cautious enemies back for their execution: her father acted as an agent provocateur under the Cheka's orders, sending her letters to bring her back under the auspices of fearing for his health; the friends who hid him were doing so as a scheme so that the Soviet could achieve its revenge; their correspondence was opened by the Cheka and they were aware of the plan from the beginning (Reilly, 166-168). However, he overlooks what I consider to be among the most likely explanation: Schovalovsky's father was never in contact with her, since she was in hiding and it would have been very difficult for him to get her address, and she had spent the entire time corresponding with a Cheka agent. Regardless of the actual reason, the message was clear – the Cheka were not averse to manipulating their target's emotions in order to realize their goals.

Much more intimate to Reilly, however, was Savinkov's return to Russia in 1924. He went back for a good reason – Lenin had recently died, leaving a power struggle for the

leadership of the Soviet Union, and according to Colonel Pavlovsky, Savinkov's former second-in-command who wrote to him in 1923, there was going to be a full-scale uprising against the Soviets in Georgia. Pavlovsky vouched for the Trust's reliability, since by this point they had already established their reputation and their windows, and Pavlovsky's agents, just as well as the Russian émigrés, were making use of these openings to Finland and Poland. Since the invitation to return was coinciding with Savinkov's disillusionment with the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the émigré organizations to effect any real change within the Soviet Union, Savinkov was tempted to return to Russia with the help of the Trust. Moreover, Savinkov was at the time desperate for any action, no matter how outlandish, and saw the death of Lenin as his last good opportunity.

Savinkov confided his plan to return to Russia to Sidney Reilly via letter, and Reilly then told Paul Dukes, "Savinkov is going back to Russia to give himself up. I too am going back, but I shall continue the fight" (van der Rhoer, 166). Despite the story about the uprising in Georgia, Savinkov was never under any impression that he would not be arrested. When he received a representative from the Trust in June of 1924, this contact made no effort to conceal the fact that should Savinkov return, he would immediately be arrested and put on trial. However, the Trust guaranteed him at the same time that he would receive nothing more than a jail sentence, and would receive a well-furnished cell in the Butyrki. Up to this point however Savinkov had not made up his mind whether or not to definitely return to Russia; it required the urging of Pavlovsky and the promise of the scheduled revolt in Georgia[50] to assure the former terrorist that he would be able to change the passage of history; there was then the assurance that if Savinkov

[50] A revolt actually *had* occurred in Georgia, but before Pavlovsky wrote to Savinkov. The Soviet press had kept news of it from leaking out, anticipating using it for this purpose (van der Rhoer, 156).

were in Soviet Russia at the time he would become the natural head of the government. All these reasons, and particularly the last one, convinced Savinkov to return.

Before setting off for Russia with the assurance of being arrested, Savinkov decided to confer with Sidney Reilly for the assurance that this would be a great plan, so he summoned Reilly from New York. Both of them were already set on returning to Russia at some point in the near future as Reilly's statement to Dukes attests, however Reilly did intend to continue the struggle whereas Savinkov was set on being arrested, likely to take advantage of the Georgian uprising by his mere presence. It is worthy of note that at no point did Reilly say he was opposed to Savinkov's return, even knowing the danger of these intentions. Considering that from July 19 until August 10 they were engaged in heated discussions in Paris – unfortunately, the content of these discussions is not on record anywhere. However it can be safely assumed that Reilly did not oppose the move even then, since it is beyond plausible belief that Savinkov would have engaged in discussion for nearly a month only to act against Reilly's advice (van der Rhoer, 168).

Nonetheless, this story is quite at odds with the one given by Pepita Reilly, who was probably not privy to the information that Sidney Reilly had also decided to return to Russia, though at a different time. She writes that the letter delivered to Savinkov from Pavlovsky claimed that Pavlovsky had met with an accident which prevented him from meeting Savinkov in person – very similar to the aforementioned case of Madame Schovalovsky – and begged Savinkov to return to Russia, since his presence was vital to the welfare of the party. Pepita says that upon reading this Sidney's immediate response was to tell him, "Don't go" (Reilly, 145), and that the discussion of Savinkov's course of action was heated as to whether or not he should go, with Reilly never capitulating. She further says that Reilly asserted the messenger was a

provocation, and that Dehrental, Savinkov's lieutenant, was seen with the alleged provocateur daily for over a week. In the end, according to Pepita Reilly, it was Dehrental's insistence on Savinkov going which ultimately convinced him to go (Reilly, 145-148).

So it was settled. On August 10 Savinkov set out for Berlin in the company of the Dickhoff-Daehrenthals, and there met Alexander Yakushev. From there they proceeded to Warsaw, and continued the journey through one of the Trust's windows, ending up in Minsk. There he was "suddenly" arrested by the head of the Belarussian OGPU, Pilar von Pilhau,[51] and conducted to Moscow to face his trial. The presiding judge was V. I. Ulrikh, who would become famous for the show trials during Stalin's Great Purge and the trials' very liberal use of the death sentence, and sentenced to death. However, apparently in accord with the terms set out by the Trust, Ulrikh commuted Savinkov's sentence to ten years' imprisonment, on the basis that "motives of vengeance should not influence the sense of justice of the proletarian masses" (van der Rhoer, 171).

The account of the trial from the Russian perspective appeared in the newspaper *Izvestiya* on August 29, the trial having been conducted on August 27 and 28. A British report on the trial appeared in London's *Morning Post* on September 8, apparently claiming that the commutation of Savinkov's sentence signified reconciliation with the Bolsheviks, and that this reconciliation was the entire reason for his return. Naturally this claim outraged Reilly, who wrote to the paper, "No more ghastly accusation could be so carelessly hurled against a man whose whole life has been spent fighting tyranny of whatsoever denomination, Tsarist or Bolshevist…" (van der Rhoer, 171). However, at this point Reilly does not elaborate as to why, if not for reconciliation,

[51] The entire arrest was very theatrical. Upon entering the room, Pilhaus announced, "I am Pilar, head of the Belorussian OGPU. The house is surrounded by my men. You are under arrest," to which Savinkov responded, "I have been expecting you" (van der Rhoer, 168-169).

Savinkov *did* go to Russia,[52] and it seems as if Reilly's claim that, "[Savinkov's] last hours in Paris were spent with me" were true, he should have been privy to such details. He goes on to concoct a conspiracy of what he considers to have happened, and mails this in a letter to Winston Churchill[53].

Savinkov, while in jail, was treated exceptionally well, as was reported by an AP correspondent who met with Savinkov during Savinkov's stay in the Butyrki prison.[54] His room was incredibly well-furnished, and he was allowed to go for walks to the countryside or drives to places near Moscow if he wished. Savinkov, for the duration of the interview, conducted himself incredibly well, as if the walls of his prison cell did not fetter him at all. When asked if the horror stories of the OGPU were true or false, he simply remarked, "Speaking for myself, they are obviously untrue" (van der Rhoer, 179).[55]

Something must have changed between the article, written at the end of 1924, and May 12, 1925, when *Pravda* reported that Boris Savinkov had committed suicide by jumping out of a window on May 8. On the day of his death he apparently wrote a letter to Felix Dzerzhinski, saying, "Either shoot me or give me the opportunity to work… I cannot endure this half-and-half existence of being neither with you, nor against you, of merely lingering in jail and becoming one of its denizens…" (van der Rhoer, 185). The official story is that after he wrote the letter Savinkov called a car, left Butyrki, and went to Yaroslavl, where he ate at a tavern, and then returned to Moscow with great speed. Once he was returned, he mounted the stairs to his

[52] Additionally, Savinkov's statement during his trial included an explicit recognition of the Bolshevik government. There were no signs he had been tortured or mistreated, nor were there any signs his statement had been coerced (van der Rhoer, 170-171).

[53] This correspondence is much too long to transcribe here. However, reprintings of the letters can be found in van der Rhoer on 172-174, and Reilly on 149-155.

[54] While he was imprisoned he was even allowed to write, During this time he wrote the semi-autobiographical novels *Pale Horse* and *Black Horse*.

[55] A more full account of this AP article can be found on the same page.

apartment, spotted an open window, and threw himself from it. According to the OGPU, and in a story which Reilly believed, Savinkov could no longer wait for freedom from the Trust's efforts, and in despair ended his own life.

Other émigrés, nonetheless, did not believe this story, and were in the end proven right. A group of four Chekists had thrown Savinkov out of the window since they no longer found him to be useful to their cause, and simply invented the suicide story to cover up the murder. Even the letter which Savinkov supposedly wrote to Dzerzhinski, accepted by Savinkov's own son as genuine based on the use of familiar phrases; this letter was found to be a forgery, written by Yakov Blyumkin, one of von Mirbach's assassins. Still, though Reilly believed the official story he must have been alerted to the deceptiveness of the Trust, since they had apparently failed to live up to their end of the bargain.

Sidney Reilly was not idle during the time of Savinkov's imprisonment. This was the time when he was in the United States, working to root out possible Bolshevik agents in the West and trying to drum up funds for the Green Revolution, which he would presumably take charge of since Savinkov now was out of commission. It was also towards the end of his stay in the United States that he received a letter from Commander Boyce, who had taken over the SIS Russian operations since Reilly had last seen him and originally put the Trust on the map of Western intelligence circles. Their correspondence goes on for several letters, but the main point of the letters is that Boyce and Maria Schultz, a Russian in exile who had become a firm believer in the Trust, were trying to organize a meeting between Sidney Reilly and the "shadow cabinet" of the Trust.[56] Sidney expresses that he had no faith in the "old manufacturers"[57] and confirmed

[56] Their correspondence is much too long to recreate here. It is fully reprinted in Reilly, 172-183, with a photograph of one of the original typed letters as an insert.

[57] The letters were written in a simple code, made to appear as if they were discussing business deals. For purposes of their code the existing groups in émigré, such as Kutepov's ROVS, were the "old manufacturers" who

that he would be open to working with this group (Reilly, 176). The correspondence lasted from January 24 to July 4, 1925, and the Reillys left on August 24 to arrive in Paris on September 3.

Though Boyce too was a firm supporter of the Trust, the rest of the SIS did not feel as though they could endorse sending Reilly to engage the Trust with their blessing. This doubt was primarily due to the lack of certainty in dealing with the organization, and the possibility that Reilly's involvement may go horribly awry – the example of Reilly's abortive attempt to overthrow the Bolshevik government in 1918 could not be forgotten. The SIS wanted plausible deniability in case the operation went wrong, but wanted to be able to take credit for the operation in case it succeeded. Regardless, Reilly was undeterred, and enthusiastically suggested the Trust should send its representatives to America (van der Rhoer, 182), so that financial help to them might be more forthcoming from the financial backers he was working to secure at that time.

Once again, when looking for the ultimate cause of Reilly's return, it is important to remember that at this time Reilly was teetering on the brink of financial ruin as a result of his involvement with the Green Revolution, and that he desperately needed any money which could come from the financial backing of the Trust. On March 25 he wrote to Boyce, "Much as I am concerned about my own personal affairs which, as you now, are in a hellish state, I am at any moment, if I see the right people and prospects of real action, prepared to chuck everything else and devote myself entirely to the Syndicate's [the Trust's] interest…" (Reilly, 180; van der Rhoer, 184). On April 4 he received a copy of the letter which the Trust had sent to Nikolai Bunakov, stating that because the Trust's leadership was so important they could not absent themselves all at once from Moscow, but if he could only come to Russia they would be able to

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were making a mess of the "new patents." It also refers to a "scheme which fell through" which could be a reference either to Savinkov's recent attempt or Reilly's conspiracy to overthrow the Bolsheviks while he was still in Moscow. Once these things are known it is not difficult to decipher the rest of the messages.

arrange a meeting. In response to this he wrote Boyce, "I am not only willing but anxious to do so and am prepared to come out as soon as I have arranged my affairs here (van der Rhoer 184, Reilly 182). Once again, the combination of financial woes and political ambition must have fed Reilly's recklessness.

Once Reilly arrived in Paris, he spent the next 18 days in a whirl of activity, meeting old friends such as Orlovsky, who had become a firm believer in the Trust, and new people associated with the Trust, including Maria Schultz. He was not to stay long, however, and quickly set out for Helsinki on September 21 so that he could move through one of the windows in Finland. At the Finland station he was met by Bunakov, Schultz, and her husband George Radkevich. Reilly listened to Schultz's impassioned plea on behalf of the Trust, and later wrote, "If only twenty-five percent of what she said is based on facts (and not on self-induced delusion, as is so often the case when the wish is father of the will), then there is really something entirely new, powerful and worthwhile going on in Russia" (van der Rhoer, 187).

On September 25, Reilly, along with Schultz and Bunakov, finally met with Alexander Yakushev at one of Bunakov's safe apartments in Vyborg. Yakushev explained to Reilly that he was there to invite Reilly for consultations to a meeting with the "shadow cabinet" of the Trust in Moscow. Reilly at first declined, saying that he had a ship to catch just five days later, implying that it would be impossible to conduct whatever business they would need to tend to during that time. However Yakushev was able to convince him that, with a tight itinerary, it would be more than possible for Reilly to meet with the Political Council of the Trust and various Trust operatives within this brief time frame and still be back in Helsinki in time to catch his ship back to Stettin on September 30.

It was planned that Reilly should cross back over the border from Leningrad to Helsinki during the night of September 28, arriving in Helsinki on the 29th. However, on the night of the 28th, there was an incident reported on the Finnish border, the report appearing in *Izvestiya* a few days later. It was a brief article, reporting that on the night of September 28 Soviet border guards had spotted smugglers trying to cross the border. In the ensuing firefight two Finnish soldiers were killed, a third captured, and a fourth gravely wounded. It was not difficult for his companions back in Finland to deduce that this meant he and his companions had been killed when trying to cross back over the Finnish frontier (van der Rhoer, 189-190).

Part of Eduard Opperput's confession upon his fake defection was the story of what happened to Sidney Reilly while he was in Russia that one last time. While the same qualifiers as before generally apply, in this case his account of events line up fairly well with an account published forty years later by Lev V. Nikulin named *Groundswell*.[58] Initially Artuzov, Pilar von Pilhau and others agreed that Reilly should be allowed to meet the top men in the Trust and report back to London that his meeting was a success. They would use the meeting to get Reilly to reveal his plans and then aid in his return abroad, where they expected him to use his connections and influence to speak on the Trust's behalf.

However, Reilly set about angering the Trust's Political Council with his ideas. First he told them that no government would give them money, and so they would have to raise the money themselves, a venture in which Reilly would render aid. His plan to raise money amounted to robbing museums of many priceless artifacts contained within and smuggling them abroad, where they could be sold at auction. He then suggested they use their vast connections to work for English intelligence. Specifically he wanted information on the Comintern, and

[58] Though supposedly a fiction story, the preface purports it to be a factual account. Its similarities with Opperput's account cannot be ignored in this regard.

offered Yakushev fifty thousand dollars for this information – he considered Potapov, but judged him "too scrupulous" for this (van der Rhoer, 210).[59]

It was at this point when the Trust began to have second thoughts about working with Reilly. Dzerzhinski then put the question to the Politburo, and Stalin, realizing that the Trust could act as a two-edged sword – if it is gathering funds based on the illusion that it is an anti-Bolshevik organization, and still nominally acts as such, then it could form a serious challenge to Soviet power – decided to arrest Reilly, knowing full well that it would discredit the Trust in the eyes of foreign governments. Though they tried to cover up the Trust's involvement with the story about an incident on the Finnish border, it was a flimsy pretext, and that, along with Marshal Pilsudski's previously noted demands, fully discredited the Trust.

All these aspects are clear, but two significant gaps remain. The first is a glaring lack of information, for at some point in time – no one can agree on when or where, exactly – Reilly was shot. This was the final realization of the death sentence placed on Reilly in absentia back in 1918, when he escaped after trying to overthrow the Bolshevik government, but the exact circumstances of his death remain a mystery. Furthermore, too many questions remain as to why Reilly went into Russia when he did, there are many questions. He clearly knew that if he went into Russia there would be no chance of his return, as his insistence that Pepita promise that she will never go to Russia, even if he were to write her from there, demonstrates. He also was very much aware of the variety of devious means to which the Soviet government would go in order to lure people designated enemies of the state back for their executions, since he witnessed this time and again. With Schovalovsky he saw how they appealed to their victims' innermost dreams and feelings, and he saw how they would be willing to use force with his wife, and

[59] Here Reilly relates an anecdote which Savinkov shared with him about how once one of his terrorists failed to throw a bomb into a carriage because there were children in it. He continued, "If you're going to be influenced by principles in your fight with the Soviets, you will achieve nothing." (van der Rhoer, same page)

finally he could not fail to deduce how they would make any promise of safety when they aimed at someone of the stature of Reilly or Savinkov. So it is clear, as the various anecdotal evidence which chronologically preceded Reilly's return attest, that Reilly was more than aware of the danger associated with going back into Russia for whatever reason.

Perhaps, he thought that he could beat the odds and evade the trap which the OGPU had set for him, the trap which had snared his close friend Savinkov and some of the most notable and cautious people of the émigré community. This presupposition would fit with the psychology of the superman; these other failures appeared to him as committed by ordinary people, not fit for ruling and fettered by the rules and activities of everyday; surely *he* could rise above and accomplish what they could not, despite the fact that his chief enemy – the young Soviet State - was already firmly entrenched when he himself returned, much better than during Savinkov's journey back. His decision to return also repeats the pattern established during the Lockhart Plot, when Reilly engaged in increasingly high-risk activities in hopes of attaining what he felt was his right by being such an extraordinary, strong-willed, and capable individual. Reilly was surely not mentally healthy at this point of his life, and the idea of such a lucrative offer could not have been ignored by someone with a Messiah Complex, so deeply rooted in Reilly's personality.

Conclusion

At this point, it is still impossible to establish all the nuances of events concerning the Trust and verify all of the facts as they relate to Sidney Reilly, Boris Savinkov, the scattered émigrés and the monolithic Trust; despite Mitrokhin's substantial contributions through smuggling thousands of archival documents out of Russia after the Soviet Union collapsed, the archives still hold secrets, and it is doubtful that we will ever know the full truth. After all, it is not even firmly established whether Sidney Reilly was working for the Cheka or British SIS from the time he met Lockhart. In the end, the best solution is only to trace the events as we understand them today, as I have done here.

After the fall of the Russian Empire and the Whites' retreat into the émigré diaspora, there were very little (if any) of the surviving which were able to work together. There were the Monarchist groups, lead by General Peter Wrangel and, after Wrangel's death in 1927, General Alexander Kutepov, and the republican-minded intellectuals, which looked primarily to Boris Savinkov for guidance.[60] Additionally, there were several smaller factions, such as the Anarchists which would obviously have no leader, and ultimately played little part in the grand political games waged between Savinkov's and General Wrangel's groups. The overall state of affairs among the Russian émigrés mirrored the situation in Russia between the two revolutions. Though they had the shared goal of overthrowing the Bolsheviks and retaking Russia, no group could agree on which form of government this new regime would take, and so their opposition took no form.

In contrast to the White émigré community, the Soviets had definite goals and could play to the instabilities of their opponents living in the West. Clearly the most successful example of

[60] One might think Alexander Kerensky would be the natural leader for the pro-democracy Russians in exile. Quite the contrary; nobody wanted anything to do with him.

this during the given timeframe was the Trust Operation, which pitted the Monarchists against the other factions and made the Monarchists' opposition look to the Trust for support in their aim to overthrow the very government which allowed the Trust to exist. The primary Soviet goal, even beyond the capture and execution of Sidney Reilly and Boris Savinkov, was the blunting of any action from the émigrés, and by tricking the émigrés into inaction and sapping their resources the Trust fulfilled this purpose perfectly.

During these factional disputes among the émigrés, the Western governments were hesitant to offer much aid to either side. True, the French helped Wrangel set up the ROVS, and various others along with the French, including the Czechoslovak and Polish governments, rendered some financial assistance to Savinkov and Reilly. However, the help the émigré groups received was never sufficient, and the unstable financial situation left their faction in a constant search for more money just to pay their staffs. They certainly did want to march an army back into Russia and depose the Bolshevik leadership, and looked to the European nations for support, but the émigrés received less and less support, financial or otherwise, as time passed. They sought a more substantial, long-term solution to their financial problems, and no national government would step up to provide such a solution.

It was into this dire situation that the OGPU stepped, presenting Alexander Yakushev as a messenger for their organization, in reality a clever trap, which would offer great promise to the wayward groups of disparate émigrés. The Trust guaranteed a quick, decisive action against the Bolsheviks in visible ways, asking only for money so that its members could carry out their operations. This was a highly effective ruse for siphoning money away from organizations already strapped for cash. The Trust provided hope for definite change and quick action

deluding the White émigrés from 1921 until 1927, the entire duration of the Trust's operation. It was, of course, a false messianic promise, and only further undermined the émigré community.

Ultimately, the entire affair came down to money and who had it. The Monarchists had plenty of money, but elected to send it to the OGPU instead of either giving it to Savinkov and Reilly or financing their own operations. Reilly and Savinkov started with immense fortunes, but as time went by, more of their ideas resulted in nothing, and their extravagant lifestyles drained whatever funds were not used for their abortive operations. Savinkov's morphine habit and his sizable retainer of bodyguards and assistants came into play here, as did Reilly's taste for expensive women, travel, and accoutrements. Furthermore, they both had to present the illusion of already having support in order to receive support, necessitating further expenditures. As Reilly's and Savinkov's respective fortunes dwindled, they looked toward the only outwardly anti-Communist organization which had a full war chest – the Trust.

Keeping in mind the Trust's careful maneuvering and the slow reaction in the émigré community, it should be made clear that this was not a game with winners and losers. The Whites lost their homeland, since after their last counterrevolutionary ideas failed to materialize they had no further options to exercise. For its part, the Trust did not fare much better; part of being dismantled under the Stalin era involved the execution of everyone involved. Further, beyond the immediate result this had on the Trust, a greater tragedy befell the Soviet people as a result of Stalin's paranoia. Though I would in no way suggest that the Trust was *the* reason for the Stalinist terror of the 1930's, it was a contributing factor: if an organization such as the Trust could pose as an anti-Bolshevik government within the Soviet Union, it could eventually be used for its supposed purpose.

The story of the Trust would have an enormous impact on Soviet internal and foreign policy for the next thirty years. Not only did it continue employing the methods it used against the émigrés in order to exact vengeance upon them (that is, until nobody would any longer fall for the bait), but an organization such as the Trust was precisely what Stalin feared could arise in the Soviet Union – a pseudo-formation of anti-Soviet espionage, which permitted the waves of purges. Though Stalin managed to discredit and ultimately dismantle the Trust before it could be used against him, he remained fearful that another such organization might arise independently of the OGPU and later of the NKVD. Stalin's accusations during the show trials, namely that a person or group of persons was receiving money from counterrevolutionary organizations or governments and that they were plotting to overthrow the Soviet leadership, exactly fit the procedure employed by the Trust. However, while the Trust did legitimately engage in taking funds from abroad under Lenin's New Economic Plan and was wholly under OGPU control by 1922, in the years that followed there was never any serious anti-Bolshevik plotting done by the Trust. Any claims to the contrary, such as the reasoning for shutting down the most successful counter-espionage operation in the OGPU's history, was the creation of an extremely paranoid mind.

When taken as a whole in their chronological development, these events must have been very confusing to people involved with the émigré communities. Even the best and most cautious minds among the emigration were fooled by the Trust; it did not even occur to anyone that the Trust may have been deceiving people or acting as agent provocateurs. As seen in the case of Madame Schovalovsky, the idea that her sick father's letters could have been fabrications never even entered Sidney Reilly's mind. Maria Schultz never guessed that Eduard Opperput's defection was anything but sincere, a mistake which led to her death quite quickly. Boris

Savinkov did not doubt the plan which would make him ruler of Russia solely through the effort of his being on Russian soil during the time when the counterrevolutionaries seized power. Sidney Reilly, for all his stern warnings to Savinkov and Pepita, fell for the trap himself. Once it was revealed to the world that the Trust was a sham opposition, the feelings of shame and betrayal in the West were very deep, indeed, almost tangible.[61]

So concluded the story of the man esteemed by some to be an inspiration for Ian Fleming's James Bond. While the life of danger, excitement, womanizing and high stakes was certainly a part of his story, the story's end was decided by none of these qualities, but from Reilly's less publicized and very human weaknesses. It was not only his desire to overthrow the Bolsheviks or to avenge Savinkov that drove him to return to Russia, but his increasingly unstable mental state and delusions of grandeur which convinced him that he could overthrow the solid Bolshevik regime and become the master of Russia, as he had dreamed since the Lockhart Plot. Perhaps, if Reilly had suffered from a less severe Messiah Complex and lacked the desire to be a hero, and instead accepted his limitations, he would not have returned so willingly to his demise. Instead, his desire to be a Napoleon, a person for whom the rules of society did not apply, overwhelmed his desire to work for the overarching cause of the counterrevolution, as seen in his willingness to circumvent orders which would censure his aspirations, and his propensity for self-aggrandizement helped to undermine the efforts of the émigré community at ousting the Bolsheviks when such plans could have realistically been implemented.

[61] The final revelation came after respected émigré Vasiliy Shulgin released his book *Three Capitals*, which claimed, after a tour led by Yakushev, that Russia was being reborn and the Bolsheviks would fall any day now. Upon the disclosure that the Trust was a fake opposition, Shulgin was disgraced in the eyes of the émigré community (van der Rhoer, 232).

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