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Iain Lauchlan

RUSSIAN HIDE-AND-SEEK

The Tsarist Secret Police in St Petersburg, 1906–1914

Iain Lauchlan is a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow of St Cross College, Oxford University. He has taught Russian history at the Universities of Leeds, Manchester, Helsinki, Tampere and Oxford.

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To my parents

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I.G.L.

Oxford, December 2001.

Terms and Abbreviations

- Agentura** – Network of agents, both internal and external.
- Bund** – Jewish SD faction
- Cheka** – the Soviet secret police, 1917–1922.
- Conspiratorial apartments** – *konspirativnye kvartiry*: safe houses for meetings between the case officer and spy.
- Court** – with a capital ‘C’ to denote the circle of courtiers surrounding the monarch.
- DP** – the Department of Police, subordinate to the MVD, 1881–1917.
- DPOO** – the Department of Police Special Section (*Osobyi otdel*). The headquarters of the tsarist secret police, 1898–1917.
- Duma** – the Imperial Russian lower house of parliament (the State Duma), 1906–1917.
- External agents** – surveillance agents, detectives, watchers. The opposition movement referred to them as ‘spies’ (*shpiony*). However, I do not. I use the term ‘spies’ to denote internal agents.
- Filer** – a Russian slang term for an external agent (plural: *filery*) derived from the French verb *filer*: to shadow, to tail.
- Fontanka** – the Department of Police Headquarters located at Fontanka 16, St Petersburg.
- Internal agents** – secret informers, secret agents: Usually working inside the opposition parties. I refer to them as ‘spies.’ The opposition movement, however, did not. It referred to them as *agents provocateurs*.
- Kadet** – the liberal ‘Constitutional Democratic Party.’
- Okhrana/okhranka** – the unofficial nickname for the tsarist secret police, 1881–1917.
- Okhrannik** (plural: *okhranniki*) Okhrana officer(s).
- OO** – *Okhrannoe otdelenie*: Security Section
- MOO**– *Moskovskoe OO*: Moscow Security Section. Moscow OO.
- MVD** – *Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del*: Ministry of the Interior (when referring to the institution).
- MVD** – *Minister vnutrennykh del*: Minister of the Interior (when referring to a person).
- PbOO**– *Sankt Peterburgskoe OO*: St Petersburg Security Section. Petersburg OO.
- PGD**– Provincial Gendarme Directorate (*Gubernskoe zhandarmskoe upravlenie*).
- SD** – Social Democrat: a revolutionary party (RSDRP) founded in 1897. The leadership split into two factions after 1903: the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. However, the division was not as clear-cut among rank and file SDs in the period of this study.
- Security Sections** – the city-based operational headquarters of the tsarist secret police.
- SOGD** – *Stenograficheskie otchety Gosudarstvennoi Dumy*. Stenographic records of the State Duma.
- Special Section** – see DPOO.
- SR** – Socialist Revolutionary: a revolutionary party founded in 1901 fusing aspects of Russian Populism and Western Marxism.
- URP** – the Union of the Russian People (*Soiuz russkogo naroda*): a right-wing extremist organisation created in reaction to the October Manifesto of 1905.

Chapter One

Russia's Inner Demons

The Origins of the Okhrana Myth

The archives of the tsarist Department of Police and its subordinate branches were only opened in the early 1990s.¹ This relatively recent event has provided an invaluable opportunity to reappraise the so-called Okhrana (or in Russian *okhranka*): the tsarist secret political security police. A wealth of new publications has subsequently emerged on the subject.² Access to hitherto closed Russian police records has revealed that a great deal of what was once taken for granted about the Okhrana belongs to the realm of myth.³ Yet, it is doubtful that these myths will be consigned to the dustbin of historiography. If anything the injection of new information will stimulate rather than sedate debate on the nature of the Imperial Russian secret police:

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- 1 The principal archives of the Okhrana are the Department of Police records held in the *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [hereafter GARF], see: GARF, *Putevoditel'. Tom 1. Fondy Gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Rossiiskogo Federatsii po istorii Rossii XIX- nachala XX vv.* (Moscow, 1994) [Hereafter: GARF, *Putevoditel'*].
- 2 The subject is a vast one. For further details on the tsarist secret police in Moscow, I would strongly recommend the reader refer to the work of Jonathan Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege. Security Police and Opposition in Russia, 1866–1905* (University of Illinois Press, Dekalb, 1998). Charles Ruud and Sergei Stepanov have given us fascinating accounts of the high politics of secret policing and the many *causes celebres* which made them infamous in: *Fontanka 16: Politicheskii sysk pri tsariakh* (Moscow, 1993) & English translation: *Fontanka 16: The Tsars' Secret Police* (Sutton, London, 1999) [hereafter referred to as *Fontanka Sixteen* to distinguish it from the Russian version]. For a thorough overview of the vast archival resources on the tsarist secret police see the various works of Zinaida Peregodova in my bibliography. Many others – such as Anna Geifman and Nurit Schleifman – have touched on the subject with their own look at the revolutionary movement.
- 3 This process of reappraisal began even before the opening of the Russian archives: D.C.B.Lieven, 'The Security Police, Civil Rights and the Fate of the Russian Empire, 1855–1917,' in Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (eds.), *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989).

some old rumours will be laid to rest, but many more will be revived. This is not altogether a bad thing. Myths offer simplified and coherent narratives, they are enduring because they contain strong elements of truth.⁴

I will use the term ‘Okhrana myth,’ in this chapter to denote the identifiable stereotypes of Nicholas II’s secret police which have taken shape in the inherited body of literature on Russian history. These stereotypes can serve a useful purpose because they provide the historian, who might be more specifically interested in other matters, with a rudimentary understanding of a confused and contradictory collection of institutions. Yet this often gives a distorted picture of the Okhrana: the sweep of the ‘story’ tends to push us towards certain clichés, particularly in narratives where the Okhrana sits in the background and not the foreground. For example, most depictions of the Okhrana through a narrative run as follows: A group of idealistic terrorists assassinate the ‘tsar liberator’ in 1881. Consequently, his more reactionary son, Alexander III, comes to the throne. Alexander III turns his back on the liberal reforms instigated by his father. He creates a new secret police with extra-legal powers, which inherit the despotic tendencies of its predecessor, the Third Section, without any of its benevolent inclinations. The Okhrana becomes a sinister *sanctum sanctorum* of the reactionary cause. Moreover, the new secret police force, under the gendarme Colonel Sudeikin, devises a morally repugnant technique of defeating its opponents: provocation.⁵ This is a means of insinuating false friends in the midst

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- 4 For insiders’ views on the deeply divided nature of the Okhrana see the memoirs of the head of Moscow Security Section 1912–1917: A.P.Martynov, *Moia sluzba v otdel’nom korpusse zhandarmov* (Stanford 1972); the memoirs of General V.F.Dzhunkovskii, assistant Minister of the Interior 1913–1915 see: GARF, f.826, op.1, *Vospominaniia V.F.Dzhunkovskogo*; the short account given by the former Director of the Department of Police 1902–05: A.A.Lopukhin, *Otryvki iz vospominanii (Po povodu “Vospominanii gr. S.Iu.Vitte”)* (Moscow, 1923); by the head of St Petersburg Security Section 1905–1909 see: A.V.Gerasimov, *Na lezii s terroristami* (Paris, 1985); & by the head of Petrograd Security Section 1915–1917 see: K.I.Globachev, ‘Pravda o Russkoi revoliutsii. Vospominaniia byvshago Nachal’nika Petrogradskogo Okhrannago otdeleniia,’ MS in the Bakhmeteff Archive, Columbia University..
- 5 The crucial role of this in the story of the Russian Revolution in a sense explains (aside from the obvious human drama interest) the continuous interest in provocation. See for example publications from the original classic study of a provocateur: Boris Nicolaievsky, *Aseff: The Russian Judas*, trans. by George Reavey

of the clandestine groups of political radicals. Society becomes infested with spies. This method proves useful in the short run and honest revolutionaries are repeatedly led to the gallows, having been ‘provoked’ into crimes by malevolent secret police agents. This myth, like most others, has a sting in its tail: the Okhrana’s success comes at the expense of the moral credibility of the tsarist regime. The secret police grows more and more incompetent, it blindly seeks to suppress even the mildest political opposition and its agents are exposed in a series of scandals. Consequently, the regime loses the support of the masses. Revolution is inevitable. The irony is that the very institution devised to preserve the tsarist regime is the one which leads to its collapse. Moreover, the Okhrana’s poisonous influence lives on: the Bolsheviks (an extremist fraction largely supported by the Okhrana in order to weaken the Social Democratic party as a whole) adopt and expand the secret police in their own war against the people in the Soviet era.⁶

Russian Gothic

One might argue that few historians would be influenced by such a glib version of events. All the same, these stereotypes *do* continue to have a profound influence after, and even because, the archives have been opened. Why? Well, some sort selective process is necessary in order to navigate the avalanche of new information. If we look hard enough for evidence of one particular tendency, sooner or later we will find it (albeit with some revision of our old views). New research therefore does not begin from scratch. We begin with the familiar

.....
(London, 1934); to relatively recent works prior to the opening of the archives such as R. Carter Elwood, *Roman Malinovsky: A Life Without Cause* (Newton, Mass., 1977). A plethora of such studies has appeared in Russia over the past decade: e.g. V.M.Zhukhrai, *Provokatory: Tainy tsarskoi okhranki: avantiuristy i provokatory* (Moscow, 1991) Feliks Lur’e, *Politseiskie i provokatory* (St Petersburg, 1992).

- 6 For example, Orlando Figes argued in his study of the Russian revolution that: ‘This constant battle with the police state engendered a special kind of mentality among its opponents. One can draw a straight line from the penal rigours of the tsarist regime to the terrorism of the revolutionaries and indeed to the police state of the Bolsheviks’: Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy. The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924* (London, 1996), p.124.

and compelling story described above, a Gothic horror writ large: complete with the inflexible and despotic father figure, the malevolent son, terrible forces lurking beneath the everyday normality, the constant haunting pursuit of the dreadful Other, split identities and even an ancestral curse thrown in for good measure. It is a convincing story, and has formed the framework for many fine historical accounts in recent years.⁷ I just don't happen to think that the story is historically true (or at least not the whole truth and nothing but the truth).

In my analysis I want to remove the tsarist secret police from the dominant influence of a narration of the origins of the Russian Revolution. Instead I will look at a specific branch of the Okhrana on a piece by piece basis. In order to avoid the necessity of extensive narrative I will confine my study mainly to the years 1906 to 1914. In doing so I want to see if a different picture emerges. What aspects of the tsarist secret police have been ignored because they don't fit into the story of the Russian Revolution? What features of the tsarist secret police have been overemphasised, to the point of caricature and myth, so that it fits in with a general exposition of the origins of the Russian Revolution and Soviet police tyranny?

Of course I am aware that my own choice of chronological period will push this study towards other sorts of bias, or lean towards some other myth. But, as I have remarked, myths aren't altogether without utility and at least this might go some way towards redressing the balance. This is not to say that an analysis of the Okhrana in St Petersburg from 1906 to 1914 will present a one-sided, rose-tinted, revisionist portrayal of the reviled tsarist secret police. Far from it. The city was after all at the hub of revolutionary movement and its mythology, and their views have a bearing on this analysis. For example, the Okhrana's duel with the revolutionary movement plays a central role in perhaps the finest literary depiction of St Petersburg in the period of this study: Andrei Bely's 'Petersburg.' One cultural historian describes 'Petersburg' thus: 'The novel is set at a moment early in the twentieth century when worker unrest seems about to explode in revolution; phantom-like hordes advance toward the

7 Most notably two of the most important books on the late tsarist secret police to date: Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*; & F.S.Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police in Russian Society, 1880–1917* (London, 1996).

capital's centre, preserve of the upper class, and their rumblings carry across as the sound "oo-oo-oo." In the city itself, the grandeur of the facades and statues is deceptive; on closer inspection, they are crumbling and decaying. The canals seethe with bacilli unseen by the naked eye while the veneer of European culture acquired by the Imperial elite who frequent the city's grand buildings conceals a fundamentally Asian interior. The ticking time bomb in a can of sardines intended for a political assassination punctuates the narrative.⁸ Clearly the idea that the rotten, decaying, superficial, artificial city St Petersburg would one day disappear in the fog, or sink back into the swamp, has influenced ideas that the collapse of the tsarist regime was pre-programmed, inevitable. To focus on Petersburg during the constitutional experiment therefore highlights the portentous signs of revolutionary change in Imperial Russia.

Thus the Petersburg myth, like the Okhrana myth, was imbued with omens of things to come. The paradigm Petersburg text is Alexander Pushkin's 1833 poem 'The Bronze Horseman' (*Mednyi vsadnik*).⁹ This refers to Etienne Falconet's imposing bronze statue commissioned by Catherine the Great. It depicts Peter the Great on horseback dramatically ascending an enormous single chunk of Finnish granite and crushing a snake (symbolising Sweden at the time, and many other things ever since) under the horse's hoof. It was a simple glorification Russian imperial power. Yet Pushkin's poem offered a more troubled vision. Like the Okhrana myth, it contains elements of Gothic horror: encompassing themes such as the deluge (set during the flood of 1824), the powerlessness of the individual against the all-powerful machine (i.e. the imperial state, embodied by Peter's statue) and the mysterious, inescapable pursuit (the spectre of Peter's statue which pursues and destroys the little man). It is not difficult to see why the radical movement in Russia's angst-ridden late Silver Age, particularly during the years of the Stolypin reaction, saw the predicament of Evgenii as a metaphor for

8 Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (London, 1995), p.8

9 See also: Nikolai Antsiferov, *The Soul of Petersburg* (Petrograd, 1922); Solomon Volkov, *St Petersburg: A Cultural History* (Trans. Antonia W. Bouis, London, 1996); & Elena Hellberg-Hirn, *Soil and Soul: The Symbolic World of Russianness* (Ashgate Press, Aldershot, 1998).

their own flight from the seemingly omniscient Okhrana. Such themes also proved applicable to growing socialist disillusionment with the Soviet regime, where once again the utopian ‘dreams of a beautiful autocracy’¹⁰ turned to nightmare. As Katerina Clark, has noted, ‘It might be said that Stalinist culture was formed at least in part as the myth of Petersburg... was married to Marxism.’¹¹

Thus, the Petersburg myth greatly corresponds with the simplistic narrative of the rise and fall of the Okhrana. However, the Petersburg myth also contains elements which encourage a more complex analysis of the Okhrana. In Petersburg, as Gogol put it: ‘everything is wet, smooth, even, pale, grey, and foggy.’¹² It is a city steeped in ambiguity. The mythology of Petersburg is rich and varied; it embraces complexity.¹³ The creative visions of Petersburg in Belyi and Pushkin emphasise the paradoxical nature of the tsarist regime. St Petersburg was the centre of power on the periphery of empire, the cockpit of a distinctly Russian form of imperialism and yet also the ‘window on Europe.’ Consequently, I have looked for evidence as to how far this imitation of the West also underscored the evolution of the Okhrana. This can be applied to the 1906–1914 period: although some form of upheaval, collapse or transformation was undoubtedly in the offing, it was never clear which way the pendulum would swing. Moreover, if the contradictory, paradoxical, and artificial St Petersburg had survived thus far for over two hundred years without sinking into the swamp, could not the tsarist regime have survived also?

This marriage of opposites penetrated every level of the Petersburg myth. For example, it did not merely suggest that the modern Russian state should be viewed simply as a tyranny. True, Petersburg was the

10 To use the felicitous phrase of Sidney Monas, ‘The Political Police: The Dream of a Beautiful Autocracy,’ in Cyril Black (ed.), *The Transformation of Russian Society* (Cambridge, 1967), pp.164–90. On the original idealistic conception of the political police see: Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.5–7; Monas, *The Third Section*, p.293 writes: ‘Far from connecting the sovereign with the public, as Nicholas I had envisaged, the political police guaranteed his isolation and ineffectiveness.’

11 Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (London, 1995), p.8.

12 Volkov, *St Petersburg*, p.xiv.

13 For example on the rich tapestry of Petersburg folklore see: N.A.Sindalovskii, *Legendy i mify Sankt-Peterburga* (St Petersburg, 1994).

heart of autocratic government, of an anachronistic imperial Court steeped in corruption and mysticism and of overweening bureaucratic interference in embryonic civil society. But from 1906 to 1914 it was also the heart of constitutional experiment: in one sense the home of democracy and the most vibrant centre of civil society: with the highest proportion of municipal voters, the highest literacy rate, the highest proportion per capita of newspapers and theatres, of telephone subscribers, of privately owned stone houses etc.¹⁴ The ‘little man’ was developing his own institutions and resources outside the control of the state. Petersburg as capital city also represents a powerful symbolic difference between Imperial Russia and the Moscow-centric Soviet Union: suggesting that Soviet tyranny was not simply a logical continuation of autocratic despotism.¹⁵

Nor was the Petersburg myth simply a pessimistic vision of a doomed civilisation’s resistance to change or progress. It also represents a highly optimistic vision of the triumph of order over chaos, progress over conservatism. True, Petersburg was on one level the most conservative of cities – the very architecture embodied a city centre frozen wholly in a particular era: the age of rationalistic enlightened despotism. Yet it was also, not surprisingly, the engine of imperial modernisation, ‘the laboratory of the modern [age],’¹⁶ and a leading European centre of innovation and technological advancement.¹⁷

I am interested in the marriage of opposites encapsulated in the Petersburg myth because this theme can also be applied to the tsarist

- 14 It had 16,000 municipal voters to its population of 1.556 million. Moscow had 8,000 to 1.481 m, Saratov had 1,884 to 214k, Kazan’ had 1500 to 182k, Kiev 4,800 to 497k– see: Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801–1917* (Oxford, 1967), pp.662–63. There were 25,000 telephone subscribers in the capital, compared to 3,500 in Kiev and 1,500 in Kazan’. (There was some mistake in the Moscow figures on this score- listing only 300 private telephones). Petersburg had 22 theatres, compared to 10 in Moscow, 5 in Tiflis, 3 in Saratov.
- 15 For a look at the differences between the two regimes see: Jacob Walkin, ‘Some Contrasts Between the Tsarist and Communist Political Systems,’ *New Review of Soviet and East European History*, vol.15 (March 1976) pp.55–66.
- 16 K.Schlögel, *Jenseits des Grossen Oktober: Das Laboratorium der Moderne. Petersburg, 1909–1921* (Berlin, 1988).
- 17 In the middle of the period of this study, 1910, a government survey recorded that Petersburg had 2,800 public electric lanterns, compared to a pitiful 322 in Moscow, 106 in Kazan’. Half the building in Petersburg were made of brick, compared to only a third in Moscow, 1/4 in Nizhnii-Novgorod 1/5 in Kazan’.

secret police: it was a highly contradictory, paradoxical, ambiguous organisation. The central contention of this book is that analysis of the Russian political police has been distorted over the past century by the over-simplistic rhetoric of binary opposition: either/or, East/West, reaction/reform. The Okhrana did not sit in the wings, it straddled both camps: reaction and reform. It worked towards securing the existing order *and* overseeing revolutionary change. This dualism in the role of the political police is most clearly displayed in St. Petersburg because the city was the heart of revolutionary movement *and* of the reactionary cause. This was not a coincidence: the two movements were interlocked in a symbiotic relationship.

The obsession with security was natural in St Petersburg because the relatively compact city centre was the seat of government. It was home to 20% of the state's higher ranking bureaucrats,¹⁸ the tsar's official – and, in the outskirts, his preferred – palaces of residence,¹⁹ and after 1905 the houses of parliament (the State Duma and the State Council). It was also the largest city in the empire – with nearly two million inhabitants. This created problems because by the twentieth century the focus of political unrest in Russia had shifted from the countryside to the cities: despite the fact that 85% of the Russian population lived in the countryside, two thirds of all crimes against the state were committed by city dwellers.²⁰ St Petersburg was also one of the most important industrial centres²¹ with the most unstable factory labour force: by 1914 two thirds of all political strikes occurred in St Petersburg.²² The geographical lay out of factories, encircling the capital, and the secluded location of the city away

18 G.L.Freeze (ed.), *Russia: A History*, (Oxford, 1997), p.186. The table of ranks had 524,000 names on it in 1900. D.C.B.Lieven, *Russia's Rulers Under the Old Regime*, (London, 1989), pp.123–25.

19 The Winter Palace was the official residence. However, the tsar spent most of his time at Tsarskoe Selo and Peterhof just outside St Petersburg: D.C.B.Lieven, *Nicholas II. Emperor of all the Russias* (London, 1993), pp.62–63.

20 Teodor Shanin, *Russia, 1905–07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth* (London, 1986), pp.20–28.

21 Nearly 50% of state crimes at the beginning of the century were committed by factory workers who made up only 3 million of the state's population.

22 This was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that factories in St Petersburg, such as the Putilov steel works employing 12,000 people, were much larger and more impersonal than the factories of other Russian cities; and 90% of the workers themselves were of rural origin and had difficulty adjusting to the cramped urban conditions.

from the principal black earth agrarian belt of the empire, made St Petersburg particularly vulnerable during times of worker unrest because striking transport workers could cut off the supplies of food and material to the central organs of power.²³ St Petersburg had the highest incidence of crimes against the state of any Great Russian city.²⁴ It was also home to the largest concentration of troops in the empire: thirteen major barracks were quartered in the twelve city districts in the centre of St Petersburg alone,²⁵ along with all the major regimental headquarters and the General Staff. St Petersburg was an important maritime region – a thriving port with the empire’s premier naval base situated in nearby Kronstadt. The city centre also contained the largest concentration of students – with one of the empire’s biggest universities (a traditional centre of political radicalism), most of the principal military academies and the leading elite aristocratic schools.²⁶ As Denis Diderot noted, it was rather foolhardy to place the heart in a fingertip of the empire. Not surprisingly therefore, violent attacks on the state in St Petersburg had raised the greatest threats to the survival of the regime: it was the site of the Decembrist rising in 1825,²⁷ and of the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. Keeping control of St Petersburg was often a matter of life and death for the state. The regime maintained control of the capital in 1905 and survived the revolution. It lost control of the capital in

23 James H. Bater, *St Petersburg: Industrialization and Change* (New York, 1976); idem, ‘Some Dimensions of Urbanization and the Response of Municipal Government: Moscow and St Petersburg,’ *Russian History*, vol.5, pt.1 (1978), pp.46–63; the seminal text on this subject is L. Haimson, ‘The problem of social stability in urban Russia, 1905–1914,’ *Slavic Review*, vols.23–24, (1964& 1965) pp.619–42, & 1–22.

24 The highest rates of crimes against the state were in non-Russian cities of the empire: Kiev 520 per million inhabitants, Odessa 384, Warsaw 153, Lodz 120 and Riga 115. Compared to Khar’kov 112, Petersburg 97 and Moscow 54. Shanin, *Russia*, p.28.

25 The twelve principal districts (*chasty*) of the capital were Admiralty, Aleksandr-Nevskaia, Kazan, Kolomenskaia, Liteinaia, Moscow, Narva, Petrograd, Rozhdestvo, Spasskaia, Vasilievskii Island and Vyborg; the four minor suburbs were Lesni, Noviaia Derevnaia, Okhta and Peterhof.

26 Alen A. Sinel, ‘The Socialisation of the Russian Bureaucratic Elite, 1811–1917, Life at the Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum and the School of Jurisprudence,’ *Russian History*, vol.3, pt.1, (1976) pp.1–32

27 In a parallel challenge to the state – the assassination of Petrograd’s Cheka boss, Uritskii, on 30 August 1918 sparked the transformation of the Cheka into an instrument of mass terror.

1917 and tsarism collapsed. Whereas the Soviet Union collapsed first of all on the periphery, Imperial Russia collapsed first of all in the centre. The fragility of a regime based in Petrograd influenced the Bolsheviks to move the capital back to Moscow in 1918.

In the face of such political instability and pressure for revolutionary change the Okhrana in St Petersburg could never have survived as a purely reactionary organisation. In other words, it had to innovate. Indeed, numerous historians have identified the Okhrana as: ‘one of the first modern security-intelligence services.’²⁸ True, modern security intelligence agencies would find comparisons to the Okhrana in St Petersburg less than flattering. The incoming chief of Petersburg Okhrana commented in 1905 that it was in such a moribund state that it resembled a ‘caricature of a secret political police.’²⁹ Yet caricatures are part of mythology: they have a powerful impact because they contain certain truths. It was not only a caricature of a *Russian* secret political police, but of secret political police in general. As such we can see both the advantages and disadvantages of secret intelligence agencies in bold colours. The small size of the Okhrana and the novelty of many of its methods make it an ideal case study in the evolution of intelligence agencies in the twentieth century. By looking at the Okhrana in St Petersburg from 1906 to 1914 we can observe in microcosm many of the practices and methods of twentieth century intelligence agencies in their infancy. The Okhrana’s failure to avert revolution serves as testament to the folly of excessive faith in the power of information. Intelligence agencies in the twentieth century prided themselves on scientific methods and rational systematic analytic practices during the information revolutions. Yet there was one feature on which intelligence agencies represent the persistent pull of the irrational in human society: As a ‘secret’ service the Okhrana was typical in that it considered ‘conspiracy’ to be its central organising principle and benchmark of operational efficiency. Far from rational, this represented a neo-hermetic belief in secret information as some sort of key to supernatural truth: The more secret the information the more valuable it must be. Yet the tsarist regime might have been better advised to pay a little more attention to the plain

28 W.Glenn Campbell (director of the Hoover Institution) intro to E.E.Smith, *The Okhrana*, p.5

29 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.8.

openly visible fact of widespread social discontentment. St Petersburg from 1906 to 1914 represents a society in which the occult and mysticism gained vogue and a political scene which still largely occupied an occult or cameralist world – in other words, a world hidden from view. These tendencies arose not because it was a backward city but *because* it was the most modern city in the empire: secrecy, cameralism, spiritualism etc. were attempts to cope with and make sense of rapid change in the modern world.

With all these contradictory tendencies underpinning the evolution of the tsarist secret police it is odd that such a simplistic, almost uniformly accepted definition of the Okhrana has been so influential. To ascertain why this is the case I will begin by examining the origins of the ‘Okhrana myth.’ In this way I wish to demonstrate why I feel it can distort the historical reality of events. This is, hopefully, a more engaging form of bibliographical survey.

25

Separate Realm: Defining the Okhrana

At its most basic level the myth of the Okhrana emerged as a means of inventing a definition of the late Imperial Russian secret police. There is a simple reason why a definition had to be ‘invented’: ‘the Okhrana’ did not officially exist. Political policing was handled by disparate institutions. The closest thing the Okhrana had to a headquarters was the Special Section of the Department of Police – yet this only emerged in 1898, that is, seventeen years after the ‘foundation’ of the Okhrana and even this office never really commanded complete control over the political police. Security Sections (*okhrannye otdeleniia*) formed the operational centres of the secret police, but were only established outside St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw after 1902. The principal field officers of the Okhrana came from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes: this organisation had been founded in 1826. In their striking blue uniforms the gendarmerie could hardly be described as a ‘secret’ police force and the overwhelming majority of gendarmes took little interest in political matters.³⁰ The gendarmerie retained a degree of independence

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30 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.12–13 & 43–44.

from the bureaucratic centre of the political police in the Interior Ministry particularly because their wages were paid partly by the War Ministry. Such a confused hierarchy meant that: ‘the staff was always at war with the department.’³¹ Other aspects of political policing were handled outside both of these institutions in the Main Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs (for the interception of private correspondence), the Censor’s office and the Ministry of Imperial Courts. Unlike the Third Section, the Cheka, the GPU etc., the term ‘Okhrana’ was never common coinage in Russia. *Okhranka* was the pejorative term for the secret police preferred by the political opposition. The state itself referred to its security police (*okhranitel’naia politsiia*) and statute on security (*polozhenie ob okhrane*), but used the word *okhrana* usually only in its literal meaning: ‘security.’ The term *okhranniki* to denote officers of the Okhrana only emerged in 1902. Agents of the Okhrana possessed no identification papers stamped ‘*okhrannik*’, there was no secret handshake, no Okhrana uniform and no clear single corporate headquarters. In many ways this was the Okhrana’s strength. For its time, the Okhrana was the prototype modern secret intelligence agency *par excellence* because it defied, or rather eluded, definition.

So why use the term Okhrana/*okhranka* at all? The most important reason is that the employees of the Okhrana themselves, despite incessant internal conflict, were developing an innate sense of belonging to the same organisation. Just because they did not give this organisation the same name, and just because the government avoided allowing such an organisation official status, does not mean that somehow the Okhrana did not *exist*. Belonging to the secret police was not so much a concrete vocation as ‘a state of mind.’³² It was a sense of belonging to an imagined community. Any degree of coalition in this group, also involved a concomitant alienation from the rest of society. To many observers the St Petersburg bureaucracy had evolved into a layer, a separate estate (*soslovie*), in – to use A.J.Rieber’s phrase – the ‘sedimentary society’ of late Imperial

31 A.I.Spiridovich, ‘Pri tsarskom rezhime,’ *Arkhiv Russkoi Revoliutsii*, vol.15 (1924), p.116.

32 George Yaney, ‘Bureaucracy as Culture: A Comment,’ *Slavic Review*, vol.41 (1982), p.106.

Russia. The Special Section's separate status was enforced by its isolated location on the top floor of the Department of Police headquarters at Fontanka 16, which was closed to all 'outsiders' (including ordinary police employees). Special Section staff, according to one *okhrannik*, were 'a breed apart,' with 'a distinct, alien look to them.'³³

This sense of separateness was inculcated in their training: Sergei Zubatov, the head of the Okhrana in Moscow the 1890s and in St Petersburg 1902–03, was a great believer in what later came to be referred to as 'indoctrination' in training future agents. His attempts to forge *esprit de corps* inside the Okhrana involved inventing some sort of collective identity. Zubatov concentrated on recruiting younger gendarme officers who would be more receptive to this new group identity (i.e. individuals whose identity, loyalties, values and beliefs were not entirely fixed beforehand).³⁴

The idea of belonging to a community united by its alienation from the rest of society was an attractive myth in particular to the kind of people who were drawn to police service. Why? Because secret police forces, often seen as the exclusive reserve of the 'insider', have attracted social 'outsiders' throughout Russian history.³⁵ The Okhrana was no exception. There was a social stigma to service in '*okhranka*' or 'the Department [of Police]' in late Imperial Russia, which meant that the real 'insiders' or 'the Establishment' shunned such employment. Nevertheless, the possibility of spectacular success in the job meant that it was a fast track to promotion. Consequently,

33 P.E.Shchegolev (ed.), *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima* [hereafter PTsR] (7 vols., Leningrad, 1924–27), vol.III, *Dopros M.S.Komissarova*, p.145.

34 See: Kyril Tidmarsh, 'The Zubatov Idea,' *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol.19 (October 1960), pp.335–46. Zubatov's indoctrination-style training was continued by many of his protégés- see A.I.Spiridovich's lecture published in J.Schneiderman, 'From the Files of the Moscow Gendarme Corps: A Lecture on Combating Revolution.' *Canadian Slavic Studies*, II, no.1. (Spring 1968); & Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.43–44.

35 On national minorities in the Cheka see: G.Leggett, *The Cheka: Lenin's Secret Police* (Oxford, 1981), pp.257–60. See for example the observation of the Georgian writer Kikodze, 'In the Cheka the ranks of investigator, secret agent, commander and executioner were filled by men without kith or kin, who in most cases knew no trade, had no education and were skilled in espionage and murder. Some were sadists by nature, some entered the service as insurance for themselves' – quoted Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton, 1993), p.31.

the leading *okhranniki* came mostly from national minorities, socially inferior *chinovniki* (bureaucratic officials) and even from the revolutionary movement. The leading Socialist Revolutionary, Viktor Chernov, noted at the time that this marked a fundamental break between the ‘old type of gendarme’ who had served in the more respectable Third Section and the ‘new type,’ of ‘investigative officers’ working in *okhrana* (‘security’). Men of the new type were introduced by Sergei Zubatov, himself a former revolutionary of humble origins. Chernov described them as: “‘former people’” from the revolutionary camp, renegades and traitors.’³⁶ This heterogeneity was still more pronounced among those archetypal pariahs: spies (known as ‘internal agents’) in the service of the police.

28

The idea of a ‘separate realm’ gave all secret servants a sense of belonging, which their ethnic/social background may have failed to provide. Richard Johnson pointed out in his own study of the Okhrana that the corporate identity of security police even transcended international state rivalries, when officers of the Okhrana worked in co-operation with European police chiefs. ‘Some professionalised bureaucracies’ Johnson writes, ‘at least, may not conform to the conflict-orientation thesis which underlies *Realpolitik* theory. Specifically organisations may evince a general predilection for close, trusting, collegial relationships with professional peers and... are more likely to adapt their behaviour to professional norms than to political ones.’³⁷

Also like the revolutionary underground, years of service further entrenched this sense of separateness in the Okhrana. Like the revolutionaries, the danger of their job meant that *okhranniki* lived increasingly secret lives, swapping their blue uniforms for civilian attire and often adopting assumed names (a potent symbol of the adoption of a new identity). This self-conception as a separate realm is very important because it shows that it was not just opponents of the political police, but the insiders themselves who saw the Okhrana as a state within a state. This can be seen most clearly in the parallels drawn at the time between the Okhrana and Ivan the Terrible’s

36 V.Chernov, ‘Iz mira merzosti i zapusteniia,’ *Sotsialist-Revoliutsioner*, no.2 (Paris, 1910), p.115. Chernov is one of the rare examples of a Russian using the term ‘okhrana.’

37 R.J.Johnson, ‘The Okhrana Abroad, 1885–1917: A Study in International Police Co-operation,’ (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1970), p.ix.

oprichnina ('separate realm'). It is odd that it was the *okhranniki* themselves who pointed out the connection, often referring to themselves as *oprichniki*. On the face of it this was a pejorative historical parallel. The *oprichniki* in the popular imagination were, after all, a barbaric, pseudo-monastic gang of state terrorists; a product of Ivan the Terrible's paranoia.³⁸ Yet the idea of belonging to this separate realm had positive as well as negative connotations. To be labelled an *oprichnik* was a source of perverse pride to many *okhranniki* because it gave these low-level bureaucrats working for obscure branches of the Department of Police an illusion of elevated status.³⁹ The *oprichniki* were, unlike their modern counterparts, the personal servants of the tsar: Ivan the Terrible's praetorian guard.

There was another aspect to this connection with the tsar. The principal operational staff of the Okhrana were officers of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes. They brought with them an invented tradition of service to society beginning with the legend of the creation of the Separate Corps: where Nicholas I handed their founder, Benckendorff, a handkerchief, commissioning him 'to wipe away the tears of the unhappy.' The handkerchief legend and Benckendorff's dreams of a political police who were both, 'feared and respected'⁴⁰ were clearly inspired by the 'terrible but gracious' tsar myth and Petrine enlightened

38 A.M.Kleimola, 'Ivan the terrible and his "Go-fers" Aspects of State Security in the 1560s,' *Russian History*, vol.14, nos.1-4 (Fall/Winter 1987); Robert O.Crummey 'Reform under Ivan IV: Gradualism and Terror' in idem (ed.) *Reform in Russian and the USSR* (Urbana, 1989) pp.13-22. *Oprichnina* was also translatable as 'the widow's portion.' For recent research suggesting that the concept of the *oprichnina* as a separate state was also not true see: Sergei Bogatyrev, *The Sovereign and His Counsellors. Ritualised Consultations in Muscovite Political Culture, 1350s-1570s* (Helsinki, 2000).

39 Ellis Tennant, 'The Department of Police, 1911-1913: From the Recollections of Nikolai Vlaimiriovich Veselago,' E.E. Smith Collection Box 1, pp.4 & 8; & *ibid.*, Box 1 folder 'Interviews': 1 Feb 1962, p.2. On how police officials from 1911 to 1913 often referred to themselves as *oprichniki* and moved in the same social circles. I.M.Trotsky, *Tret'e otdelenie pri Nikolae I* (Moscow, 1930): this aspect evolved from the original Separate Corps of Nicholas I, which I.M.Trotsky referred to as the tsar's 'private oprichnina' representing 'the nerve centre of his entire governmental system.' See: P.S.Squire, *The Third Department: the establishment and practices of the political police in the Russia of Nicholas I* (London, 1968), p.60.

40 Benckendorff's proposals were published in full in 'Proekt g.A.Benkendorfa ob ustroistve vvshei politsii,' *Russkaia starina*, vol.CIV, no.12 (Dec., 1900), pp.615-16.

despotism.⁴¹ The modern security police officer accepted these parallels because it enabled him to bask in past glories enjoyed under the Third Section when he had posed as ‘the eyes and ears of the rulers... with direct connection to the tsar... reporting how he thought the Russian people felt... Thus serving in the role of a connecting link between the tsar and the people.’⁴²

The idea of a mystical bond with the tsar penetrated all levels of the police. For example, Gorky offered a revealing description of his conversations with an ordinary Kazan’ police constable at the turn of the twentieth century, who boasted that the tsar was like a spider and that the police were part of, ‘an invisible thread, like a spider’s web, which emanates from the heart of His Imperial Majesty... All is bound and knit by that thread and by its invisible strength the tsar’s empire is upheld for ever and eternity.’⁴³ The imagery again suggests a bond between the Okhrana, imperial and autocratic mythologies. For example, L.V.Dubbelt, head of the Third Section, famously wrote: ‘Russia may be compared to a harlequin’s costume, the panels of which are sewn together with a single thread and hold together gloriously and handsomely. This thread is autocracy.’⁴⁴

The idle boast of Gorky’s policeman also revealed another very practical reason why the *okhranniki* embraced such a sinister myth: it helped intimidate the revolutionary movement. The archives show that Department of Police welcomed the frightening public image of the Okhrana because it exerted ‘psychological pressure’ on the

41 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.5–6, 12–13, & 43–44. Petr Durnovo also voiced his approval of this revival of Muscovite tsarist ideology in 1910– see: Lieven, *Nicholas II*, p.168. On the basileus/khan dichotomy see Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia, People & Empire, 1552–1917* (London, 1997), p.7. The early contributions of the political police to the reform process in the nineteenth century are well documented in the gendarmerie’s own self-glorifying 1876 ‘Jubilee Report’ published in V.Bogucharskii, “Tret’e otdelenie,” *Vestnik Evropy* (March 1917), pp.86–125. On the terrible but gracious tsar myth see: M.Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (London, 1961); Maureen Perrie, *The Image of Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore* (Cambridge, 1987); & B.Uspenskii, “Tsar i Bog. Semioticheskie aspekty sakralizatsii monarkha v Rossii” in idem. (Ed.) *Iaziki kul’tury i problemy perevodimosti* (Moscow, 1987).

42 Chernov, ‘Iz mira merzosti i zapusteniia,’ p.115.

43 M.Gor’kii, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol.16, *Moi universitet*, p.51.

44 Quidt. Squire, *The Third Section*, p.178.

revolutionary movement and ‘sowed mutual mistrust’ among opponents of the state.⁴⁵ This will-o-the-wisp was very useful to the security police because, contrary to popular perceptions, Russian society was chronically *undergoverned*: the Russian Empire at the turn of the century had only 4 administrators per thousand inhabitants compared to 7.3 in England and Wales, 12.6 in Imperial Germany and 17.6 in France.⁴⁶ The revolutionary underground estimated that there was a ‘Black Cabinet’ (a secret office inside central post offices for intercepting and reading people’s mail) in every city and even many towns of the empire. When one Soviet historian dredged the archives he found evidence of only seven such offices, reports of others, he noted, ‘were sheer hallucinations.’⁴⁷ The first thorough socialist history of the Okhrana estimated that the Department of Police employed up to 40,000 spies.⁴⁸ Yet, investigations in 1917 only managed to uncover 600.⁴⁹ At most there were probably no more than 2,000 secret informers working for the Okhrana at any one time.⁵⁰ The Okhrana in St Petersburg was rumoured to employ thousands of detectives trained to shadow political suspects: few government officials would have been safe from revolutionary attacks

- 45 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, Vice Director of the Department of Police, S.E.Vissarionov, to all heads of Security Sections, 10 March 1911. On the psychological trauma caused by this constant surveillance see: Alan Kimbal, ‘The Harassment of Russian Revolutionaries Abroad: The London Trial of Vladimir Burtsev in 1898,’ *Oxford Slavonic Papers* (New York, 1973), pp.48–64.
- 46 Cited in among others O.Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891–1924* (London, 1996), p.46.
- 47 R.Kantor, ‘K istorii chernykh kabinetov,’ *Katorga i ssylka*, vol.XXXVII (1927), p.93. His article is based on a *doklad* by I.Zybin to A.T.Vasil’ev of 12 July 1913. Maiskii had been wrong when he wrote that there were Black Cabinets in Riga, Vil’na, Tomsk, Nizhnii-Novgorod and Kazan’.
- 48 V.K.Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka: sostavleno po sekretnym dokumentam zagranichnoi agentury i Departament politzii* (Petrograd, 1918), pp.203, 216. GARF, f.5802, op.2, d.239, l.21, circular of 21 July 1908: cited by I.Iodlovskii at the Extraordinary Investigatory Commission. See also: Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.334.
- 49 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, index no.3f, boxes 21–25. Paris Internal Agency never exceeded 22: Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.122–37. Moscow Security Section at its height had 147 informants and St Petersburg 200: S.B.Chlenov, *Moskovskaia okhranka i ee sekretnye sotrudniki* (Moscow, 1919), pp.61–84; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.225.
- 50 Z.I.Peregudova, ‘Istochnik po izucheniiu sotsial-demokraticeskogo dvizheniia v Rossii,’ *Voprosy istorii*, no.9 (1988), p.96.

had the terrorists known that there were fewer than 250 ‘external agents’ in the capital.⁵¹ *Okhranka*, literally ‘the little security agency,’ was indeed not particularly big.

So if we want to know who invented the idea of an all-seeing, all-powerful Okhrana we need look no further than the *okhranniki* themselves. Indeed, in the years after the revolution many of them came to be highly critical of their former service. Take, for example, the description of the Okhrana by one former Siberian *okhrannik*, V.N.Russian: ‘scattered throughout the country, with its departments, investigation points, and gendarme administrations, patiently listening to the reports of countless spies and scouts, constantly arresting, hanging and deporting, strong in its fund of bottomless human baseness, strong in the amount of blood and tears shed, strong in the annual ten million ruble fund, the Okhrana affected directly and indirectly all the measures of the government... The Okhrana set the tone...’⁵²

32

The myth of an omniscient Okhrana was a government bluff. This perhaps urges a reappraisal of the grandiose claims of omniscience made by the Soviet security police.⁵³ Was this not a bluff also? When the revolutionary movement saw through the Okhrana’s bluff revolution soon followed. For example, the SR terrorist Boris Savinkov remarked after the murder of the Minister of the Interior Plehve that, ‘the autocracy lost not only a most faithful servant; it lost its terrible mystique of power.’⁵⁴ The terrible mystique of power was a crucial prop to the tsarist state.

51 M.E.Bakai, ‘Iz vospominanii M.E.Bakaia,’ *Byloe*, no.8 (Paris,1909), pp.108–09.

52 V.N.Russian, ‘The Work of Okhrana Departments in Russia’ (Hoover, Institution, Russian Collection), pp.4–6.

53 See: M.Latsis, *Chrezvychainye komissii po bor’be s kontrrevoliutsiei* (Petrograd, 1921), p.24; E.J.Scott, ‘The Cheka,’ *St Antony’s Papers*, no.1 (1956), pp.22–23. Contrast for example, analysis accepting ‘terror as a system of power’ e.g. Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (London, 1970); with more recent research questioning whether the state did really inspire such all-pervasive fear: e.g., R.Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin’s Russia*. (Yale UP, 1998).

54 Quid. in Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, pp.149–50. On the theme of the Okhrana and influencing popular opinion see: F.S.Zuckerman, ‘Self-Imagery and the Art of Propaganda: V.K.von Plehve as Propagandist,’ *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 28 (1982), pp.68–82.

The death of Plehve was a decisive moment in the failure of the tsarist regime to hoodwink society with a self-imposed myth. The Okhrana was merely one aspect of this public relations failure.⁵⁵ However, Russian society in general, and groups explicitly opposed to the Russian state in particular, did not reject the tsarist self-conception outright. Instead, they adopted aspects of this myth, and subverted others. As an ‘imagined community’ based upon ‘invented tradition’ the Okhrana myth emerged in much the same way– and performed many of the same functions– as national identity. I make this point because I will now look at the ways in which the Okhrana myth also incorporated, and came to influence, perceptions of Russian national identity.⁵⁶

Oriental Despotism

33

So if the tsarist secret police had such a rich *heroic* mythology, why is it that the prevailing Okhrana myth is such a negative, villainous stereotype? The simplest answer would be to point to Western propaganda and the somewhat subjective historical research during the Cold War. The essence of Cold War ideology was a dichotomous world-view: Russia versus the West, us versus them, good versus evil, freedom versus tyranny. The search for a definition of Russia’s unique identity, particularly its differences to Western countries, commonly focussed on the tsarist and Soviet state organs of espionage as defining features of Russian ‘otherness’ or ‘exceptionalism.’ Meanwhile, the study of secret intelligence services in the West remained the ‘missing dimension’ of European scholarly research.⁵⁷ When it came to analysing Western intelligence agencies journalists rushed in where academics feared to tread. Consequently, the study

.
55 As one assistant Interior Minister confessed: ‘the Russian government was hated but not feared. The government thunder rolled incessantly; but there was no lightning.’ Gurko, *Features and Figures*, pp.237–38. Also qtd. in Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, p.146.

56 On the relationship between invented traditions and national identity see Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge U.P., 1983); and Hosking, *People & Empire*, introduction and part one.

57 See: Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (eds.), *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities* (London, 1984).

of Western intelligence agencies has been considered a trivial subject and their broader thematic significance has been ignored. This has never been the case in Russia: the significance of the secret police as a central pillar of the Russian state has been discussed *ad infinitum*. Kremlinological excavation of Russia's past in an attempt to predict future behaviour naturally drew attention to similarities between tsarist and Soviet statecraft. Inevitably, the Okhrana came to be guilty by association: Big Brother's little father.⁵⁸ Here is a clear case of the importance of pre-conceived stereotypes: researchers knowing what they want to find before they look.

Kremlinologists did not have to look hard. There is a long and rich tradition of highly critical descriptions of the Russian Empire written by outsiders, foreigners and visitors.⁵⁹ This is particularly true with regard to descriptions of the Russian secret police. Most surviving descriptions of the *oprichnina* were made by rather biased foreigners.⁶⁰ A more recent antecedent to the Okhrana myth was the Marquis de Custine's description of Russia in 1839. This seminal best-seller was written by a devout Catholic, fervent republican, who had been inspired to write the book by émigré Polish nationalists. This was hardly a recipe for a dispassionate and accurate account of the Orthodox autocratic Russian Empire of Nicholas I.⁶¹ Karl Marx's comments on Russia provide another classic example of ill-informed Western bias. He paid little attention to the socio-political reality of Russian life. Instead, he presented a crude caricature of Russia in

58 On the patrimonial aspect to tsarism see: Petr Chaadaev referring the ruler as the 'little father [batiushka] of the Russian people' in P. Chaadaev, *Stat'i i pis'ma* (Reprint, Moscow, 1989) p.204.

59 On the influence of English and German travellers on the perception of Muscovy as a despotism see: Marshall Poe, ' "Russian Despotism": The Origins and Dissemination of an Early Modern Commonplace' (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993). On western travellers in Muscovy see: L.E. Berry and Robert O. Crummey (eds.) *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom* (Wisconsin, 1968).

60 See Daniel H. Kaiser & Gary Marker (comp. & ed.) *Reinterpreting Russian History (Readings 860–1860s)* (Oxford, 1994), chpt.9: 'The State Structure of Muscovite Russia.': particularly Heinrich von Staden's description of the *oprichnina* intended to persuade Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II to invade Muscovy– pp.151–54.

61 Le Marquis de Custine, *La Russie en 1839*, (D'Amyot, Paris, 1843). George F. Kennan, *The Marquis de Custine and His Russia in 1839* (Princeton U.P., New Jersey, 1971), pp.23–29: Custine was particularly influenced by his Polish travelling companion Ignace de Gurowski.

order to support his Hegelian concept of thesis versus antithesis, progress versus stagnation. ‘The bloody mire of Mongolian slavery, not the rude glory of the Norman epoch, forms the cradle of Muscovy,’ he wrote, ‘and modern Russia is but a metamorphosis of Muscovy.’⁶²

Of course, various other dichotomies integral to foreign policy have permeated Western thought: most notably in nineteenth century imperialist perception of Occident and Orient. There is a clear similarity in these deep-rooted prejudices. Indeed, the Russian secret police has been central to depictions of Russian statecraft as ‘Oriental despotism.’⁶³ This goes a long way in demonstrating how foreign policy of the United States shifted so easily from one ‘Oriental’ threat to another: from the Soviet/Russian to the Muslim Fundamentalist/Arabic ‘threats’ in the 1990s. In his critique of Oriental studies Edward Said argues that the idea of the Orient was an invention of the West. The consequence of basing academic research on a mythological conception of the East is that as more research is undertaken not only Western knowledge but also Western ignorance ‘becomes more refined and complex... For fictions have their own logic and their own dialectic of growth and decline.’⁶⁴ Knowledge and myth are not antithetical, they develop side by side.

Yet, ideas of Russian despotism were not merely the product of Western xenophobia. There was a good reason for many scholars to stress the importance of Russian police tyranny as a distinctly Russian phenomenon: *Russians* themselves had complained for centuries that they were unique in living under oppressive police tyranny. This is a crucial difference to Said’s view of Orientalism: one might argue that the native population of the Russian Empire, particularly its political opposition, took the pivotal role in the creation of the Okhrana myth. Petr Struve, the Russian Marxist turned liberal,

62 Quoted in Alexander Yanov, *The Origins of Autocracy: Ivan the Terrible in Russian History* (trans Stephen Dunn, London, 1981), p.vii. For a balanced analysis of the Mongol legacy see: Daniel Ostrovsky, ‘The Mongol Origin of Muscovite Political Institutions,’ *Slavic Review*, vol.49, no.4 (Winter, 1990).

63 For classic texts encompassing aspects of this separate conception of Russia see: Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1957); & Tibor Szamuely, *The Russian Tradition* (London, 1976).

64 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London, 1995), p.62. Said takes a more extreme line: that ignorance develops more than knowledge.

claimed in 1903 that the principal difference between the tsarist state and the rest of the world was, ‘in the omnipotence of the secret police.’⁶⁵ Russian opponents of various Russian regimes took the lead in emphasising the underlying continuity of secret police tyranny despite the frequent institutional facelifts (i.e. the dismantling of the Third Section, the Okhrana, the Cheka, etc. etc.) Workers in the late 1920s and 1930s often referred to the local GPU as ‘Stalin’s *okhranka*’ and even believed that it was staffed by the same people.⁶⁶ The proclamations of Kronstadt sailors, who rose against the Soviet regime in 1921, conjured up images of even deeper currents of continuity in Russian political police oppression: ‘The power of the police and gendarme Monarchy passed into the hands of Communist usurpers, who, instead of giving the people freedom, instituted in them the constant fear of falling into the torture chambers of the Cheka, which in their horrors far exceed the gendarme administration of the tsarist regime. The bayonets and bullets, and the gruff commands of the Cheka *oprichniki*—these are what the working man of Soviet Russia has won after so much struggle and suffering.’⁶⁷

Cold War analysis therefore did not invent this myth. It was an erudite reading of past accounts of Russia by Russians. The only problem was that these Russian accounts were also highly subjective. One might presume that the simple reason why the West more readily accepted the negative stereotypes of the Russian secret police propagated by the political opposition, rather than the heroic myth cultivated by the organs of Russian imperial power, might be to point to political factors. For example, one might presume that the West shared liberal views with the Russian opposition. Or one might presume that the West was motivated by interests of *Realpolitik*: supporting the opposition, after all, could be a useful foreign policy lever against Russian expansionism. However, this does not explain why the Okhrana myth was propagated by all political groups in Russia and took hold among groups of all political persuasions in

65 Quid. in Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (London, 1974), p.307.

66 Boris Silver, *The Russian Worker’s Own Story* (London, 1938), p.38. The English translation is given as ‘Stalin’s Okhrana.’

67 *Izvestiia vremennogo komiteta*, 8 March 1921, ‘Za chto my boremsia.’ See: *Pravda o kronshadtie* (Prague, 1921)—quid in: John D.Dziak, *Chekisty: A History of the KGB* (Lexington, 1984), p.34.

the West (liberals, socialists, monarchists, conservatives, fascists etc.) Moreover, sometimes the myth went contrary to *Realpolitik* (for example, the Okhrana was something of an embarrassment to the British Liberal government after the formation of the 'Triple Entente' in 1907.)

The Russian opposition successfully propagated their negative interpretation of the Russian secret police because their views coincided beforehand with the West as a result of a particular bond between the two. This bond was formed between the Russian opposition and the West on three interconnected levels: geography, psychology and publicity.

The geographical connection is plain to see. Wave upon wave of *intelligently* were exiled from the Russian Empire throughout the nineteenth century and settled in Western Europe. These colonies of well-educated and vocal exiles from Imperial Russia numbered around 10,000 by 1905. Consequently, the West's principal contact with 'Russia' was with her political opponents. This was not a one-way process whereby Russians dissidents (to use an anachronism) merely sold an image of the Okhrana to the gullible West. The Okhrana myth evolved through a process of cross-fertilisation of ideas between East and West. Western prejudices were reintroduced into Russia at the end of the nineteenth century with the publication of Russian translations of the Marquis de Custine's book inside the tsar's empire.⁶⁸ This occurred in much the same way as the totalitarian model of Stalinism gained vogue inside Russia in the late 1980s and 1990s after the smuggling of pre-revisionist Western literature on the Great Terror. Returning Europeanised students and émigrés also played a crucial role in this regard.

This process of cross-fertilisation of ideas, bordering on psychic contagion, goes still deeper. The majority Russian émigrés in the nineteenth century ended up in Paris. One can easily discern the influence of the conspiratorial paranoia running through French

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68 Excerpts first appeared in print in Russia in an article by N.K.Schilder in *Russkaia starina*, vol.61 (1891); and in full in 1910 in a book entitled—*Nikolaevskaia epokha. Vospominaniia frantsuzskogo puteshestvennika- Markiza de Kiustina* (Moscow, 1910); the second version was interestingly enough published by the Society of Former Political Prisoners and exiles, entitled *Nikolaevskaia rossiiia* (Moscow, 1910).

political life. For example, the Okhrana myth has a great deal in common with paranoid perceptions of the Society of Jesus in France. One of the leading propagators of these fears described the Jesuits in a fashion similar to the idle boast of Gorky's Russian policeman: 'Imagine a gigantic telegraphic network encompassing the universe and converging on a single centre, each member of the Society of Jesus is a wire; the General [in charge of the Jesuits] is the centre.'⁶⁹ We might also point to paranoia surrounding the Freemasons, where cross-fertilisation of Russian with French paranoia manifested itself in the form of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion.'⁷⁰ This contained all classic elements of conspiracy theories: a 'separate' society; operating on a subterranean level, both metaphorically (i.e. in secret) and literally (usually underground in the Paris catacombs, some later memoirists also claimed the tsarist secret service had its head quarters underground); and composing plans for world domination. These myths shared the same precursors: for example, the forged 'Testament of Peter the Great' expressing fears of Russian aspirations for world domination.⁷¹ Karl Marx was one misguided believer in this forgery. His views on Russia illustrate one of the clearest examples of a leading thinker's unthinking regurgitation of political mythology, writing as he did in 1867: 'The policy of Russia is changeless... Its methods, its tactics, its manoeuvres, may change, but the polar star of its policy— world domination— is a fixed star.'⁷²

The Russian political opposition's fear of the secret police was a psychological bond with observers from the West, who feared Russia

69 Bouis quoted in: Geoffrey Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth Century France* (Oxford, 1993), p.211. See also: Michel Leroy, *Le mythe jésuite, de Beranger a Michelet* (Paris, 1993).

70 Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka Sixteen*, chpt.10; Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London, 1970), passim. See also the views of the nineteenth century Slavophile and anti-Semite Ivan Aksakov: 'The Jews in the Pale of Settlement constitute a "state within a state"... whose highest authority is the "Universal Jewish Alliance".' Qutd. in G.Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552–1917* (London, 1998), p.391. See also S.Lukashevich, *Ivan Aksakov, 1823–1886* (Harvard, 1965).

71 The idea of a Russian blueprint for world domination which inspired the forgery was principally promoted by a Polish refugee in Paris, General M.Sokolnicki, in the early nineteenth century.

72 Taras Hunczak (ed.) *Russian Imperialism: From Ivan the Great to the Revolution* (New Brunswick, 1974), foreword, p.ix

in general. We should take account of the manner in which Western experts on Russia became personally acquainted with that country: for example, most of the influential foreign contemporary accounts of the Cheka were written by people who were there to spy on Russia, or preparing an invasion of Russia. Thus, many of them shared the same perceptions of the Russian political opposition because they themselves were pursued by another despotic and seemingly omniscient secret police (the Cheka) during their intervention in the Russian Civil War. The Cheka informer Arthur Ransome noted of his fellow Briton, Paul Dukes, that years of clandestine missions inside the hostile and despotic Bolshevik state had given Dukes, ‘much the same view of Russia as a hunted fox gets of a fox-hunt.’⁷³ And Robert Bruce Lockhart’s contention – that ‘the notorious Okhrana was directed by sly and deadly cheats’⁷⁴ – was most likely influenced by his experiences as a victim of one of the Cheka’s sly sting operations.

An analysis of the myth of the ‘sinister’ Okhrana is useful in this sense because it provides a distillation of the general myth of Russia under Western eyes. In other words, the secret police are a paradigm of the fear of Russia in the West. Secret intelligence institutions occupy an ‘occult’ world, in that they are hidden from view. As such, very little information is freely available about these institutions at the time, and sometimes even after their disappearance. This is very similar to the West’s difficulty in understanding Russia. As one historian of Western views of Russia has noted: ‘It was psychologically quite understandable that for honest middle-class European liberals the very boundlessness of Russia, with its autocrats, nomads, and sectarian self-burners, had something sinister and uncanny.’⁷⁵ There

73 Quid. in C. Andrew and O. Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story* (New York, 1990), p.41. In addition to the more well-known works of Paul Dukes and Robert Bruce Lockhart there is a vast body of literature written by British agents about their experiences of the ‘fox-hunt’. See for example, Col.F.M.Bailey, ‘A Visit to Bokhara in 1919,’ *Geographical Journal*, February 1921 & idem, *Mission to Tashkent* (London, 1946). ; Paul Nazaroff, *Hunted Through Central Asia* (London, 1932).

74 Quid in Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.7.

75 Emmanuel Sarkisyanz, ‘Russian Imperialism Reconsidered,’ in Taras Hunczak (ed.) *Russian Imperialism: From Ivan the Great to the Revolution* (New Brunswick, 1974), p.47.

was also something unnerving to the native Russian about the apparent vast reach of their own state into every corner of this enormous empire. And the way in which this state could spirit away political opponents into the vast unknown depths of Siberia was particularly sinister and uncanny. Thus, Western descriptions of Russia and Russian descriptions of their own secret police have both been subject to fear, speculation, invention and exaggeration.

Ignorance and fear breeds a certain superstitious dread, akin to a fear of the supernatural. Take for example, Andrei Kurbskii's (who might be seen as a Muscovite 'defector' of the sixteenth century) description of the *oprichnina*: 'Instead of distinguished men, adorned with good conscience, [Ivan the Terrible] gathered around him from all the land of Russia foul men, filled with every kind of evil... The Devil and his accomplice have armed the hosts of the children of darkness... and bound them with vows and spells.'⁷⁶

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The ideas underpinning Kurbskii's attack are clearly drawn from contemporary European fears of witchcraft. Norman Cohn has traced how these fears had ancient roots running from the Roman persecution of the early Christians, to the dissolution of the Knights Templar and beyond. Irrational beliefs in sinister secret societies are extremely eclectic: they borrow or inherit ideas from other myths and consequently tend to contain similar basic elements. Central to these fears was the idea that: 'there existed, somewhere in the midst of the great society, another society, small and clandestine, which not only threatened the existence of the great society but was also addicted to practices which were felt to be wholly abominable, in the literal sense of anti-human.'⁷⁷ Witches brought harm to society because in order to achieve power they had to perform *maleficium*, that is harming their neighbours by occult means. Cohn writes that, 'though they

76 Quoted in Martin Rady, *The Tsars, Russia, Poland and the Ukraine, 1462–1725* (London, 1990), pp.46–47. See J.L.Fennell (ed.), *Prince A.M.Kurbsky's History of Ivan IV* (London, 1965). For controversial claims that the Kurbskii accounts were forgeries see: E.L.Keenan, *The Kurbskii-Groznyi Apocrypha* (Harvard UP, 1971)

77 Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (Revised edition, London, 1993), p.ix. The subject of witchcraft has also been tackled by another historian of the Russian secret police, see: Robert Thurston, *Witch, Wicce, Mother Goose: The Rise and Fall of the Witch Hunts in Europe and North America* (London, 2001).

perform *maleficium* individually, they are a society, assembling at regular intervals, bound together by communal rites, subject to a rigid, centralised discipline.⁷⁸

Each generation inherits and then reinvents such fears. Academic depictions of an omniscient Russian secret police might be couched in scientific language, but the metaphorical meaning has often been little different to accusations thrown against the mythical secret society of witches. Thus, through the agency of the secret police the Russian state was seen to perform *maleficium* on Russian society in its entirety. For example, Alexander Yanov has argued that Ivan the Terrible was ‘the forefather—I might even say inventor— of a political monstrosity which neither *coups d’etat*, nor reforms, nor revolutions have proved capable of destroying [viz., the *oprichnina*].’⁷⁹ The secret police are thus interpreted as the occult cause of Russian otherness, Russian autocratic tyranny and Russian ‘Oriental despotism.’ One might note that Yanov’s description of the *oprichnina* even betrays some overt signs of this fear of the supernatural. For example he describes Ivan the Terrible’s reign as, ‘a kind of alchemical laboratory in which this monstrous form of power— not susceptible it seems, to time and corrosion— was worked out... which doomed Russia to a strange cyclical reproduction of its history.’⁸⁰

For a case of *maleficium* performed by the Okhrana we need only look at their purported effect on the psychology and methods of the revolutionary movement. For example, one of the finest historians of the Russian Revolution, W.H.Chamberlin, wrote that, ‘the conditions under which a revolutionist lived, whether he was doing underground work in Russia or participating in the emigrant circles abroad, were admirably calculated to produce fanatics, saints, heroes, inquisitors and neurotics. In this grim crucible were being forged future Red Administrators and managers of socialised industry, future commanders of the Red Army and officials of the Cheka.’⁸¹

78 Ibid., p.147.

79 Alexander Yanov, *The Origins of Autocracy: Ivan the Terrible in Russian History*, (trans. Steven Dunn,) pp.17–18.

80 Ibid., p.18. See also George Backer, *The Deadly Parallel: Stalin and Ivan the Terrible* (New York, 1950).

81 Quid in Leggett, *The Cheka*, p.266.

The tsarist Bastille

The final reason for the cross-fertilisation of ideas between the West and the Russian opposition in the formation of the Okhrana myth that I want to discuss in this chapter is the theme of publicity, or openness. The Third Section and the Cheka were great believers in the importance of publicising their own self-image. While both of these organisations conducted secret investigations, they also advocated a high public profile: 'Firstly to inspire a feeling of safety for honest folk, second to frighten those who seek to topple the throne.'⁸² The Cult of the Cheka⁸³ and Benckendorff's belief in cultivating the people's trust in their 'moral strength' was 'the best guarantee of success,'⁸⁴ indicate that these organisations placed central importance on their own public reputations. In stark contrast to this, the Okhrana shunned publicity. True, the Okhrana made attempts to influence public opinion through bribery and 'seeding' of the press, but this was not a campaign of self-publicity but rather an attempt to improve the public reputation of the imperial regime as a whole.⁸⁵ The Okhrana's craving for secrecy was a direct result of their training process, which emphasised that: 'Investigatory work is secret work, hidden from the eyes of society and the authorities.'⁸⁶

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82 'Proekt g.A.Benkendorfa,' p.616.

83 On the cult of the Cheka see: A.Gayev, 'The Noble Chekists,' *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR*, vol.22, no.3 (March 1965). Typical early examples can be found in the Soviet press on the tenth anniversary of the Cheka's foundation, eg: Bukharin's articles in *Pravda*, 18 Dec.1927, and *Izvestiia*, 20 Dec.1927; and his various eulogies on Dzerzhinskii on the fifth anniversary of his death. For a general survey of the Soviet depictions of the Cheka see: A.L.Litvin, 'VChK v sovetskoi istoricheskoi literature,' *Voprosy istorii*, 5 (1986), pp.96–103. The FSB and SVR remain highly concerned with cultivating good public relations. See for example: E.M.Primakov (general editor), *Ocherki istorii Rossiiskoi vneshnei razvedki*, 6 vols. (Moscow, 1996–2000). Another good case in point is the KGB 'museum' in the Lubianka— a rather selective presentation of the history of the Russian secret police— now open to tourist groups.

84 'Proekt g.A.Benkendorfa,' p.616.

85 See for example: W.J.Long, 'Russian Manipulation of the French Press 1904–1906,' *Slavic Review*, 31 (June 1972), pp.343–54. For archival information on P.I.Rachkovskii's emphasis on influencing the press see: GARF, f.102, op.253, d.172, DP circular, 19 April 1905, 'Ob uchrezhdeniiu polu-ofitsial'nogo subsidiruемого pravitel'stvom Russkogo biuro korrespondentsii,' ll.4–12.

86 Quid Schneiderman, 'From the files,' p.88. On censorship of security police matters see: 'Materialy po noveishei istorii Russkoi tsenzury,' *Osvobozhdenie*,

This one-sided policy might have been sensible had the Okhrana been merely an intelligence gathering organisation. But it was also a police force: contact with the general public and concomitant publicity was inevitable. This failure to develop a public relations 'face' cost it dear: it left the field open for opponents of the state to monopolise the early public depictions of the Okhrana. Moreover, as the only place where the victims of police repression could freely air these views was abroad, the myth of the Okhrana evolved largely in the foreign press. Russian political émigrés attempted to win foreign sympathy and support against their harassment at the hands of a tyrannical political police by denouncing tsardom as an Asiatic or Oriental despotism.⁸⁷ Thus, many Russians, in the attacks on tsarism, unintentionally strengthened existing foreign prejudices regarding Russia (though playing on these prejudices was perhaps deliberate on the part of the national minorities of the Russian Empire). The radical opposition, unable to escape— even abroad—the malevolent infiltration of tsarist spies, developed a fixation on the dread Okhrana as 'the living symbol of all that is most repressive, cruel, mean and revolting in autocracy.'⁸⁸ Petr Struve encapsulated the mood in the beleaguered political underground when he argued that: 'the struggle with the police is essentially the struggle with autocracy.'⁸⁹ He sought to rally all opposition groups into a single faction, united by their opposition to 'all-penetrating surveillance of autocracy.'⁹⁰ The movement claimed to represent the diametric opposite of the Okhrana: 'Liberation' (*Osvobozhdenie*).

no.1 (1903), pp.204–08. Prohibited topics prior to 1905 included trials against police officers, biographical details about terrorists, popular disturbances, strikes, tendentious references to poor harvest, and certain details about the assassination of public officials.

87 See in particular Rene Fulop-Miller's introduction to the memoirs of A.T.Vasil'ev, the last Director of the Department of Police: A.T.Vassilyev, *The Okhrana* (London, 1930).

88 Azeff quoted in Boris Nicolaievsky, *Azeff: the Russian Judas* (London, 1934), p.129.

89 Petr Struve, qtd. in J.W.Daly, 'The Watchful State: Police and Politics in Late Imperial Russia, 1896–1917' (PhD diss., Harvard, 1992), p.184.

90 P.Struve, 'Vsepronikaishchii sysk samodержavii,' *Osvobozhdenie* (Stuttgart, 25 Dec.1903), no.14, pp.253–54. For an oppositionist publication on the Okhrana aside from Struve or Burtsev see: A.V. (V.Tuchkin) [pseud. for Viktor Chernov] *Za kulisami okhrannogo otdeleniia* (Berlin, 1910).

The opposition cause was aided by defectors tempted, be it by cash or conscience, to sell their stories to the Parisian press.⁹¹ *Plus ca change...* These defectors fuelled the myth-making process through exposés (usually sensationalistic to please their new journalistic paymasters) of the murky machinations of the tsar's secret police.⁹² The Russian opposition offered the European public an exciting evocation of 'a world of vileness and desolation.'⁹³ Eventually the Okhrana's attempts to preserve its anonymity were reduced to absurdity when operational secret police chiefs in St Petersburg such as Gerasimov, Rackhovskii, Komissarov and Von Kotten became household names among the political opposition.⁹⁴ Confidential Okhrana documents were also frequently leaked by disgruntled officers still working inside the 'secret' police, particularly after 1905. These were published mainly by Struve between 1902 and 1905 and by Vladimir Burtsev in 'The Past' (*Byloe*) after 1905.⁹⁵

The importance of the myth – as opposed to the reality – can be seen by the fact that, if anything, interest in the Okhrana grew *after*

91 The leading defectors were: Sorokin, Meilakhovich, Ianitskii, Finkelman, Borisov, Leone, Joulia, Jollivet, Pilenas-Wallenrod, Sushkov, Tiercelin, Lt.Benson, Bakai, and Menshchikov: Hoover, Okhrana archive, Boxes 210–12.

92 M.E.Bakai, 'Iz vospominanii M.E.Bakaia: Provokatory i provokatsiia,' *Byloe*, no.8 (Paris, 1908); A.P. 'Departament politzii v 1892–1908 (Iz vospominanii chinovnika),' *Byloe*, nos.5/6 (Nov./Dec. 1917), pp.17–24. L.P.Men'shchikov (ed.), *Russkii politicheskii sysk za granitsej*, Part 1 (Paris, 1914). For police dissent see A.A.Lopukhin's book (former Director of the Department of Police), *Nastoiashchee i budushee russkoi politzii* (Moscow, 1907). Burtsev wasn't always successful: on Rackhovskii's refusal to sell secrets to him see *Vecherniia moskva*, 22 Oct. 1910.

93 Viktor Chernov referred to secret police inhabiting: 'a world of vileness and desolation.' [merzost' i zapustenie] – see *Sotsialist revoliutsioner*, no.2 (Paris, 1910), p.114.

94 For an example of the broad level of knowledge about the Okhrana staff in St Petersburg see the more or less complete list of the names and addresses of the leading *okhranniki* in St Petersburg in: *Budushchee*, 12 Nov. 1911, 'Chernaia kniga' [Cutting in Hoover, Nicolaevsky collection, Box 204, folder 'Okhrannoe otdelenie'].

95 See, for example, the publication of some of the most important organisational circulars of the Okhrana: 'Svod pravil vyrobotannykh v razvitie utverzhennago Gospodinom Ministrom vnutrennykh del 12 avgusta tekushchago goda [1902]: Polozheniia o nachal'nikakh rozysknykh otdelenii,' *Byloe*, no.8 (1908), pp.54–67; & 'Tainyi doklad: I.d. moskovskogo ober-politseimeistera (po okhrannomu otdeleniiu) 8 aprelia 1898g.' *Rabochee delo*, no.1 (1899), pp.23–24. For a general history of *Byloe* see: F.M.Lur'e, *Khraniteli proshlogo: Zhurnal "Byloe." Istoriia, redaktery, izdateli* (Leningrad, 1990).

its collapse in February 1917. One explanation for this is clear if we go back to the idea of myth as a story or narrative. The myth of the Okhrana provided a simple narrative explanation and justification for the collapse of tsarism and the 1917 revolutions.⁹⁶ Moreover, the Okhrana provided a malleable subject for myth-making in 1917 because the February Revolution brought about the destruction of large sections of the police archives by crowds of rioters, revolutionaries and perhaps a few former *okhranniki* with pasts to hide.⁹⁷ The archive of the Paris Foreign Agency was also thought to have been destroyed by the Russian Ambassador to Paris in 1917, V.A.Maklakov. The archive's remarkable re-emergence in 1957 earned it the nickname 'the phantom file.'⁹⁸ The timing of its reappearance, at the height of the Cold War, if anything enhanced

- 96 For some examples of publicity in the first year of the revolution see: M.A.Osorgin, *Okhrannoe otdelenie i ego sekrety* (Moscow, 1917). M.A.Osorgin, 'Dekabr'skoe vozstanie 1905g. v opisaniu zhandarma,' *Golos minuvshago*, 7/8 (1917), pp.351–60: based on a letter from A.P.Martynov. S.G. [? Sviatkov?] *Okhranniia otdeleniia* [sic] *v poslednie gody tsarstvovaniia Nikolaia II* (Moscow, 1917). V.Ia.Iretskii, *Okhranka: Stranitsa russkoi istorii* (Petrograd, 1918)
- 97 Up until the 1990s little was known about the extent of the damage because the archives had been closed since the 1920s. For accounts of destruction of archives during the revolution see: *Rannoe utro*, 9 March 1917; & V.B.Zhilinskii, *Organizatsiia i zhizn' okhrannago otdelennii vo vremia tsarskoi vlasti* (Moscow, 1918), pp.4–6. On attacks by crowds on Petersburg OO at the corner of Mytinskaiia naberezhnaia and Aleksandrovskii prospekt in February 1917: Globachev, 'Pravda o Russkoi Revoliutsii,' pp.83–87. To gain an idea of the extent of the destruction we can compare the surviving number of files for St. Petersburg Security Section (6058) with the only section, Moscow, that was anywhere near the size of it and whose archives were mostly undamaged, of which 51,326 files survive. Only 270 delo survived from Petrograd Provincial Gendarme Directorate. On the bonfires outside Moscow Security Section in Gnezdnikovskii *pereulok* on 1 March 1917 see: Lur'e intro in Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.16. There was also a fire on Pantilev'skii street in Petersburg from the files in the side-wing of the DP building (the 5th and 8th *deloproizvodstva*). The Special Section files were safe on the fourth floor. Only cards under the letter A in the card index of names were damaged. An apocryphal story circulated that all surviving Department of Police files were transferred to the Academy of Sciences on Vasil'evskii island in St Petersburg on a single sledge. This created the impression that only a handful of files had survived. In fact the exhausting process of moving this vast archive took over two weeks. Moscow Okhrana staff, like many others, selectively destroyed secret agent files— see: Z.I.Peregudova, "Deiatel'nost' komissii Vremennogo pravitel'stva i sovetskikh arkhivov po raskrytiiu sekretnoi agentury tsarskoi okhranki," *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, no.5 (1998), pp.13–14.
- 98 See: A.Kobal, *Departament Politsii. Zagranichnaia Agentura* (Stanford, 1989).

the mythical status of the Okhrana. Even now, with a rich and varied archive of Okhrana documents at hand, there is considerable room for areas of doubt and uncertainty as to their activities. This is because the destruction of documents is an inherent habit of secret police organisations whilst still in power – either as a result of outgoing officials erasing records of their more disreputable operations or merely as a means of clearing office space.⁹⁹ For example, two of the most influential secret police chiefs in St Petersburg, Petr Rachkovskii and Aleksandr Gerasimov, both removed all their most sensitive files upon leaving office.¹⁰⁰

So the Okhrana myth was a fairly malleable piece of clay, out of which the opposition could sculpt a definition of their own political antithesis. This is a common tool of propaganda by all usurper regimes wishing to establish legitimacy. Simon Schama has pointed out that in the French Revolution of 1789: ‘If the monarchy was to be depicted (not completely without justice) as arbitrary, obsessed with secrecy and vested with capricious powers over life and death of its citizens, the Bastille was the perfect symbol of those vices. If it had not existed, it is safe to say, it would have had to be invented.’¹⁰¹ The reality of course was far less spectacular: less than 20 prisoners were found to be ‘languishing’ in far from harsh conditions in the Bastille of July 1789 and the Peter-Paul fortresses of February 1917.¹⁰² It is clear

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99 For example, the British Special Branch pulped its pre-1914 records during the Second World War: Bernard Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State* (London, 1987), p.xi. See also: G.H.Legggett, ‘Lenin’s Reported Destruction of the Cheka Archive,’ *Survey*, vol.24, no.2, (107) Spring 1979, pp.193–99. Gen.I.Serov was supposedly ordered by Khrushchëv to destroy Beria’s archives in July 1954.

100 Gerasimov, *Na lezvi*, p.58; On Rachkovskii’s personal archive which was moved to Paris by his son and went missing some time around the second world war: See *Ezhegodnik*, p.320. For a few other examples of Okhrana personnel admitting destroying documents see: PTsR, vol.V, *Dopros Kryzhanovskogo*, pp.407 & 412; & on Russiianov’s destruction of files in Enisei see: Eric Lee, ‘The Eremín Letter: Documentary Proof that Stalin was an Okhrana Spy?’ *Revolutionary Russia*, vol.6, no.1 (June 1993), pp.55–96.

101 Simon Schama, *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York, 1989), p.392. Related works include: Dmitry Shlapentokh, ‘The Images of the French Revolution in the February and Bolshevik Revolutions,’ *Russian History*, 16, no.1 (1989), pp.31–54; & Richard Cobb, *The Police & People: French Popular Protest 1789–1820* (Oxford UP, 1970).

102 Kresty prison in Leningrad was said to have held 30,000 prisoners by the 1930s, this was in great contrast to the tsarist period. There were said to be 16 men to a cell in Soviet times, which had been built for one man in tsarist Russia. The

from Russian post-Revolutionary publications that the Okhrana, rather than the Peter-Paul fortress or Winter Palace, was the tsarist Bastille. This was not conducive to serious historical analysis: the beautiful hypothesis of the Okhrana's oppressive activities was so useful that there was little incentive to destroy it with the ugly facts. The Okhrana myth also proved very compatible with the Rasputin legend¹⁰³ in narratives of the 'decline and fall' of Imperial Russia: 'dark forces' at Court poisoning the imperial regime at the fountainhead of political power. Accusations that the Okhrana was the mainspring of most of the assassinations of tsarist ministers was one aspect of this myth of collapse through corruption, which provided the satisfying poetic justice for tyrants who appeared to have been quite literally hoist with their own petard.¹⁰⁴

It is also important to note that in defining an antithesis, the Okhrana myth enabled opponents of tsarism to define themselves. For example, the Provisional Government was only able to unify on the basis of what the varying groups in the coalition opposed (rather than supported): the image of the Okhrana as 'the pillar of Russian reaction,'¹⁰⁵ was a ready-made polar opposite to the progressive liberal platform. Ironically enough, the Provisional Government set up its own 'Chekas' and 'Okhranas' in 1917: for example, the *Chrezvychainaia sledstvennaia komissiia* (Extraordinary Investigatory Committee) and *Okhrana narodnoi svobody* (Security of the People's Freedom).¹⁰⁶

entire tsarist prison population never exceeded 225,000, most of whom were criminals. Ronald Hingley, *The Russian Secret Police: Muscovite, Imperial Russian and Soviet Political Security Operations* (New York, 1970), p.273

103 Memoir accounts of political police officers, wishing to place themselves at the centre of affairs reinforced this connection. See: A.I.Spiridovich, the head of the Court Okhrana 1905–1917, *Les dernieres annees de la cour de Tsarskoe-Selo* (2 vols., Paris, 1928–29); S.P.Beletskii, *Grigorii Rasputin: iz zapisok* (Petrograd, 1923); & K.I.Globachev, 'Pravda o Russkoi revoliutsii.' On the Rasputin legend see: Mark Kulikowski, 'Rethinking the Origins of the Rasputin Legend,' in E.H.Judge (ed.) *Modernization and Revolution: Dilemmas of Progress in Late Imperial Russia* (New York, 1992), pp.169–86: Kulikowski points out that the Rasputin legend emerged mostly *after* February 1917.

104 'Rasputin v osveshchenii "okhranki"' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.5 (1924); P.Pil'skii, *Okhranka i provokatsiia* (Petrograd, 1917); M.A.Osorgin, *Okhrannoe otdelenie i ego sekrety* (Moscow, 1917); I.Pavlov, *Tainy okhranki: Iz uzhasov sekremnykh zastenov* (Moscow, 1917).

105 Vladimir Burtsev in *Budushchee*, no.4 (Paris, 12 Nov.1911).

106 Peregudova, "Deiatel'nost'", pp.10–22. Sveaborg April 1917 commission of the Provisional Government for investigating the Department of Police was named:

The intention of these organisations was the exact opposite of the Cheka and the Okhrana: they sought to discredit and abolish secret political policing once and for all. With this in mind, tsarist police officials were placed on trial in 1917 by the Extraordinary Investigatory Committee. This served more as a means of exposing the seamy underbelly of autocracy, than as a serious legal prosecution.¹⁰⁷ The government published lists of former secret agents in the summer of 1917 (a process to be echoed in Eastern Europe from 1989 onwards).¹⁰⁸ Consequently, the myth had an important impact on the decision-making policies of the Provisional Government. As Sidney Monas has pointed out the very word ‘police’ (*politsiia*), ‘had accrued so much significant horror by 1917, [that it] was expediently abolished.’¹⁰⁹ Most importantly, the Provisional Government’s emphasis on civil liberties ruled out the possibility of maintaining a security police: the Department of Police, all Security Sections, and the Separate Corps of Gendarmes were all abolished and not a single member of the Okhrana’s staff worked for the Provisional Government.¹¹⁰ This was a popular move, but it left the new regime fatally vulnerable to just the kind of conspiratorial parties that the Okhrana had specialised in neutralising.¹¹¹

‘Okhrana narodnoi svobody Sveaborgskoi kreposti,’ In Vyborg it was called: ‘Okhrana narodnoi svobody’ (GARF, f.1791, op.4, d.16, l.2). For the functions of the *Chrezvychnaia sledstvennaia komissii* (ChSK) founded on 4 March 1917 see: *Vestnik Vremennogo pravitel’sva*, no.1 (46) 5 (18) March 1917. This was directed by the supreme head N.K.Murav’ev in Petrograd. It had various functions divided into 30 sections. The main area of research was the Petrograd based ‘Osobaia komissii po obsledovaniuu deiatel’nosti byvshego Departamenta politicii podvedomstvennykh emu uchrezhdenii,’ with P.E.Shegolev appointed head on 10 March 1917.

107 The complete stenographic records and other materials on the Commission are held in GARF, f.1467, *Chrezvychnaia sledstvennaia komissii*; and in abbreviated form in PTsR, 7 vols.

108 See: *Vestnik Vremennogo pravitel’sva* nos.35, 36, 84, 86& 87 June-July 1917.

109 Sidney Monas, *The Third Section* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), p.22.

110 Military intelligence on the other hand retained almost all of its staff: Col.B.V.Nikitin who was chief of the counterintelligence section of Petrograd Military District in February 1917, went on to become the Provisional Government chief of security, see: Boris Nikitin, *Rokovye gody: Nove vospominaniia uchastnika* (Moscow, 2000).

111 The purge came about as a result of the February Revolution MVD staff retained only two department heads after the revolution & eleven new ones appointed—see: H.J.White, ‘The Provisional Government,’ in Crisp, *Civil Rights*, p.295.

Big Brother's little father?

The liberal movement, therefore, did not just build on the myth, it *believed* in it. Of course, if the myth is indicative of the very real widespread hatred for the Okhrana then the Provisional Government had good reason to consider its abolition as vital to the survival of a new democratic regime. Indeed, there is persuasive evidence (which has influenced historians to this day) that the Okhrana was so unpopular, incompetent and even perfidious that it actually helped the revolutionary-cause.¹¹² For example, it is odd that the most successful Okhrana spy, Evno Azef, was also rumoured to have masterminded a total of 28 terrorist attacks on government officials.¹¹³ The election of the leading police spy in the Bolshevik fraction, Roman Malinovskii, to the Duma would have been impossible without the assistance of the Department of Police.¹¹⁴

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The early Soviet examination of police records in the early 1920s revealed that contrary to the liberal myth as to the anachronistic and incompetent nature of the tsarist secret police, much of what could be gleaned from the archives indicated that the Okhrana was a very effective intelligence agency for its time. It acquired a vast and well-organised archive of materials on the revolutionary movement and an efficient system of distributing this information to all of its subordinate branches, whilst preserving a reasonable degree of secrecy and protecting its sources. The Okhrana is even rumoured to

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112 E.g. Pipes contends that: 'The principal unintended accomplishment of the proto-police regime was to radicalise Russian society': Richard Pipes, *Russian Under the Old Regime* (London, 1974), p.315.

113 N.P.Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1968), p.283.

114 See: PTsR, vol.5, *Dopros V.F.Dzhunkovskogo*, p.219. Lenin told the Provisional Government Investigatory Commission 'I do not believe Malinovskii was involved in provocation because the Okhrana would not have gained as much from it as the party,' qutd. in G.Golovkov and S.Burin, *Kantseliariia nepronitsaemoi t'my* (Moscow, 1992), p.93. See also Hoover, E.E.Smith Collection, Box 10, Testimony of Chkheidze; & Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 206, folder 'Malinovskii,' *Vechernie izvestiia*, 'Delo Predatel'ia Malinovskogo' (5th November 1918.) R.C.Elwood, *Roman Malinovsky*, pp.29 & 83. In the Duma Malinovskii proved an inspiring orator, speaking on 22 occasions in the first session of the Fourth Duma and on 38 in the second session, he signed 54 interpellations and made five legislative proposals.

have begun using bugs (*klopy*)¹¹⁵ and there is some archival evidence to suggest they listened in on phone conversations.¹¹⁶ The Okhrana's cryptology section was the most advanced of its time.

Yet this did not lead to an objective analysis of the Okhrana. One myth merely modified another: numerous Soviet historians adopted, or rather subverted, many aspects of the self-glorifying mythology of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes. Thus, boasts by Okhrana staff about their ability as security police became evidence of omniscience and the staff myth of a bond with the tsar became evidence of omnipotence. Numerous early accounts were unquestioningly accepted for decades— such as this: 'There was not a single party, nor a single mill, factory, nor a single organisation, nor society, union, club committee, university, institute, there was not even a single newspaper editorial staff in which among its members and collaborators there would not have been several secret agents.'¹¹⁷

One of the first researchers into the Okhrana after the revolution was so impressed by the archival collections that he concluded that 'the *okhranka* was all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-capable.'¹¹⁸ He believed the Department of Police's card index to contain: 'the names of all social activists, a card for almost any intelligent person who at one time in life had ever thought about politics.'¹¹⁹ Yet these sort of conclusions ignore the fact that reports were frequently ignored and that a vast card index is no better indicator of omniscience than Russia's 1897 census or, for that matter, a modern telephone directory.

The omniscient Okhrana myth grew still further as a result of the Cold War. The simple fact of the existence the Okhrana's vast archives served as solid evidence to many in the 1950s that Imperial Russia had been an all-encompassing police state in embryo. For example, the Okhrana's synoptic charts of political groups were seen by Hanna Arendt as a precocious attempt to accomplish 'the utopian goal of

115 Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16* (Moscow, 1993), p.116.

116 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.225, 1.413, 22nd December 1908: lists an employee of the Petersburg City Telephone Exchange as on the payroll of St Petersburg OO.

117 A.Volkov, *Petrogradskoe okhrannoe otdelenie* (Petrograd, 1917), p.14.

118 Zhilinskii, 'Organizatsiia i zhizn', p.306 'vsesil'noi, vse-znaiushchii i vse-mogushchei.'

119 Ibid., p.267.

the totalitarian secret police.’¹²⁰ This shows how definitions of the Okhrana have grown still more dark and sinister as a result of what came afterwards. It is clear with hindsight that the Cheka was a far more oppressive organisation than the Okhrana had been. Yet, during the Civil War the most damaging slander on the Soviet secret police conceivable was to refer to it as a reincarnation of the Okhrana. Opposition propaganda claimed that large sections of Okhrana staff had entered the service of the Cheka.¹²¹ The image of the Cheka in the propaganda of liberal and socialist opposition was thus a direct descendant of pre-revolutionary depictions of the Okhrana. Even many of the same individual people who had taken the lead in exposing the moral turpitude of the tsarist police system went on to fashion the most memorable early critiques of the Cheka.¹²² It was likewise used as a rally point for the otherwise politically divided opponents of Soviet power. The Cheka and the *chekisty* (‘our modern *oprichniki*,’) ¹²³ served as symbols of Soviet tyranny.

Consequently, the revolutionary Cheka desperately avoided any association with the counter-revolutionary Okhrana. It issued secret directives to subordinate units during the Civil War expressing concerns that: ‘people are beginning to look upon us as *okhranniki*’ and consequently called for a ‘self purging of our ranks.’¹²⁴ By the

120 Hanna Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pt. 3 (New York, 1951), pp.151–52.

121 For émigré claims that Okhrana and the Cheka were one and the same see: G.M.Oberoucheff, ‘Who are the “Counter-Revolutionists” in Russia?’ *Struggling Russia*, vol.1, no.4 (12 April 1919), pp.53–55; Partiia sotsialistov revoliutsionerov, [Memorandum of the foreign delegates of the Russian Social Revolutionary Party to the conference of the three international federations of the socialist and communist parties held at Berlin on 2 April 1922] (Berlin, 1922), 20pp.

122 Mel’gunov was a leading light in the Provisional Government ‘Extraordinary Investigatory Committee’ and the Whites’ ‘Investigatory Committee.’ Peregudova, ‘Deiatel’nost’’, p.15. See his: ‘Pis’ma L.A.Rataeva- S.V.Zubatovu 1900–1903: Soobshchil S.P.Mel’gunov,’ *Golos minuvshago*, no.1 (June 1922); S.P.Melgounov, *The Red Terror in Russia* (London, 1925). See also: Iu.Fel’shtinskii (comp. & ed.), *Krasnyi terror v gody grazhdanskoi voiny: po materialam sledstvennoi komissii po rassledovaniiu zlodeianii bol’shevikov* (Overseas publications interchange, London 1992).

123 Left SR ‘Bulletin,’ April 1919 quoted in S.P.Melgounov, *The Red Terror in Russia* (London, 1925), p.206.

124 Qutd. in Leggett, *The Cheka*, p.190. See M.Latsis, *Chrezvychainye komissii*, p.11; *Ezhenedel’nik Cheka*, no.5; Bunyan, *Intervention, Civil war and Communism in Russia* (Baltimore, 1936), p.247; Scott, ‘The Cheka,’ p.20.

mid-1920s the OGPU spearheaded the witch-hunt for former Okhrana agents as a means of ‘purging’ society. Their tendency to exaggerate the size of the Okhrana was a convenient means to justify arrests of opponents of the Soviet regime. They tended to denounce persons even vaguely connected with the Okhrana, to the point where many people were arrested whose only ‘crime’ was to have had their mail perused by the Okhrana (and thus listed in files as ‘author of agent information’).¹²⁵

Rather than evolving into the Cheka, the Okhrana was the most notable case of discontinuity between tsarist and Soviet regimes. For example, while large sections of the lower ranking tsarist bureaucrats went on to work for the Soviet regime (for example, 90% of the staff of the Soviet regime’s State Control Commission were former employees of the institution’s predecessor, the tsarist procuracy)¹²⁶ there are only three documented examples of Okhrana officers joining the Cheka.¹²⁷ I.A.Zybin,¹²⁸ the head of the Okhrana’s cryptology section continued work in this area for the Soviets. General V.F. Dzhunkovskii, the Assistant Minister of the Interior 1913–15¹²⁹ was

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125 Peregudova, “Deiatel’nost’ komissii Vremennogo pravitel’stva,” pp.16–19. In December 1925 the archive was transferred to Moscow and placed largely under the control of the OGPU (though formally under control of the Red Professor, M.N.Pokrovskii, director of the Central Archive). The OGPU subsequently published complete lists of persons in the secret agent card index from 1926–29: just under 10,000 persons. OGPU, *Spisok sekretnykh sotrudnikov, osvedomiteli, vspomogatel’nykh agentov byv. Okhrannykh otdelenii i zhandamskykh upravlenii*, vols.1 & 2 (Moscow, 1926 & 1929).

126 Thomas Remington, ‘Institution Building in Bolshevik Russia: The Case of “State Control”’, *Slavic Review*, vol.41 (Spring 1982), pp.97–102.

127 There were various rumours that other gendarmes taking part in military intelligence also went on to serve the bolsheviks. E.g. see: Globachev, *Pravda o russkoi revoliutsii*, p.52 on Maj.Gen.N.M.Potapov and Col.Mal’chul’skii who ‘both occupied prominent [vidnye] positions in the Bolshevik regime after the October seizure of power.’ (These two men were military intelligence assistants to General Leont’ev during the war.) See also: Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.13: for the assertion that Col.Terpelevskii, head of Moscow Gendarme Division, joined the revolutionaries as early as February 1917.

128 Zybin’s opposite number from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aleksandr Savitskii, joined the British Code and Cipher School. On personnel changeover see: Gary Richard Waxmonsky, ‘Police and Politics in Soviet Society, 1921–1929’ (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1982), p.51.

129 V.F.Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia* (2 vols., Moscow, 1997), vol.I, p.23. His work was probably under coercion as a consultant in 1921 on the new Soviet passport system.

pressured into working on Cheka internal passport reform. Henri Bint, the French head of the Foreign Agency's team of detectives in Paris, appears to have helped establish OGPU surveillance operations abroad.¹³⁰

Yet, comparisons persisted into the 1920s taking on a new dimension, where high level Bolsheviks – Trotskii, Lunacharskii, Sverdlov and Kamenev among others – were accused of former Okhrana service.¹³¹ In the Great Terror of the 1930s Stalin turned this to his advantage: 'former agent of *okhranka*' was added to the charges against Grigorii Zinov'ev, Lev Kamenev, Genrykh Iagoda and countless lower *apparatchiki*.¹³² This tactic backfired on Stalin when opponents of the Soviet regime began claiming that the *vozhd*' himself had sold his soul to the Okhrana. The emergence of the infamous 'Eremin letter' in 1956 (more than likely a forgery) was championed by many, principally Isaac Don Levine, as conclusive proof that Stalin had indeed been a tsarist spy.¹³³

- 130 GARF, f.509, *Bint Genri (1853–1929), Nabliudatel'nyi agent*, op.1, dd.1–130. On rumours regarding General M.S.Komissarov and the Cheka see chapter six. In 1923 the Cheka supposedly tried to recruit the last tsarist Director of Police, A.T.Vasil'ev, see: *Novoe vremia*, 9 Feb.1929. In their recruitment of *spetsy* the Red Army's espionage section recruited a number of tsarist military intelligence officers: e.g., A.A.Samoilo, director of intelligence at the General Staff, 1909–1914.
- 131 Hoover, Nicolaevsky collection, Box 204, Folder 'Okhrannoe otdelenie,' *Novoe vremia*, 5 Sept. 1924; gendarme Gen.Palatinov on Trotskii as a spy in Kiev. The former head of the 1905 Petersburg Soviet, G.S.Nosar'-Khrustal'ev, claimed Trotskii betrayed the Soviet in 1905: V.V.Shul'gin, *Chto nam v nikh ne nraivitsia: Ob antisemitizm v Rossii* (Paris 1929), p.281. A Nizhnii-Novgorod OO official later claimed to have had A.V.Lunacharskii on the payroll. Sverdlov was also rumoured to have worked for the Okhrana, see: Iu.Lipatnikov, 'Byl li agentom okhranki Sverdlov?' *Situatsii*, no.1 (1991).
- 132 There are records of former Okhrana officials being punished under article 67 of the previous Criminal Code, see: Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 204, folder 'Okhrannoe otdelenie.' See also: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956* (London, 1974), p.67. Former service in the Okhrana was punishable under Article 58, Section 13 of the 1926 Criminal Code.
- 133 Most articles on the Stalin controversy have been published in Iu.Fel'shtinskii (comp. and ed.), *Byl li Stalin agentom okhranki? Sbornik statei, materialov i dokumentov* ('Tainy i istorii' series, Moscow, 1999); Eric Lee, 'The Eremin Letter: Documentary Proof that Stalin was an Okhrana Spy?' *Revolutionary Russia*, vol.6, no.1 (June 1993), pp.55–96. See also: Roman Brackman, *The Secret File of Joseph Stalin: A Hidden Life* (London, 2000). One believer in Stalin-the-spy was ex-CIA Moscow station officer, E.E.Smith, [see: *The Young Stalin: The Early Years of an Elusive Revolutionary* (London, 1968)] who unwittingly

CONCLUSION

The Okhrana myth flourished at first essentially because the Okhrana was a very *real* agency. It was oppressive, often corrupt, secret and political: this meant that the Okhrana was viewed through the distorted lenses of fear, scandal, rumour, speculation and propaganda. The myth was formed largely outside Russia and consequently conforms to, and has incorporated, many negative stereotypes about Russian national identity. Subsequent events strengthened the myth because it provided a narrative explanation for the outbreak of the Russian Revolution and apparent proof that Soviet tyranny had Russian national, rather than ideological, roots. The political opposition to Imperial Russia, and subsequently to the Soviet state, played on Western prejudices regarding the despotic 'Oriental' tendencies of Russian government. Nevertheless, the myth was also used by many tsarist administrators as a source of identity, prestige and power.¹³⁴ The myth thus became an important factor in itself, affecting how political groups defined themselves. It flourished not least because it was used by the tsarist government as a source of psychological strength and by the radical Russian opposition to emphasise the heroic nature of their struggle. This shows an unusual, though not unique, embracing of negative stereotypes.¹³⁵ Anna Geifman, the latest biographer of the Okhrana's most famous spy, Evno Azef, has written that: 'Contemporaries noted in surprise that in certain people the Azef affair even elicited a perverse feeling of national pride. Many Russian nationals in Europe appeared quite pleased with all of the publicity and fanfare that the scandal begot, and their elated faces in Parisian cafes seemed to be saying "We, Russians, showed those Europeans, didn't we?"'¹³⁶

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became part of the conspiracy theory himself when he was tragically killed in a purely accidental hit-and-run in 1980 whilst carrying a manuscript on this subject: Hoover, Smith Collection, Box 10, press cuttings.

134 Sergei Chugrov, 'Ideological Stereotypes and Political Myths: The Empire Strikes Back,' in Anne De Tinguy (ed.), *The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Columbia UP, 1997), pp.311–12: on the 'corrupting influence of the West.'

135 One advocate of psychohistory has even suggested that an entire nation can share certain psychological tendencies, in the case of Russia: masochism. See Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, *The Slave Soul of Russia: Moral Masochism and the Cult of Suffering* (New York, 1995).

136 Anna Geifman, *Entangled in Terror: The Azef Affair and the Russian Revolution* (Delaware, 2000), p.2.

Chapter Two

Occidental Despotism

A Comparison of Security Policing in Russia and the West

A distinct concept of 'Russia' served the purpose among certain European political philosophers of defining the 'other', the diametric opposite of the West. This reinforced the idea that some sort of collective set of attributes existed which defines the West. It is evidence of the bond, referred to in the previous chapter, between the Russian political opposition and the West: both groups utilised certain stereotypes of the Russian secret police to define an antithesis to themselves (thus helping to define their own thesis or self-conception). These self-conceptions were consequently rather vague, and thus as varied and malleable as the Okhrana myth itself. For example, one British historian has noted: 'Educated British understanding of the Tsarist state was frequently defective in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but attitudes to Russia are significant because they show what the British did not want their empire, or indeed their own country, ever to resemble. Specifically, in the context of intelligence, the British despised the supposedly ubiquitous Tsarist secret police.'¹ With all the turmoil and tragedy of Russian history it is a comfort to dismiss the issue with the pithy, 'Russia is a foreign country, they do things differently there.' The reality of course is often far different.

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Certainly, there are other features of the Russian state which makes the evolution of political policing more pronounced. One might point to autocracy as a system which necessitates a large *security* police because power is concentrated on individuals rather than institutions.

1 Richard J. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 1904–1924* (London, 1995), p.36.

Attacks on political power therefore take on the form of direct attacks on the life of the sovereign. In the three hundred and twenty years after Ivan the Terrible, five tsars and two autocrats met violent deaths.² Attacks on the life of the Russian ruler were consistently followed by an escalation in political policing. Peter the Great's *Preobrazhenskii prikaz* developed into a political police agency after the revolt of the *streltsy* in 1698. Nicholas I founded the Third Section after the Decembrist uprising of 1825. The first organ of the Okhrana (St. Petersburg 'Security Section') was established in 1866 after attempts on the tsar's life. Alexander III oversaw the full elevation of the Security Sections into the nerve centres of the political police after the murder of his father. Lenin's Cheka escalated the Red Terror in reaction to the attempt on his life.³ And of the seven Soviet leaders, the only two to be thrown out of office (Khrushchev and Gorbachev) were, not coincidentally, self-styled 'reformers' advocating limits on the powers of the political police. This is linked to another, oft cited, point: Russia is a vast seamless empire without natural borders, it fits neatly into the category of a 'universal empire.'⁴ In such empires liberal regimes have seldom preserved stability: the strict control of society is essential to hold centrifugal tendencies at bay. Russian government has become more despotic *after*, not before, phases of collapsing imperial hegemony (for example, the reaffirmation of autocracy after the Time of Troubles and the 1918–1921 Civil War as the 'crucible' of Soviet tyranny).⁵

Nevertheless, although Russian autocracy lasted longer than its European equivalents, this does not make it unique. Nor are Russians

2 Tsars Peter III, Ivan VI, Paul I, Alexander II, and Nicholas II, and autocrats Theodore Godunov and False Dmitrii.

3 'O vnesudebnykh organkh,' *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no.10 (1989), p.30; Leggett, *The Cheka*, chpt.6.

4 Robert Wesson, *The Imperial Order* (Los Angeles, 1964). Wesson compares ancient India, China, Egypt, the Inca Empire, Persia, Rome, Byzantium, the Ottoman and the Russian Empires. See Ariel Cohen, *Russian Imperialism: Development and Crisis* (Westport, Connecticut, 1996), chpt. 1.

5 The Civil War as the 'crucible of communism' was a phrase first coined by M. Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Harvard U.P., 1952). Fitzpatrick, Sheila 'The Civil War as Formative Experience,' in *Bolshevik Culture* ed. Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez & Richard Stites, pp.57–76 (Bloomington, 1985); & idem, 'The Legacy of the Civil War,' in , D.P.Koenker, W.G.Rosenberg & R.G. Suny (eds.) *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War: Explorations in Social History* (Bloomington, 1989), pp.385–98.

the only imperialists to use espionage to prop up their empire: a reliance on the secret police for state security is not unique to Russia. Not without reason has espionage often been called the second oldest profession. Crude intelligence services have been a component part of imperial government since the Persian Empire's 'eyes and ears of the king,' the Spartan *krypteia* and the Roman *frumentarii*.⁶ Moving to contemporary parallels: political assassination was a pan-European problem which was tackled by a pan-European expansion and systematisation of espionage and political policing.⁷ The first British modern political police force, Special Branch, was set up to cope with the Irish bomb campaign of 1887, and in France the Sureté Generale was expanded after a bomb was found in the French Chamber of deputies in 1893.⁸ This undermines Richard Pipes' contention on Russian 'exceptionalism' that: 'Before the First World War no other country in the world had two kinds of police, one to protect the state and another to protect its citizens.'⁹

The investigative techniques of the Okhrana were much the same as in the West. The long history of tracking political crime through denunciations in Imperial Russia, dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth century 'word and deed' laws, has parallels in other European states which have never been fully explored.¹⁰ Moreover,

6 William G. Sinnigen, 'The Roman Secret Service,' *Classical Journal*, Vol.57, no.1, (1961) p.65.

7 Contemporaneous assassinations included President Carnot of France in 1894; Canovas del Catillo, the Prime Minister of Spain in 1897; the Empress Elizabeth of Austria in 1898; King Humbert I of Savoy in 1900; and William McKinley, the US President, in 1901. Unsuccessful attempts were also made on Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany; King Alphonso of Spain (1878, 1905 and 1906); King Humbert I of Savoy (1878 and 1897); Alexander III of Russia (three attempts in 1887); Fauré, the President of France (1897); Loubet, President of France (1905); Leopold II, King of Belgium (1902); and the Emperor of Japan (1910). This combined threat brought all European security services together at the international anti-anarchist conferences of 1898, 1904 and 1914: Richard Bach Jensen, 'The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.16, no.2 (1981).

8 See: Thomas G. Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870–1914. The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organization* (London, 1984), p.184.

9 Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, p.302.

10 For laments on the lack of comparative research in this area see the excellent collection of articles, 'Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789–1989,' *Journal of Modern History*, vol.68, no.4 (Dec.1996), pp.747–931. G. Cubitt, 'Denouncing in the French Revolution,' *Renaissance and Modern Studies*,

the Okhrana marks a milestone in Russian history because this organisation abandoned the Third Section's reliance on denunciations in favour of the use of spies.¹¹ Some might say that this is a specious difference; but it marked a recognition that individual Russian subjects were no longer morally obliged to denounce all enemies of the state. Russia was certainly not alone in employing turncoats as spies.¹² In fact the Okhrana's secret agent network was first established in the 1880s with the assistance of French police advisors.¹³ Even the Ottoman Empire, usually the most backward Great Power police force, had used repentant criminals (*bojek bashis*) as their chief source of intelligence.¹⁴ Russia's first Ministry of Police established in 1811 was directly modelled on its French equivalent of 1796.¹⁵ Joseph Fouché dominated the French police from this moment and systematically employed the use of spies and centralised the police *apparat*.¹⁶ In France former criminals and spies even rose to the summit of police power.¹⁷

Yet an article in the British press in 1917 indicates prevailing opinions when it argued that the most important milestone in Russia becoming more like the West was the fall of the Okhrana: 'the real

vol.33 (1989), pp.144–58. On 'word and deed' see: A.M.Kleimola, 'The Duty to Denounce in Muscovite Russia,' *Slavic Review*, vol.31/4 (1972), pp.759–90.

- 11 'Proekt g.A.Benkendorfa ob ustroistve vyshei politzii,' *Russkaia starina*, vol.CIV, no.12 (Dec., 1900), pp.615–16: on the reliance on denunciations delivered by 'honest folk.' The head of Moscow Okhrana wrote that department of Police abandoned these practices: 'Because "honest people" knew nothing about these conspiracies, yet the gendarme police hopelessly expected from them some sort of help and collaboration.' Martynov, *Mota sluzhba*, p.6.
- 12 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Boxes 207–209: On the press exposure of Mikhail Rakovskii, a leading Polish revolutionary, as an agent of the Prussian *Sicherheit* in 1910.
- 13 L.Andreux, *Souvenirs d'un prefet de police*, vol.1 (Paris, 1885), pp.35–39, & 158–163. M.Lemke, 'Nash zagranichnyi sysk, 1881–1883gg.: Pravitel'stvennoe sodruzhestvo s evropoi,' *Krasnaia letopis'* vol.5 (1922), pp.67–84.
- 14 Glen Swanson, 'The Ottoman Police,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.7 (1972), p.248.
- 15 Alexander I commissioned A.D.Balashov to procure 'a copy of the statute founding the Napoleonic Ministry of Police,' in 1811 for the creation of this Ministry, qutd. in Monas, *Third Section*, pp.40–41.
- 16 Eric A.Arnold, *Fouché, Napoleon and the General Police* (Washington, 1979).
- 17 The most famous example was Francois Vidocq head of the Surete Generale 1812–27 who was the model for Balzac's Vautrin: P.J.Stead, *Vidocq, Pacaroon of Crime* (London, 1953), pp.133–58.

autocrat of old Russia.’¹⁸ Just because the Okhrana was highly unaccountable, corrupt and politicised, does not mean that it was an all-powerful police force (later to be seen as proto-totalitarian). The New York Metropolitan Police suffered from these same failings but remained essentially a part of the liberal democratic system.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Weimar Germany had a model political police force in Prussia (*Preussische Geheime Staatspolizei*) – incorruptible, apolitical and accountable: yet it evolved from 1933–34 into the ‘totalitarian’ Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*) – retaining essentially the same structure and even mostly the same personnel.²⁰ The stricter controls on Imperial German police did not deter some historians on the eve of the Second World War asserting that the separate trajectory of Prussia towards the Nazi tyranny had begun as early as the 1830s.²¹ It has perhaps taken longer to dismantle this kind of mythology of a separate path with regard to Russia because the successor institutions of the Cheka have endured to this day.

All secret services have to varying degrees been able to elude clear limitations on their powers. For example, a leading historian of the CIA has pointed out that: ‘Always at the heart of [of the structure of the United States’ system of government] has remained the idea of vigorous checks against power imbalances– oversight. Yet, one police domain has stood out as a conspicuous exception to the rule: the nation’s secret intelligence operations.’²² Events towards the end of the twentieth century, from Watergate to the Iran Contra Affair, made this all too clear.²³

- 18 E.H.Wilcox, ‘The Secret Police of the Old Regime,’ *Fortnightly Review*, vol.CVII (London, 1 Dec.1917), p.827– Vladimir Burtsev was the main source for this piece; see also Wilcox’s somewhat prophetic article: ‘Lenin as Protégé of the Old Regime,’ *Fortnightly Review*, vol.CIX (London, 1918), p.500.
- 19 J.F.Richardson, ‘Berlin Police in the Weimar Republic: A Comparison with Police Forces in the Cities of the United States,’ *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.7 (1972), pp.262–63.
- 20 Christoph Graf, ‘The Genesis of the Gestapo,’ *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.22 (1987), pp.421–28.
- 21 See for example: Philip Walton-Kerr, *Gestapo: The History of the German Secret Service* (London, 1939); and even to some extent Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London, 1952); & A.J.P.Taylor, *The Course of German History* (London, 1945).
- 22 Loch K.Johnson, ‘The CIA and The Question of Accountability,’ *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.12 (no.1, 1997), p.180.
- 23 Frederick M.Kaiser, ‘Impact and Implications of the Iran-Contra Affair on Congressional Oversight of Covert Action,’ *International Journal of Intelligence*

The tsarist state was not the only one in Europe to develop a concept of political unreliability (*politicheskaia neblagonadezhnost'*) which penalised subjects merely for straying from political orthodoxy.²⁴ Joseph II of Austria began compiling lists of 'political unreliaables' in 1780, connected with the work of appointing state servants, compiling reports on the mood and opinions of the people and the issuance of passports.²⁵ Another indicator of accountability is the position of an institution in the hierarchy of government. In this category, at least, the Okhrana was highly accountable. Its creation marked a dismantling of the powers of the Third Section to police, 'the entire complex administrative machine.'²⁶ Pergen's Ministry of Police in Austria at the beginning of the century had control over the ordinary police. The Okhrana did not. Joseph II's Higher Police, like tsar Nicholas I's Third Section, controlled press and theatre censorship. The Okhrana did not. The Habsburg *Kriegsüberwachungsamt* of the Great War co-ordinated all intelligence gathering organs.²⁷ The Okhrana did not.²⁸ Moreover, the secret police had lost its position as an office of the tsar's chancellery in Russia with the abolition of the Third Section in 1880. Also, the significance of the link between the armed support available to the Okhrana from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes and the Cheka's use of armed detachments should not be over-emphasised. The creation of armed detachments to support police forces was common to most European states. France led the way with the creation of a paramilitary police

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and Counterintelligence, vol.7 (1994), pp.205–34. Loch K. Johnson, 'The CIA and The Question of Accountability,' pp.180–81.
- 24 P.A.Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhavii* (Moscow, 1964), pp.76–77. 'Political reliability' was first defined in an unpublished imperial act of 1 Sept. 1878.
- 25 D.E.Emerson, *Metternich and the Political Police: Security and Subversion in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1815–30* (The Hague, 1968), pp.176–80.
- 26 Benckendorff head of the Third Section 1826–41 qutd. in the 'Jubilee Report,' in V.Bogucharskii, 'Tret'e otdelenie,' *Vestnik evropy*, 3 (March 1917), p.88.
- 27 J.F.N.Bradley, 'The Russian Secret Service in the First World War,' *Soviet Studies*, vol.20 (1968–69), p.242.
- 28 Samuel Hoare—accustomed to British accounts of an all-powerful, centralised Russian secret police—wrote about his arrival in Petrograd as a military intelligence liaison officer that: 'My first duty according to my instructions was to put myself into the closest personal touch with the chief of the Russian secret service. I found that there was no such person. In Russia every department seemed to have a Secret Service and nobody exercised any central control.' S.Hoare, *The Fourth Seal* (London, 1930), p.52.

force in 1791.²⁹ Metternich added an armed gendarmerie subordinated to the higher police in Austria. And Benckendorff in turn imitated Metternich in 1826.³⁰

The late tsarist state was by no means unique in monitoring popular opinions through mail interception ('perlustration').³¹ Again, Imperial Russia had imitated France in this area.³² The Quai d'Orsay and the Sureté Generale read Germany's diplomatic telegrams throughout the Agadir crisis of 1911 and each other's mail through the Moroccan crisis of 1905.³³ Peter Holquist has argued that the *motive* behind perlustration rather than proving continuity between Cheka and Okhrana surveillance, actually indicates a crucial difference between them.³⁴ The Okhrana read people's mail to track down sedition: 'categories such as "popular support" and especially "apathy" simply were not part of the mental universe of tsarist bureaucrats... Subjects were either obedient or not. The administrative goal was compliance rather than belief.'³⁵ The *chekisty* on the other hand were obsessed with knowing everything about the population, with the aim of sculpting, 'a better, purer society... Surveillance, then, was not designed to uncover popular sentiments and moods, nor was it intended merely to keep people under control; its whole purpose was to act on the people, to change them.'³⁶

29 See: Clive Emsley, *Gendarmes and State in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Oxford, 1999).

30 See Alter L.Litvin, 'The Cheka,' in E.Acton et al. (eds.), *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution* (Arnold, London, 1997), pp.314–22: already by June 1918 the Cheka had armed detachments amounting to 38 regiments and 40,000 men.

31 Vladimir de Korostovetz 'The Black Cabinet', *The Contemporary Review*, Vol.CLXVII (1945).

32 Jean Tulard, 'Le "cabinet noir" de Napoleon,' *L'histoire*, vol.32 (1991), pp.81–83.

33 C.M.Andrew 'Deciffrement et diplomatie: le cabinet noir du Quai d'Orsay sous la Troisieme Republique' *Relations Internationales*, Vol.III (1976), No.5.

34 Peter Holquist, "'Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work': Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context,' *The Journal of Modern History*, vol.69 (September, 1997), pp.415–450.

35 Holquist, 'Information is the Alpha and Omega,' p.421. See also: Vladlen Izmozik, *Glaza i ushi rezhima: Gosudarstvennyi politicheskii kontrol' za naseleniem sovetskoi Rossii v 1918–1928 godakh* (St Petersburg, 1995), p.71; Nicholas Werth, 'Une source inedite: Les *svodki* de la Tcheka-OGPU,' *Revue etudes des slaves*, vol.66 (1994), pp.17–27.

36 Holquist, 'Information is the Alpha and Omega,' p.417. The totalitarian school mistook aspirations for reality. See: Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*, p.422: 'The task of the secret police is to serve as the eyes and ears of the dictator, to

This development was, again, not unique to Russia. Political police practices aimed at sculpting society, which have often been referred to as ‘totalitarian,’ were rooted not in the establishment of the Okhrana or ‘exceptional’ Russian cultural differences but rather in the total wars of 1914–1921. The war brought about profound changes in the legal structure of all combatant states.³⁷ It was during the Great War that the German and British governments began mail perustration.³⁸ British censorship staff grew from 170 at the end of 1914 to 4,861 at the end of the war. Thus, by 1918, the British employed roughly the same proportion of censors to the size of their population as Soviet Russia in the early 1920s.³⁹ In contrast, the tsarist Black Cabinets before 1914 had only 49 employees.⁴⁰

Even more importantly, the British monitored the mood of the men in the trenches to mould opinions.⁴¹ The same process took place in the French and German armies.⁴² The aim of British, French and German censors during the Great War therefore, were not so different from those of the totalitarian police forces. Attempts to sculpt

perform a prophylactic as well as a punitive function. It must not only hear what people say; it must also be prepared to diagnose their souls and plumb their innermost thoughts. It must transform every citizen into a potential watchdog of informer.’

- 37 The seminal work on the affect on British society, consciousness and polity is Paul Fussell’s *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York, 1975); see also: Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee (eds.), *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War* (Oxford, 1995), p.xi; O.I.Averbakh, *Zakondatel’nye akty vyzvannye voinoiu 1914 goda* (Vilna, 1915), pp.17–39.
- 38 See Bernd Ulrich, ‘Feldpostbriefe im Ersten Weltkrieg: Bedeutung und Zensur,’ in Peter Knoch (ed.), *Kriegsalltag: Die Rekonstruktion des Kriegstalltags als Aufgabe der historischen Forschung* (Stuttgart, 1989), pp.40–75; Wilhelm Deist, ‘Censorship and Propaganda in Germany During the First World War,’ in Jean-Jaques Becker and Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau (eds.), *Les societees europeenes et la guerre de 1914–1918*, (Paris, 1990); David Englander, ‘Military Intelligence and the Defence of the Realm,’ *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, vol. 52 (1987), pp.24–32; Nicholas Hiley, ‘Counter-Espionage and Security in Great Britain During the First World War,’ *English Historical Review*, vol.101 (1986), pp.635–70.
- 39 Holquist, ‘Information is the Alpha and Omega,’ pp.422 & 440.
- 40 R.Kantor, ‘K istorii chernykh kabinetov,’ p.93.
- 41 David Englander, ‘Military Intelligence,’ pp.24–32.
- 42 Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People* (Dover, 1985), pp.217–19. J.N.Jeanneney, ‘Les archives des commissions de controle postale aux armees (1916–1918),’ *Revue histoire moderne et contemporaine*, vol.15 (1968), pp.209–33.

the Red Army's mood and convictions were termed 'political enlightenment work' (*politicheskoprosvetitel'naia rabota*); meanwhile, the German propaganda in the Kaiser's army was termed 'enlightenment activity' (*Aufklärungstätigkeit*). All sides shared the same totalitarian concept of people as resources: the German *Menschenmaterial*, the Russian *liudskaia sila*, and the British *manpower*. 'Totalitarianism' therefore was not created by the natural evolution of a specific national culture, nor was its arrival accelerated by the Okhrana. The term, invented in Italy, gained vogue in the West during the Cold War as a means of categorising Russia as a separate realm.⁴³ Yet, totalitarianism emerged as an aspiration as a result of the total war mentality. Russia was, therefore, by no means unique in this regard. Similar arguments were used to define Germany as a separate realm. For example, Allan Bullock has argued that Nazi totalitarianism was a *reductio ad absurdum* of German tendencies since unification. Yet it was the intense experience of war that reduced these political systems to absurdity. All belligerent states experienced a form of total government – be it called War Communism, DORA or *Kriegswirtschaft*.⁴⁴ 'Totalitarianism' was more pronounced at first in Russia because the Great War – if we include their Civil War – lasted longer. White Army intelligence services were far closer in character to the Cheka than either were to the pre-war Okhrana.⁴⁵ Most importantly, totalitarian aspirations survived in Russia because the Communist ideology erased the line separating social and political life and defined society as being in a constant state of class war.⁴⁶

43 For reason critical overview of this term see: Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York, 1995).

44 Anton Kaes, 'The Cold Gaze: Notes on Mobilization and Modernity,' *New German Critique*, vol.59 (1993), p.116.

45 GARF, f.439 (*Upravlenie delami Osobogo Soveshchaniia*), op.1, dd.5–9. Viktor Bortnevskii has published a great deal on this subject, a few examples are 'White Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence during the Russian Civil War,' *Carl Beck Papers*, no.1108 (1995); idem, 'K istorii osvedomitel'noi organizatsii "Azbuka"', *Russkoe proshloe*, no.4 (1993), pp.160–93; idem, 'Iz dokumentov belogvardeiskoi kontrrazvedki: Sekretnaya svodka o rabote Khar'kovskogo osvaga,' *Russkoe proshloe*, no.2 (1991), pp.339–47. See also: Peter Holquist, 'Conduct Merciless Mass Terror: Decossackization on the Don, 1919,' *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol.38 (1997), pp.103–108; Peter Kenez, *The Civil War in South Russia, 1919–1920: The Defeat of the Whites* (Berkeley, 1977), pp.65–78

46 Seminal works attempting to define 'totalitarianism' and the modern police state include Hanna Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*; Brian Chapman, *Police State* (London, 1970).

The Soviets thereby applied total war organisational techniques accordingly during peace-time.⁴⁷ The same argument could be applied to the Third Reich.

The history of the rise and fall of the Okhrana represents an example of dangers to modern civilisation in general, not just Russia. Even Hanna Arendt, one of the foremost exponents of the idea of Russian otherness, noted that the Russian secret police were by no means the only agency in the twentieth century to be seduced into committing atrocities in the name of a higher cause. She argued that the germs despotic altruism could even be perceived in the imperialist ambitions of liberal England:

When the European mob discovered what a “lovely virtue” a white skin could be in Africa, when the English conqueror in India became an administrator who no longer believed in the universal validity of law, but was convinced of his own innate capacity to rule and dominate, when dragon-slayers turned into either “white men” or “higher breeds” or into bureaucrats and spies, playing the Great Game of endless ulterior motives in an endless movement; when the British Intelligence Services (especially after the First World War) began to attract England’s best sons, who preferred serving mysterious forces all over the world to serving the common good of their country, the stage seemed to be set for all possible horrors.⁴⁸

66

Emergency Powers and Security Laws

Many analysts have argued, in contrast to this, that the ‘totalitarian’ state had specific national cultural roots. Richard Pipes has offered a cogent yet provocative contention that Russia was already heading ‘towards a police state’ as a result of the infamous Security Law (*Polozhenie ob okhrane*) in 1881, which became the fountainhead of

47 On the central importance of the Great War on the formulation of Leninism and Lenin’s own belief that Western states were descending into forms of totalitarianism, see: Neil Harding, *Leninism* (London, 1996), chpts.4–5, particularly pp.83–84. Ironically Lenin aimed to create a state that took a separate path to what he saw as totalitarian monster-states evolving in the West.

48 Hanna Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p.221.

the Okhrana's arbitrary powers and, Pipes suggests, 'Russia's de facto constitution.'⁴⁹ The Security Law granted extra-legal powers to the government in provinces that were declared to be under a state of 'Reinforced' or 'Extraordinary Security.' Frederic Zuckerman has argued that the Security Law drove a wedge between state and society, creating 'two Russias.'⁵⁰ These ideas have clearly been influenced by the contemporary liberal critique of imperial Russia. Vladimir Gessen argued at the time that the security laws were responsible for the 'uncompromising hatred' of the masses.⁵¹ Lopukhin singled out the political police as the creators of two Russias when he wrote in 1907 that, 'the whole political outlook of the ranks of the Corps of Gendarmes boils down to the following propositions: that there are the people and there is the state... As a result, the protection of the state... turns into a war against all of society... By widening the gulf between state authority and the people, it engenders a revolution.'⁵²

Yet, all western European states and empires resorted to some sort of emergency laws when they felt their sovereignty to be gravely threatened. For example, the most infamous use of extra-legal powers by the tsarist state— the Field Courts Martial from 1906–07 – were in fact modelled on the Austrian *Feldkriegsgerichte*.⁵³ Even the British Empire, with a skeleton staff stretched over a quarter of the earth's surface, often resorted to arbitrary measures: martial law was declared in Ireland during the uprisings of 1798, 1803 & 1916.⁵⁴ In more distant parts of the British Empire the declaration of martial law was even more common.⁵⁵ The island position of Britain made it easier to

49 Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, pp.299 & 305.

50 Zuckerman, 'The Political Police, War, and Society,' p.30.

51 V.M.Gessen, *Isklyuchitel'noe polozhenie* (St. Petersburg, 1908), p.171. Laura Engelstein, 'Combined Underdevelopment: Discipline and the Law in Imperial and Soviet Russia,' *American Historical Review*, vol.98 (1993), pp.338–353.

52 Qtd. in Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old regime*, p.316– from Lopukhin, *Nastoiashchee i budushchee*, p.33. See also: Winfried Luedecke, *Behind the Scenes of Espionage* (London, 1929), p.142.

53 Alexander Izvolsky, *Recollections of a Foreign Minister* (New York, 1921), p.241. For a general analysis see: Otto Kirchenheimer, *Political Justice: The Use of Legal Procedure for Political Ends* (Princeton, 1961).

54 G.Broecker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland, 1812–1836* (London, 1970), pp.219–42.

55 For example in Barbados in 1805 and 1816, Demerara in 1823, Canada in 1837–38, Ceylon in 1848, Cephalonia in 1849, Cape of Good Hope in 1835, 1849–51 and 1852, St. Vincent in 1863, and Jamaica in 1831–32 and 1865. See:

ignore these measures. Nevertheless, they were partially applied even in the mother country with the Defence of the Realm Acts during the First World War and prolonged beyond 1918 by Lloyd George's Emergency Powers Act.⁵⁶ In India, where the British and Russian Empires were as little as twenty miles apart, the British Empire faced many of the same threats as the tsarist regime and the same problems of under-administration. Most notably the Raj faced a terrorist movement and an organised revolutionary party, Ghadr (revolt), by 1914.⁵⁷ The British administrators were all too aware that their attempts to create an Indian political police force to deal with these threats were uncomfortably similar to Russia and that, 'it would not do for the native press to get it into their heads that we were about to establish a Third Section after the Russian pattern.'⁵⁸

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European regimes targeted repressive laws at the areas where they considered their sovereignty to be most threatened. In the case of Third Republic France after 1871 it was foreign espionage, whereas with Russia it was the revolutionary opposition after the 1870s.⁵⁹ Therefore, when the threat changed, so did the law: when Paris became a sanctuary for anarchists in the 1890s, the government tightened press controls to fight media support for anarchism⁶⁰ and introduced a law whereby the mere possession of explosives was punishable by up to five years imprisonment.⁶¹ In response to the rise of left-wing terrorism in the 1870s Bismarck launched a campaign to liquidate the socialist parties in Germany that was very similar to tactics later used by the Okhrana: through international police co-

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- Charles Townshend, 'Martial Law: Legal and Administrative Problems of Civil Emergency in Britain and the Empire, 1800–1940,' *The Historical Journal*, vol.25 (1982), p.168.
- 56 A.J.P.Taylor, *English History, 1914–1945* (Oxford, 1965), pp.18, 29 & 144.
- 57 Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, pp.44 & 64. This resulted in a bloody campaign of terror which included the attempted assassination of the Viceroy for India in 1912, and in the conviction and execution of 186 terrorists (mostly Bengali) from 1908–18.
- 58 Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India to Lord Cross, the Secretary of State for India, 17 April 1887, *quid.* in *ibid.*, p.36.
- 59 Barton L. Ingraham, *Political Crime in Europe: A Comparative Study of France, Germany and England* (Los Angeles, 1979), pp.179–80.
- 60 These laws were far harsher than the press laws of 1881. *Ibid.*, pp.180 & 190. This was in reaction to the throwing of a bomb into the Chamber of Deputies from the visitors gallery in December 1893.
- 61 Law of 18th December 1893.

operation, police harassment of revolutionaries, restrictions on freedom of the press and an anti-socialist law in 1878.⁶² Society was more important than the state in determining the nature of the police force and laws that each state evolved. Thus, the more conservative state, Germany, had in the 1880s more lenient laws on political sedition than liberal Republican France, because the former's social stability was more secure.

Jonathan Daly has convincingly argued that Russia's infamous 1881 Security Law marked to a certain degree a limitation of the state's resort to arbitrary measures.⁶³ Moreover, the very definition of *extraordinary* laws indicates that an ordinary legal system also exists. Indeed, if we look at Imperial Russia's ordinary legal code we can see it was comparatively humane for its own time—abolishing the death penalty in 1754 and corporal punishment in 1854 (though this did not include the peasantry: the overwhelming majority of the population). One nineteenth century French observer of Russia noted: 'If civilisation of a people were to be judged by the mildness of its penal laws, Russia could have claimed first place in Europe.'⁶⁴ The emergence of extraordinary laws only came *after* the codification of civil rights for the tsar's subjects with the 1864 judicial reforms.⁶⁵ In this system an independent judiciary on Western lines had been created. Thus, liberal judges, who were frequently at odds with the state over the suppression of state crimes on political rather than purely legal grounds, could not be removed.⁶⁶ The inadequacy of the ordinary legal system to deal with state crimes became ever more apparent as the revolutionary movement escalated throughout the 1870s. At the Nechaev trial from July to September 1871, 60 of the

62 Two assassination attempts were made on Kaiser Wilhelm I on 11 May 1878 and 2 June 1878.

63 J.W.Daly, 'On the Significance of Emergency Legislation in Imperial Russia', *Slavic Review*, 54, no.3 (1995), pp.609–12. He points out that the 1881 law was more moderate than and indeed limited previous measures, see: *Polnoe sobranie zakonov* [PSZ], series 2, vol.54, part 1, nos. 59476, 59491 and 59531

64 Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *L'empire des Tsars et les Russes* (Paris, 1889–93), vol.II, p.433

65 Marc Szeftel, 'Personal Inviolability in the Legislation of the Russian Absolute Monarchy,' *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol.17 (1958), pp.1–4.

66 Richard S.Wortman, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago, 1976), pp.75–85.

87 were cleared despite clear evidence against them. The most blatant example of an independent court acquitting a clearly guilty person on political grounds was the 1878 trial of Vera Zasulich. ‘Two Russias’—as far as it existed—was born out of difficulties in transplanting Western institutions and practices into Imperial Russian society. The security laws were attempts to cope with this problem. ‘Ironically, such suspensions were the hallmark of transitions from absolutist to constitutional rule, from early modern *Polizeistaat*, or rationalised absolutism, to the rule of law.’⁶⁷

The true difference between Russian police and those of the West was not in the police’s attitudes to society, but rather in society’s attitudes to the police. This applied to high society as well as low:⁶⁸ even tsar Nicholas II did not entirely trust his political police, particularly if their reports brought unpleasant hints that not all Russian subjects were devoted to their tsar. For example, Nicholas II ordered the release of subversives in the Baltic fleet arrested by the Okhrana in August 1913 because he was (wrongly) convinced that the evidence against them had been fabricated by the police.⁶⁹ The clearest indication of a distinct difference in Russian society’s attitudes to the police was observed by the Austrian ambassador to St. Petersburg, Aehrenthal, in the wake of the assassination of the Russian Minister of the Interior, Plehve, in 1904, when he wrote that, ‘The most striking aspect of the present situation is the total

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67 Daly, ‘On the Significance,’ p.603.

68 For example Nikolai Veselago a gendarme employee of the Department of Police from 1911–1913 recalled that his uncle forbade his ‘entering the family home with the statement that no Veselago in the “pit of intrigue” was welcome.’ Qtd. in Tennant Ellis [pseud.], *The Department of Police 1911–13* (MS in Hoover, E.E.Smith Collection), p.21. Even other branches of the police and gendarmerie looked down on *okhranniki*— see Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.64; PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros S.P.Beletskogo*, p.268.

69 Lieven, ‘The Security Police,’ p.241. Nicholas was influenced in this regard by the courtier and influential publisher Prince Meshcherskii. Dominic Lieven has paraphrased Meshcherskii who expressed the opinion “ that at least the revolutionaries’ abominations were the product of commitment to ideals, while those who used unscrupulous tactics against them were motivated by nothing but the desire for power, money, and the perquisites of office” : *ibid.*, p.255. Even Dostoevsky, in his arch-conservative later years, is famous for saying that should he hear of a plot to kill the tsar he would not report it to the police for fear of being thought an informer: G.Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union, 1917–1991* (London, 1985), p.21.

indifference of society to an event that constituted a heavy blow to the principles of the Government...I have found only totally indifferent people or people so cynical that they say that no other outcome was to be expected. People are prepared to say that further catastrophes similar to Plehve's murder will be necessary in order to bring about a change of mind on the part of the highest authority.'⁷⁰

Resentment towards seemingly all-encompassing police oppression was a reaction to the 'modernisation' of the state (or 'state formation'). Similar reactions against state formation can be found in other European countries. Russia merely followed the European pattern. The first 'police' force in St. Petersburg, established under Anton Divier in 1718, was based on the Paris police under Louis XIV. The seventeenth century Paris police force claimed omniscience and was the first to enforce systematic registration of urban residents.⁷¹ This was originally welcomed as a great boon for city life. It took a while before observers began to recognise the downside of a meddling police force: 'As law and order came to be taken more or less for granted in city life, the police were regarded more and more as limiting freedom of movement and repressing the free and legitimate play of civil life.'⁷² Even in Victorian Britain, where respect for the police was perhaps stronger than in any other country, there was a certain gloom regarding the modern police, as they seemed to represent another symbol of the modern age from which the Gothic Victorian sought to escape. Take for example, the comment of one of the pre-eminent Gothic novelists, Elizabeth Gaskell. She claimed that a momentous expansion of the investigative powers of the British police had occurred over the past fifty years, to the point where by the 1850s any victim of a crime merely had to 'set the Detective Police to work; there would be no doubt as to their success; the only question would be as to the time which would elapse before the hiding-place could be detected, and that could not be a question long. It is no

70 Quid. in Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray* (Stanford, 1988), p.54. For another eye-witness account of the 'semi-public rejoicings' which followed Plehve's death see: E.J.Dillon, *The Eclipse of Russia* (New York, 1918), p.120.

71 Sidney Monas, *The Third Section*, pp.24–25. But as many travellers also pointed out the myth of such omniscience was often far removed from the reality.

72 Ibid., p.26.

longer a struggle between man and man, but between a vast organised machinery, and a weak, solitary individual; we have no hopes, no fears—only certainty.⁷³ Many modern observers might offer a similar judgement on the abilities of our own police. But I doubt an observer in the twenty-first century would offer such a confident assessment of the police of, say, the 1960s. And yet the technological resources and investigative methods of police in the 1960s were light years ahead of the ‘organised machinery’ of the Victorian ‘Protective and Detective Police.’ These views, therefore, might be seen as an all too human subjective reaction to rapid technological, political and social change; not a reflection of objective reality.

So why has the Russian reaction to the developing institutions of policing been so much more pronounced? Well, because modern state formation occurred later (hand in hand with far more rapid urbanisation and industrialisation) in Russia and the police were at the vanguard of this process. Thus, technophobia (or *future-shock*) was experienced even more intensely in Russia. Added to this, the apogee of the Okhrana coincided with an era of international tension when paranoia regarding growing espionage institutions was part of the pre-Great War pan-European *Zeitgeist*.⁷⁴ The twentieth century might well go down in history as the zenith of state run secret intelligence agencies. Yet this is not because the omniscient state was ever achieved during this period. This arose because technological innovations of the previous hundred years were having an enormous impact on everyday life and consequently on the popular imagination. Most notably through the birth of mass communications: the rotary printing press, the railway, telegraphy, the typewriter, the telephone, wireless, cinema etc. The same applied to scientific

73 Elizabeth Gaskell, ‘Disappearances,’ published in idem, *Gothic Tales*, (Penguin reprint, 2000), p.3. Originally published in *Household Words*, 3 (7 June 1851), pp.246–50. Gaskell was persuaded to believe in the omniscient ‘scientific’ abilities of the police by a number of articles in the periodical *Household Words*. See for example: ‘The Modern Science of Thief Taking,’ *Household Words*, 2 (13 July 1850), pp.368–72; & ‘Detective Police Party,’ *ibid.*, (27 July 1850), pp.404–19.

74 Lord Fisher, *Memories* (London, 1919), p.96; See: Nicholas P.Hiley, ‘The Failure of British Espionage Against Germany, 1907–1914,’ *Historical Journal*, vol.26, (1983) pp.868–88. For novelistic expression of this see the classic Edwardian novels Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands*; Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*; & G.K.Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*.

innovations in human-identification such as haematology, dactyloscopy (finger-printing), and photography.⁷⁵ The important point to note, therefore, was that the revolution in police methodology occurred at the same time as Russia's most significant period of state formation.

Sidney Monas has argued that: 'The development of political police in Russia follows a general European pattern: *follows*, not leads. One can find peculiarly Russian traits if one looks for them, but they seem to be part of the general problem of Russian administration, explicable in terms of economic and cultural backwardness.'⁷⁶ The only concrete difference between the tsarist security police before 1914 and its European equivalents was in the scale of their activities. The Okhrana was larger not only because the definition of what constituted political sedition was broader, but also because the scale of real and genuinely dangerous sedition was itself much broader in Russia than in the West. The tsarist regime responded with a force commensurate to the scale of the threat it faced: From 1896 to 1912 3767 persons were sentenced to death by District Military Courts.⁷⁷ This was in response to a wave of mass terrorism which threatened to unseat the tsarist regime: from 1905 to 1910 alone around 9,000 persons were killed in 'terrorist' attacks, the overwhelming majority of whom were government officials.⁷⁸

75 The latter assisted Bertillon's process of 'anthropometry' – a means of measuring the features of the face and body developed in the 1890s in order to provide positive identification of a person. This is still used by Interpol and can also be seen as a forerunner of the modern 'photo-fit.' Allen Sekula, 'The Body and the Archive,' *October*, vol.39 (1986), pp.3–64; Carlo Ginzburg, 'Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method,' *History Workshop*, vol.9 (1980), pp.5–36.

76 Monas, *The Third Section*, p.27.

77 D.Rawson, 'The Death Penalty in Tsarist Russia: An Investigation of Judicial Procedures,' *Russian History*, vol.11 (Sept., 1984), p.37.

78 Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 205, folder 'Lopukhin,' Protokol no.37, pp.59–66.

CONCLUSION

A comparative study of government practices reveals that Imperial Russian policing followed the Western pattern. Western condemnation has, ironically enough, focused on the very features of the Imperial Russian state which most closely resembled the West (something of the rage of Caliban contemplating his own unsavoury reflection, albeit in a rather unflattering light). Many Russian reactionaries, as well as reformers, looked to the West for inspiration.⁷⁹ The West is not, and has never been, a homogeneous bloc.⁸⁰ Reactionaries who adopted Western methods rarely wanted Russia to imitate the West wholesale (nor would this have been possible due to the diversity of states in the West). There was a deliberate process of selective imitation. Moreover, there was a transmutation of police methods as a result of difficulties in introducing Western models of government into Russian society.⁸¹ It is something which has a contemporary relevance: governing Russia with Western methods has, to put it mildly, proved troublesome.

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79 And many Russian officials emphasised that the key to reform was building on *Russian* traditions— for example the pan-Slavist MVD Count N.P.Ignat'ev advocated a representative assembly based on the seventeenth century *zemskii sobor*: 'a unique Russian kind of constitution, for which Europe would envy us and which would silence our pseudo-liberals and nihilists.' Quid. in Hosking, *People and Empire*, p.374.

80 After all, many convincing arguments have been advanced that it was Britain, not Russia, which diverged from the European 'norm' prior to 1914. See for example, the classic opening lines of A.J.P.Taylor's *English History, 1914–1945* (Oxford, 1965), p.1: 'Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state, beyond the post office and the policeman. He could live where he liked and as he liked. He had no official number or identity card. He could travel abroad or leave his country forever without a passport or any sort of official permission... For that matter, a foreigner could spend his life in this country without permit and without informing the police. Unlike the countries of the European continent, the state did not require its citizens to perform military service.'

81 The pre-eminent historian of eighteenth century Imperial Russia, Marc Raeff, has advanced the notion that Russian exceptionalism was rooted in the fact that Western ideas were introduced by the cameralist state, rather than through 'organic' growth in Russian society: Marc Raeff, *Political Ideas and Institutions of Imperial Russia* (Boulder, Colorado, 1994), p.306.

Chapter Three

Inside the Bureaucratic Labyrinth

The Structure of the Okhrana

So the court offices were in the attics in this block of flats? This was not an arrangement to inspire much respect, and it was comfortable for a defendant to reflect how short of cash this court must be if its offices were located where the tenants, themselves the poorest of the poor, threw their useless junk. Of course, it was not outside the bounds of possibility that there was plenty of money available but that it was embezzled by the officials before it could be used for judicial purposes. Judging by what K. had experienced so far, this must even be very probable, but then such corruption in the court must be very debasing for the defendant yet fundamentally more reassuring than poverty in the court might be. Now K. could understand why at the first hearing they had been ashamed to summon him to appear in the attics and preferred to pester him in his apartments

Franz Kafka, 'The Trial.'¹

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There are several reasons for beginning a specific case study of the tsarist secret police in St Petersburg with an analysis of the bureaucratic framework of its operations. The first and most important reason is to identify which government offices were involved in political policing, what their powers were and, in doing so, to arrive at a more precise institutional outline of the ambiguous term: 'the Okhrana.'

1 Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, trans. Idris Parry (Penguin Classics reprint, London, 2000), p.47.

Secondly, a picture of the mechanics of the Okhrana's information gathering will offer an internal perspective. Past studies written by tsardom's opponents tended to be drawn from an external perspective, viz., through the distorted lens of the pursued, not the pursuer. An external observer would only be able to perceive effect, not cause. The external appearance of the Russian bureaucracy tended to be deceptive, and it is necessary to look at the structure in detail to penetrate this façade. Samuel Hoare, British diplomat and intelligence officer attached to the Russian government during the Great War, noted that the Interior Ministry and central administration of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes were 'the very centre of the Russian bureaucracy' occupying 'an endless block of brick-red offices... True to the Russian type, the façade was the best part of the building. At the back of the general staff [building] was a network of smelly yards and muddy passages that made entrance difficult and health precarious.'² When we look beneath the outer-casing of the machine, at the nuts, bolts and levers of police power, the Okhrana appears to be of a far more mundane and modest nature than was commonly supposed. For example, unlike the Third Section and the Cheka it was not a self-contained entity, separate from the rest of the bureaucracy. Unlike the mythological image of the Okhrana as a sort institutional *eminence grise* whispering advice into the ear of the autocrat, neither servants of the Department of Police nor of the Security Sections had direct access to the tsar.³

My third reason for looking at the bureaucratic structure is that it is only by an appreciation of the immensely complex, changeable and tangled hierarchy of government organs that the power struggles between competing cliques of police officials (to be discussed in the following chapters) can be understood.⁴ The operational head of the Okhrana (Security Section) in St Petersburg from 1905–1909,

2 S.Hoare, *The Fourth Seal: The End of a Russian Chapter* (London, 1930), p.48.

3 Leggett writes that Dzerzhinsky had a seat on the central committee, from 1919 was also head of the NKVD and from 1920 Orgburo. He also 'had constant dealings with Lenin, who personally superintended the political police in his dual capacity as Sovnarkom chairman and party leader': *The Cheka*, p.158

4 For an expression of the argument in support of a united chain of command see: A.A.Lopukhin, *Nastoiashchee i budushchee russkoi politzii* (Moscow, 1907), *passim*. He argued that ordinary and political police should be unified and subordinated to the local Governor's office.

A.V.Gerasimov, wrote that his job in this ‘colossal city’ involved navigating ‘departmental labyrinths, with an oppressive atmosphere of work and a mass of unexpected complications.’⁵ The prized position as head of St Petersburg Security Section therefore proved to be something of a poisoned chalice. It was the undoing of almost every official foolhardy enough to accept the role. The first head, G.P.Sudeikin, was assassinated by one of his secret agents, Degaev, in 1883. Gerasimov himself was undone by the Azef scandal and the virulent wave and bureaucratic back-stabbing which followed it. And his successor, Colonel Karpov, lasted less than two months after his official appointment to the post before he was murdered by one of his own secret agents in 1909. Life was equally hazardous for the other Petersburg security officials. Three out of the six Ministers of the Interior were assassinated from 1902 to 1911 alone. An attempt was made on another (P.N.Durnovo) in 1906. And the St Petersburg City Governor and the head of the Main Prison Directorate were both murdered in the capital in 1906–07. Even the Petersburg Okhrana officials who escaped assassination often ended their careers in disgrace as they were blamed for any security mishaps. The Director of the Department of Police, A.A.Lopukhin, was branded a ‘murderer’ by his boss for failing to prevent the assassination of Grand Duke Sergei in 1905.⁶ The head of St Petersburg Security Section, L.N.Kremenetskii, lost his job after the Bloody Sunday massacre in 1905, even though the atrocity was carried out by soldiers, and not the security police. And the Assistant Minister of the Interior, P.G.Kurlov, was dismissed for ‘dereliction of duty’ after the assassination of Stolypin in 1911. The insecurity of their position was directly connected to the ‘authoritarian’ bureaucratic structure and identification of the chief of security in the capital as the central pillar of Russian reaction. This meant that enemies of tsarism focussed their hatred of the system – and also their terrorist attacks – primarily on representatives of the security police. It also meant that the fastest route to a position of great power for ambitious officials inside the Russian government was usually through the Interior Ministry. Internal politics were fiercely competitive. As we shall see, these

5 Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.5.

6 Ibid., p.8.

tendencies in the Interior Ministry were most pronounced in its secret executive arm: the Okhrana.⁷

This chapter is intended mainly as a piece for reference. In general many readers might prefer to take simply a brief perusal of the diagrams and then proceed directly to the ‘conclusion’ section of this chapter.

The Ministerial System

The tsarist bureaucracy had been based on the Ministerial system since 1802, whereby the various activities of the state were supervised from the political centre in St Petersburg⁸ and divided into separate ministries on the basis of the functions they performed: e.g. foreign affairs, internal affairs, finance, military affairs and justice.⁹ Over the next century these grew into imposing bureaucratic machines which, in the words of one historian, ‘tended to be semi-autonomous empires.’¹⁰ By 1906 there were fourteen government ministries.¹¹ At the head of each was a minister who, up until 1905, was directly answerable to the tsar alone. The power of individual ministers however, was greatly curtailed following the 1905 revolution. Firstly, because of the introduction of the State Duma, ministers could be called in to answer ‘interpellations’ from the people’s representatives.¹² Secondly because the State Duma’s consent was required for the approval of the ministerial budget.¹³ Thirdly because of the introduction

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7 On factional struggles see: ‘A.A.Lopukhin, Police Insubordination and the Rule of Law’ in *Russian History*, 20, Nos 1–4 (1993), pp.147–162.

8 Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, pp.51–52. The central bureaucracy was made to seem vast by the relative inadequacy of the organs of local government: local government taxation accounted for only 15% of taxes (compared to over 50% in the West). In this period 20% of Russia’s bureaucrats worked in the capital.

9 Daniel T.Orlovsky, *The Limits of Reform: The Ministry of Internal Affairs in Imperial Russia, 1802–1881* (London, 1981), pp.14–19, 35. This was based an older tradition: Orlovsky writes that: ‘the monocratic [*edinolichnyi*] authority of the Minister of Internal Affairs was clearly rooted in the structural tradition of the the *prikazy*.’

10 D.Lieven, ‘Russian Senior Officialdom under Nicholas II: Careers and Mentalities,’ *Jahrbücher für geschichte Osteuropas*, 32 (1984), p.209.

11 See diagram 2a.

12 S.L.Levitsky, ‘Interpellations according to the Russian constitution of 1906,’ *Slavonic and East European Review*, 1 (1956–57), pp.220–31.

13 Article 96 of the Fundamental Laws. N.P.Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennikh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii*, (Moscow, 1968) pp.281–84; Marc Szeftel,

of the Council of Ministers – which meant, in theory, that individual ministers were answerable to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (i.e. Prime Minister) and no longer, in theory, had the privilege of reporting directly to the tsar.¹⁴

Inside his own ministry the minister's rule was absolute: from the outset he had the power to dismiss members of his staff at will. Beneath the minister were his Assistants (usually two or three) and beneath them were the directors of departments. Beneath each director were subsections (*ekspeditsii*- expeditions or *deloproizvodstva*-secretariats or *otdely*- sections) headed by a 'chief' (*nachal'nik*). All of these offices were based in St. Petersburg. Below this the ministry was represented by various directorates (*upravleniia*), sections (*otdeleniia*), stations (*uchastki*), offices (*kansteliarii*), and points (*punkty*) in the provincial capitals and the larger towns. The overall effect of this monocratic system was that power was rationed out in a stratified, pyramidal pattern. This system of strict hierarchy was known as 'gradualism' (*postepennost'*) or 'departmentalism.'

In 1880 all police affairs were subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁵ The former centre of the secret police – the Third Section of His Majesty's Imperial Chancellery– was abolished and its functions, along with its archives, headquarters at Fontanka 16 and its personnel, were passed on to the new Department of Police.¹⁶ The Interior Ministry had been involved in secret police work long before it officially took control of affairs in 1880: Count Perovsky had directed the ministry back into political espionage as early as 1844. It was one of his subordinates, Sinitsyn, the head of the Petersburg detective police, who uncovered the Petrashevsky conspiracy in 1849 and thereby exposed the seeming incompetence

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The Russian Constitution of April 23 1906: Political Institutions of the Duma Monarchy (Brussels, 1976).

14 However, this had the effect of greatly increasing the influence of the secret police from 1906 to 1911, because the Minister of the Interior, Stolypin, was also Prime Minister. Alfred Levin, 'Peter Arkad'evich Stolypin: a political appraisal,' *Journal of Modern History*, vol.37 (1965), pp.445–63. 'Uchrezhdenie Ministerstva vnutrennikh del,' *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*, vol.I, part 2, art.314.

15 GARF, f.569,op.1,d.65, Loris Melikov, *Dokladnaia zapiska o preobrazovanii politsii*, 1 Aug.1880, ll.5–6.

16 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, pp.22–23. Orlovsky, *The Limits of Reform*, pp.33–42.

of the Third Section. The Department of Police was just one among nearly a dozen departments of the vast Ministry of the Interior. This structural change theoretically relegated the secret police from servants of the tsar, to servants of the bureaucracy.

The Interior Ministry's absorption of the secret police was a rational step because it marked the unification of the internal intelligence and security organs under one ministry: combining the police with the Separate Corps of Gendarmes, censorship operations¹⁷ and the communications network of the Main Directorate (Department) of Posts and Telegraphs.¹⁸ Moreover, the arrangement of policing functions in separate departments of the Interior Ministry imposed further checks and balances on the political police. For example, the political police had no control over censorship, communications, or education. From this we may deduce that 'thought-control' or any sort of ideological indoctrination, even on a negative level, was not possible. Even in the case of the Interior Ministry it was not a simple progression of aggrandisement: for example, the MVD lost control of the Factory Inspectorate to the new Ministry of Trade and Industry in 1905.¹⁹

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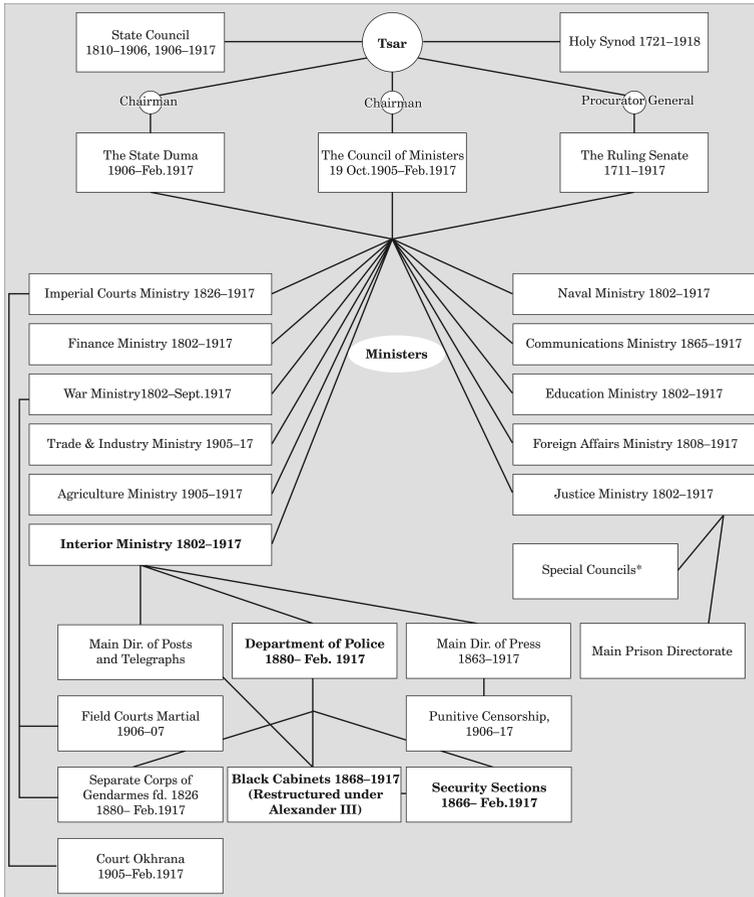
In addition to these ministries there were three other sections with equal status of a ministry: State Control (*Gosudarstvennyi kontrol'*) under the State controller, the Main Directorate of the General Staff (under the head of the general staff) and State Horse-Breeding (under a Chief Director). I have included two of the principal sections directly subordinate to the tsar; the Holy Synod under an Over-Procurator (*Ober-prokuror*) and the State Council (under a chairman), which was adapted to form an upper chamber to the State Duma in 1906. There were various other departments and commissions not included in the diagram, which ensured that the tsar's powers remained

17 Taken over from the Ministry of Education in 1863. On post-1905 censorship see Caspar Ferenczi, 'Freedom of the Press under the Old Regime,' in Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson (eds.), *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989), pp.195–205; and J.Walkin, 'Government Controls over the Press in Russia, 1905–1914,' *Russian Review*, vol.13 (1954), pp.203–09.

18 This was taken over from the Ministry of Ways and Communications in 1868. With this Department the Interior Ministry also inherited the 'Black Cabinets.'

19 N.P.Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudartsvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1968), p.285.

Chart 3a) The position of security policing in the ministerial system



* Special councils on administrative punishment, 14 Aug.1881- Feb.1917. † Field Courts Martial, 1906-1907. Sections in bold were directly involved in political investigations.

dominant: such as the emperor's personal chancellery and the Council of State Defence (operating from 1905 to 1909 – guaranteeing Nicholas II's dominance over affairs relating to the armed forces). The Ruling Senate could also perform functions of a supreme court and became involved in matters such as inquiries into the murder of Stolypin in 1911.

The Department of Police: Okhrana HQ

When we burrow deeper into the bureaucratic system we find that not only were there checks and balances on the parameters of political police activity from other government ministries and other departments of the Interior Ministry, there were also supposed limits on the activities of the Okhrana within the Department of Police itself.

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In 1880 the Department of (State) Police was used just as the administrative centre of the state's ordinary police, placing them under unified control for the first time since the dissolution of the Ministry of Police in 1819.²⁰ The secret police, under the gendarmerie, retained their independence and still ran the 'Security Sections' in Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw until Alexander III enacted the statute of 'Regulations Concerning the Measures for Safeguarding the State order and Public Tranquillity' on 14 August 1881.²¹ From thereon the secret police were subordinate to the Director of the Department of Police, who was in turn responsible to the Assistant Minister of the Interior in charge of police (*zaveduiushchii politsii*). This assistant Minister almost always held the concurrent post of *komandir* of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes. In turn, and setting the seal on the union of police and gendarmerie, the Minister of the Interior held the symbolic post of Chief (*Shef*) of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes. This then placed the semi-civilian Security Sections above the paramilitary gendarmerie in the administration of political criminal investigations (*politicheskii rozysk*).

20 PSZ, series 2, vol.55, part 1, no.61279.

21 A.M.Prokhrov (ed.), *Sovetskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (Moscow, 1983), p.43: Hence the name for Okhrana operational centres: 'Section for the protection of public order and tranquillity'.

The evolution of the institutional structure of policing in late Imperial Russia indicates that reaction and reform were not always mutually exclusive. For example, the unification of all police affairs was counterbalanced by a planned consultative legislative assembly.²² The creation of the Department of Police thus cannot be considered in isolation as a reactionary move by the tsarist regime because it was part of a package of reforms by the moderate reformist head of the Supreme Executive Commission and then Minister of the Interior, Count M.T.Loris-Melikov. Therefore, an efficient and in some ways repressive secret police force need not be seen as hostile to political and social reform. Paradoxically, a more far-reaching police force was often the mechanism that brought about the stability necessary for reform to take place. Moreover, when the institutions of repression became more efficient the state usually became less oppressive. For example, when the Ministry of the Interior obtained control over the censorship process in 1863 it was able to become more thorough in the areas it chose to apply censorship— such as political pamphlets— by jettisoning some of its more intrusive and onerous duties— such as censorship before printing and interference over the publication of large books.²³

The central offices of the Department of Police— located in the four-story building at Fontanka 16, St Petersburg— gradually expanded in line with its increasing workload. From 1894 to 1899 the Fontanka clerical staff rose from 44 to 72 to cope with the increase in paperwork alone. By 1895 the Department of Police had 161 full time employees.²⁴ By 1911 this figure had risen to over 300.²⁵ It was a supervisory organisation, which was at first divided into three Secretariats handling

22 M.McCauley & P.Waldron, *The Emergence of the Modern Russian State, 1855–1881* (London, 1988), p.12.

23 Charles Ruud, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804–1906* (Toronto, 1982).

24 R.Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (London, 1974), p.301.

25 GARF, f.102, op.295, d.4, ll.1–46: lists names, salaries and partial information on the service career of over 300 members of staff up to 1911. This tallies with the description by Vesselago: Tennant Ellis (pseud. for E.E.Smith), *The Department of Police 1911–13: From the Recollections of Nikolai Vladimirovich Veselago*, MS in Hoover Institution, Edward Ellis Smith Collection Box 1, pp.5–10. He estimated the total number of employees at the DP at this time to be around 400.

personnel and ordinary police affairs, juridical affairs and political affairs respectively. Over the next two decades policing functions became highly specialised: By 1883 the fourth and fifth Secretariat were formed, in 1894 the sixth, in 1902 the seventh, in 1908 the eighth and in 1914 the ninth. By 1914 in addition to the nine Secretariats in the Fontanka there was a library, a registration section (*registratsionnyi otdel*) and a central reference apparatus (*Spravochnyi apparat*). The control centre of the Okhrana was known from 1898 as the Special Section (*Osobyi otdel*) of the Department of Police.²⁶ The Okhrana had thus only been given a clear and separate administrative centre seventeen years after its foundation.²⁷

The Department of Police's Nine Secretariats

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The first secretariat (*pervoe delproizvodstvo*) was, in modern parlance, the personnel office – handling appointments, transfers, pensions, dismissals. It shed some functions with the passing of years – for example from 1907 the handling of pensions was transferred to the third secretariat.²⁸ This was also the first point of reference in any further reforms and evolution in the organisation of police affairs such as the restructuring of the secret police in 1907, and the organisation of investigative sections from 1908–09. The first secretariat was also responsible for miscellaneous issues such as horse theft, desertion and vagrancy.

The second (legislative) secretariat (*zakonodatel'skoe deloproizvodstvo*) was responsible for issuing directives and circulars to all police organs – particularly regarding interpretation of the law

26 J. W. Daly, 'The Watchful State: Police and politics in Late Imperial Russia, 1896–1917' (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1992), p.63. The Special Section was originally attached to the third secretariat to sift through perustrated letters from the postal censor from 1894, but came to supervise all political police affairs by 1898.

27 For a comprehensive guide to the division of duties in the Department of Police in January 1914 see: GARF, f.102 op.244, (DPOO, 1914g.) d.130, *Raspredelenie obiazannostei deloproizvodstv Departamenta politsii s 1-go ianvaria 1914g.*, ll.55–59.

28 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.23. All the files (*dela*) for the first secretariat of the DP are held in GARF, f.102, op. 1–37 (1880–1917).

and codes of conduct. It also handled rules on membership of clubs, permission for balls, masquerades, parties, regulating factory relations, passport control and the supply of passports (non-political) for entry into Russia, and visas for Muslim pilgrimages. From 3 January 1914 a whole gamut of extra duties were passed on to this desk including handling the sick (and – during the war – the wounded), the poor, monitoring commercial ports, exile of foreigners, and questions on the import of cars and aeroplanes. From 24 December 1914 the second secretariat was responsible for enforcing and monitoring workers' legislation. They also handled the liquidation of German companies during the First World War.²⁹

Up until 1898 **the third secretariat** was known as the secret section (*sekretnoe deloproizvodstvo*). In 1898 the secret functions were taken over by the Special Section (*Osobyi otdel*). The little-known third secretariat, which ran the Okhrana from 1881–1898, had a far broader mandate than the infamous Special Section ever possessed. Up to 1898 it processed all the reports (*doneseniia*) from Provincial Gendarme Directorates, Security Sections, the Foreign Agency and political surveillance reports. Reports on political reliability were housed there. Files on individual revolutionaries in the nineteenth century were also processed there. At this time they freely maintained surveillance over the revolutionary propaganda as it penetrated the army, navy, society, schools etc. Peasant moods and disturbances were carefully monitored by this section up to 1902; as were the student disturbances of this period, and the activities of the various religious groups and individuals such as Tolstoy. The monitoring of the illegal purchase, possession and smuggling of arms was handled by the third secretariat until 1907. From 1907 to 1917 this office also handled many aspects of police surveillance which are often erroneously associated with the Special Section: such as keeping *dvorniki* and other civilians as paid informers and bonuses for police officers.³⁰ From 1900 it became responsible for granting or refusing permission to hold public lectures.

29 Ibid., pp.22–24. For archival records on the second secretariat see: GARF, f.102, op.38–76 (1880–1917).

30 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, pp.27–29.

The fourth secretariat was established on 14 March 1883. It existed in its original form until 6 September 1902 when all of its functions were transferred to the seventh secretariat. A new fourth section was created on 3 January 1907 taking over the responsibilities of the Special Section (*Osobyi otdel*) regarding all non-secret worker and peasant matters.³¹

The fifth (executive) secretariat (*ispolnitel'noe deloproizvodstvo*)³² was created in 1883 out of the juridical section (*sudebnyi otdel*) of the MVD. It dealt with questions of political unreliability, administrative exile, and assignment of open surveillance (*glasnyi nadzor*). It also handled various liaison work with the district prosecutors – particularly regarding the dissolution and various *causes célèbres* surrounding People's Will in the 1880s and 1890s, the factory disturbances at the turn of the twentieth century, and peasant and worker disturbances during the 1905–07 revolution. In June 1912 all the fifth secretariat's functions were absorbed by the sixth secretariat. The fifth secretariat re-emerged in January 1914 when it was responsible for preparing reports to the MVD and exile commissions.

The sixth secretariat³³ was founded in 1894 taking over the duties of the second secretariat regarding the observation of the Factory Laws. It also handled policing the possession of explosive equipment and the Jewish question. In June 1900 it was responsible for liaison with the Ministry of Finance as regarded rewards to the police for enforcing alcohol licensing, and measures against arms smuggling, vagrancy, and currency forgery. This section had considerable involvement in the ill-fated Zubatov unions and his agent Professor I.Kh.Ozerov of Moscow University. In 1907 the sixth secretariat was made responsible for vetting the political reliability of persons entering state or *zemstvo* service. In June 1912 most of its functions were taken over by the fifth secretariat and the sixth secretariat became the central reference desk (*tsentral'nyi spravochnyi apparat*) for the whole of the Department of Police. From 27 March 1915 to 5

31 Ibid., pp.29–30. GARF f.102 (4-oe deloproizvodstvo), op.116–126 and 257, dd.1–9296 (1907–1917).

32 Ibid., pp.30–32. GARF f.102, (5-oe deloproizvodstvo) op.127–153 and 304 (1880–1917).

33 Ibid., pp.32–33. GARF f.102, (6-oe deloproizvodstvo) op.154–177 and 310 (1894–1917).

September 1916 the sixth secretariat took over all the functions of the old Special Section in an attempt by Fontanka Director, Beletskii, to broaden the powers of the political police.

The seventh (surveillance) secretariat (*nabliudatel'noe deloproizvodstvo*) was founded on 6 September 1902 to take over all the functions and archives of the former fourth secretariat.³⁴ From May 1905 the seventh secretariat was responsible for producing investigative (*rozysknye*) circulars and liaison with the Prison Department (*tiuremnoe vedomstvo*). From 3 January 1914 the seventh secretariat took over the responsibilities of the jurisconsulate section (*iuriskonsul'skaia chast'*). It was partly responsible for watching revolutionary propaganda in the factories and the activities of legal political parties.³⁵

The eighth secretariat was created in 1908 to supervise the Investigative Sections (*sysknye otdeleniia*). It was effectively the criminal investigation department.³⁶ It was also responsible for liaison with foreign police forces. Its control over criminal investigations was greatly expanded in 1915.³⁷

The ninth secretariat³⁸ temporarily took over all of the Special Section's functions in April 1914 in a vain attempt by Assistant Minister of the Interior, Dzhunkovskii, to stifle the autonomy of the secret political police. It came to be involved in liaison with the military authorities investigating 'German forces' (*nemetskie zasiliia*) and prisoners of war, and alien internees.³⁹ After the reshuffle of 27

34 Ibid., pp.33–36. GARF f.102, (7-oe deloproizvodstvo) op.178–214 and 309 (1881–1917).

35 From 1907 to 1917 Fontanka was officially involved in the surveillance of SDs, SRs, Armenian nationalist organisations such as *Dashnaktsutium* and *Gnchak*, the Tiflis based *Droshak* party, Zionist socialists, and the *Bund*.

36 Ibid., p.36. GARF f.102, (8-oe deloproizvodstvo) op.215–225 and 305 (1908–1917). These archives were the worst affected by the destruction of archives during February 1917– only 180 *dela* survive.

37 See the memoirs of one of the heads of this section: A.F.Koshko, *Ocherki ugovnago mira tsarskoi Rossii*, three vols. (Paris, 1929).

38 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.36. GARF f.102, (9-oe deloproizvodstvo), op.225 and 307, dd.1–368 (1914–1917).

39 A.A.Miroliubov, 'Politicheskii sysk v Rossii v 1914–1917gg.' (Kand.diss., MGIA, 1988), pp.30–32; L.I.Tiutiunnik, 'Departament politicii v bor'be s revoliutsionnym dvizheniem v Rossii na rubezhe XIX–XX vekov (1880–1904 gg.)' (Kand.diss., MGIAI, 1986), pp.46–53, 260–67; Z.I.Peregudova, 'Departamenta politicii v bor'be s revoliutsionnym dvizheniem (gody reaktsii i revoliutsionnogo pod'ema),' (Kand.diss., MGIAI, [Moscow] 1988), pp.174–76.

March 1915 the Special Section was revived in all but name (renamed the 'sixth secretariat'). Meanwhile, the ninth secretariat survived retaining its responsibilities in all areas involving co-operation with the military involving deserters, prisoners of war, internship and exile of enemy foreign nationals resident in Russia since before the war.

Sanctum sanctorum

The offices of the Special Section were located on the top floor of the Fontanka headquarters.⁴⁰ As its name indicated it was different from the other offices of the Department of Police. Police officials claimed that this section was so secret that only Special Section staff, the Minister of the Interior, the Director of the Department of Police and the tsar were allowed access to it.⁴¹ Officially, this office was top secret and its very existence could be denied. Unlike the Security Sections it went almost completely unnoticed by the political opposition. Staff up to 1907 had to keep their police connections a secret.⁴² Duty officers were posted on guard 24 hours a day at the only entrance to the Special Section. Their office staff numbered around 10–15 intelligence officers with a similar number of clerks.⁴³ From 1907 to 1917 the administration of the Special Section's affairs was organised, like the Department of Police, into nine sections (*otdelenia*) with an additional 'secret' section. The organisation of divisions within the Special Section had, also like the Department of Police, been reshuffled considerably from 1905 to 1907. On 17 January 1905 the Special Section divided its functions up into four 'sections'

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40 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.36. GARF, f.102, (*Osobyi otдел*) op.226–247 and 316 (1898–1917).

41 From the debates of the State Duma it appears that many were unaware of the existence of the Special Section: Russia. *Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Stenograficheskie otcheti*. (St Petersburg, 1906–1917) [Hereafter GDSO], 1st Duma, 1906, vol.2, cols.1133–34, 1140; Laporte, *Histoire de l'okhrana*, p.213.

42 Daly, 'The Watchful State,' p.70.

43 The Special Section staff files for 1910/11 list 14 officials earning over 100 rubles a month. Of these those earning over 200 rubles a month were named as: N.A.Peshkov, M.E.Broetskii, N.D.Zaitsev, I.A.Zybin, And those over 100 rubles a month were named as: Rukavichnikov, Belovodskii, N.K.Shiller, Sargani, V.V.Kurochkin, V.D.Bol'shev, I.S.Vasil'ev, Drinevich, N.A.Aleevskii, N.I.Gaidaevich. This list also shows that there were 30 men and one woman of lower rank (mostly clerks) in DPOO in 1911 earning less than 100 rubles a month each. Duty rosters suggests that the size was much the same in 1917 (the names of 34 duty officers are listed for Jan. and Feb. 1917).

(*otdeleniia*). In July 1906 the Special Section was divided into two autonomous offices – *Special Section A* and *Special Section B*.

Section A was concerned with political investigations (*politicheskii rozysk*). The parameters of this portfolio were defined by eleven discernible functions: i) watching political parties ii) directing local investigative organs; iii) processing agent information and surveillance notes; iv) issuing relevant circulars to all investigative organs; v) compiling a library of revolutionary publications and politically banned materials; vi) producing a digest and guide to these materials; vii) control of the Foreign Agency; viii) monitoring the army for infiltration by revolutionary agitators and propaganda; ix) maintaining a photographic library and archive of politically unreliable persons; x) decipherment and cryptology; xi) digesting all the above work and research into producing *Vsepoddaneishie zapiski* ('Humble notes') for the perusal of the Minister of the Interior and his assistant in charge of the police.⁴⁴

Section B was occupied with questions concerning the surveillance of groups in civil society such as professional unions, associations and pressure groups. It was also commissioned to watch revolutionary penetration of the factories, peasantry, railway staff, telegraphists, print workers, strikers, illegal meetings and congresses, etc. After the reorganisation of 3 January 1907 Section B was completely separated from the Special Section and absorbed by the fourth secretariat.

The ten divisions inside the Special Section from 1907 onwards were determined by targets of surveillance: section one dealt with non-party opposition groups; two SRs; three SDs; four nationalist parties; five codes and ciphers; six gendarme inquests; seven political reliability; eight external surveillance (created 1908); and nine military espionage (created 1914).⁴⁵ In 1910 the Special Section centralised the control of all the most important secret agents in its Highly Secret Agents Section (*Sverkhsekretnyi agenturnyi otdel*).⁴⁶

44 GАРF, *Putevoditel'*, p.38.

45 *Ibid.*, p.44. For a collection of Special Section weekly summaries for the years 1901–1905 see: Hoover, Okhrana archive, Box 152.

46 Eroshkin, *op.cit.*, p.283.

Fluctuations in the powers of the Okhrana headquarters

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The prevailing image of the Okhrana held that the scope of its activities grew over the last two decades of imperial rule.⁴⁷ The areas which indicate that this was indeed happening were the Special Section's gain of control over policing arms smuggling from 1904 onwards;⁴⁸ the aforementioned centralisation of the best secret agents; and its move into matters of military intelligence and counter-intelligence after 1914. On balance, however, the general trend in the allocation of duties in the Department of Police shows that the powers of the secret political police (as opposed to the police in general) were being gradually eroded by increasing specialisation of policing functions. One could, of course, put it another way: more sections of the police were becoming concerned with political affairs. Whether this was an expansion or contraction of the Okhrana is a moot point: it depends on what we define as 'the Okhrana'. If we opt for a narrow definition of the HQ as being the Special Section, rather than the Department of Police as a whole, then there was a process of relative contraction. The Okhrana headquarters passed from being one of the three secretariats within the Department of Police, to being one of ten. As a result many of the new secretariats took over some of the Special or Political Section's old functions: the third secretariat was responsible for monitoring student disorders (from 1898), the payment of *dvorniki* (doormen, caretakers, janitors) as informers (from 1907), processing gendarme inquests (from 1898), and granting permission for the holding of public lectures (from 1900);⁴⁹ the fourth secretariat acquired control of surveillance of worker and peasant movements, all legal political parties and the monitoring of Duma elections (from 1907)⁵⁰; the sixth secretariat was largely responsible for the Zubatov unions from 1902–1905 and the checking of political

47 Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police*, p.225.

48 R.J.Johnson, 'The Okhrana Abroad, 1885–1917: A Study in International Police Co-operation,' (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1970), pp.133 &155.

49 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, pp.32–34.

50 The monitoring of election was carried out by a desk called: 'The Special Secretariat concerning the election to the State Duma' which was subordinate to the fourth secretariat. Eroshkin, *op.cit.*, p.283; GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.32.

reliability of persons entering state service from 1907; finally the seventh secretariat took over the handling of gendarme inquests and the surveillance of the overt activities of revolutionary parties and the Kadets from 1907.⁵¹ The creation of the Court *okhrana* in 1905, subordinate to the Ministry of Imperial Courts, marked the most significant reduction in the Okhrana's duties because it dislocated the Interior Ministry's secret police from the centre of power and from the *kudos* of protecting the life of the tsar.⁵² The four political sections of the Department of Police were only briefly unified under one head when P.I.Rachkovskii was placed in charge of the 'political section' (*politicheskaiia chast'*) of the Department of Police in 1905.⁵³ The Okhrana's role was essentially to act as a *secret* political police force.

The reduction in the power of the Special Section rendered it more effective in its secret political police duties – in the same manner that the streamlining of censorship had made the suppression of printed sedition more effective. External surveillance of revolutionaries became more efficient as the Special Section created the 'Central' (*tsentral'nyi*) Detachment.⁵⁴ As its responsibilities became limited to secret political policing, many information leaks were plugged by the creation of the Highly Secret Agents Section in 1910.⁵⁵ At the same time as this they were able to bring the Foreign Agency into line through financial reform.⁵⁶ A more specialised secret political police force also had the advantage of creating a stronger *esprit de corps* among the *okhranniki*: any improvement in this regard was useful, because in general its group morale was at a very low ebb.⁵⁷

51 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, pp.33–34.

52 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.270–71. Eroshkin, *op.cit.*, pp.283–84.

53 For an official summary of Rachkovskii's powers in 1905 see: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 9, MVD DPOO Top Secret Circular no.9965, 6 Aug. 1905. Rachkovskii combined supervision of the Okhrana with control over the inquests of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes and a seat on the Special Councils (*Osobyie soveshchaniia*) on administrative exile.

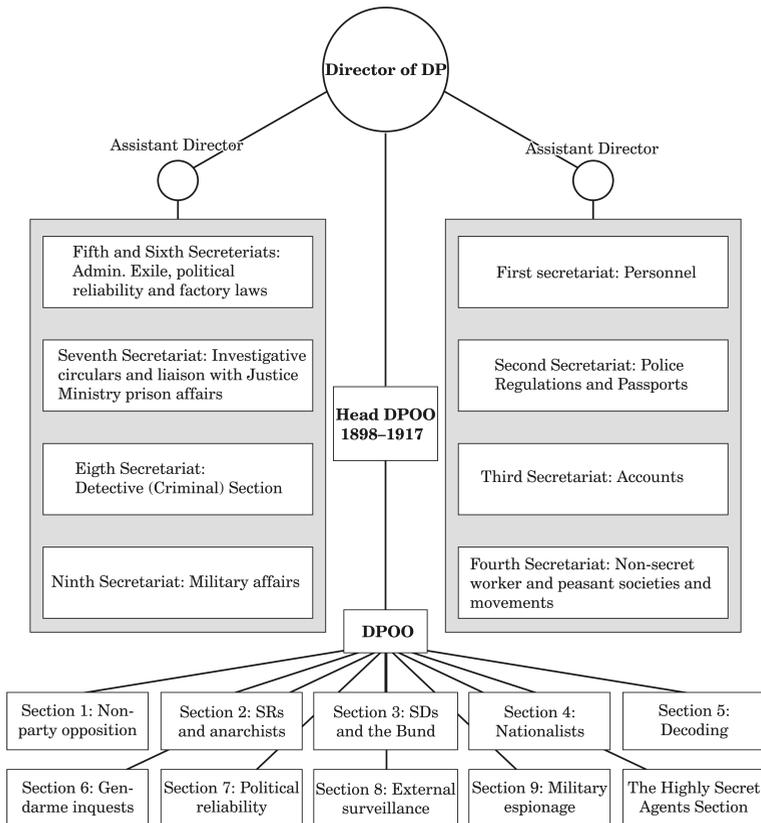
54 *Sovetskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, p.43.

55 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.189–90.

56 F. Zuckerman, 'The Russian Political Police at Home and Abroad, 1880–1917' (PhD. diss. New York University, 1973), p.376.

57 Eroshkin, *op.cit.*, p.90; Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.222.

Chart 3b) The Department of Police, 1906–1914



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The operational sections of Okhrana

The Special Section was not directly involved in intelligence collation. Instead, it operated as a message processing centre. It received all of its reports and data from below: from its own subordinate ‘field’ establishments: Security Sections, Investigation Points, the Foreign Agency in Paris and the Balkan Agency in Constantinople. The Special Section also benefited from a sideways or horizontal flow of

information from what I have termed *auxiliary agencies of the Okhrana*, which were organisations subordinate to the Assistant Minister of the Interior in charge of Police, but not to the Special Section. They were not involved exclusively in political police work and were therefore not part of my definition of the Okhrana. The main auxiliary agencies were the Separate Corps of Gendarmes and the ordinary police. The third source of information was what I have termed *reciprocal intelligence agencies*. These were organs outside the jurisdiction of the Assistant Minister of the Interior in charge of police. The Okhrana therefore relied on cultivating good relations and mutual assistance with these reciprocal agencies. The three principal reciprocal agencies were the Court *okhrana*, the Main Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs, and the War Ministry's Counter-Intelligence Points.⁵⁸ The auxiliary police and gendarme agencies reported mostly to the Security Sections; and the reciprocal agencies passed information on mostly directly to the Special Section.

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Security Sections

The first Security Section was based in St Petersburg: opened in 1866 it was known as the 'Section for securing order and tranquillity in the capital' (*Otdelenie po okhraneniuiu poriadka i spokoistviia v stolitse*). The second Security Section was founded in Moscow on 1 November 1880. It was at this point that the powers of the two Security Sections were expanded by the MVD Count M.T.Loris-Melikov, to make them the professional centres of the struggle with political subversion. The third Security Section was founded in Warsaw in 1900 (though some versions date its establishment as early as 1880–81). It was only under MVD Plehve (1902–1904) that the use of Security Sections spread throughout the empire. This occurred as a result of a conference of police chiefs chaired by S.E.Zvolianskii in December 1901 to decide how to cope with the diffusion of the revolutionary movement into the provinces.⁵⁹ The result was the creation of eleven 'Investigations Sections' (*rozysknye*

58 Subordinate to the Ministries of Imperial Courts, the Interior and War respectively.

59 Tiutiunnik, 'Departament politsii,' p.76.

otdeleniia, later to be renamed Security Sections) in the autumn of 1902.⁶⁰ The number of Security Sections reached their zenith in 1907 with 27 in all.⁶¹

The Director of the Department of Police, A.A.Lopukhin drew up a 37 point collection of rules and directives for these new institutions in 1902.⁶² According to this the principal job of the Security Sections was ‘political investigations’⁶³ (*politicheskii rozysk*) carried out by means of an external agency of plain clothes detectives, tails and shadows and an internal agency of ‘secret collaborators’ (i.e. spies)⁶⁴ ‘in defence of state order and public tranquillity.’⁶⁵ All staff appointments needed the approval of the Director of the Department of Police.⁶⁶ The Department of Police also had to be kept constantly informed about the ‘more important secret agents’.⁶⁷ The sphere of activities of the Security Section was limited ‘to the city where the head of the section is resident’. However, they were given permission to extend their activities to ‘cities of the province where the most manifest signs of revolutionary propaganda present themselves.’⁶⁸

60 On 13 Aug. 1902 eight new ‘Investigation Sections’ were established at Vil’na, Ekaterinoslav, Kazan’, Kiev, Odessa, Saratov, Tiflis and Khar’kov.

61 Although there had only been 27 Security sections in all at any one time, there had been 29 Security Sections over the years at: St Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Kiev, Arkhangel’sk, Baku, Belostok, Chita, Ekaterinoslav, Grodno, Iaroslavl, Irkutsk, Khar’kov, Lodz, Nikolaev, Nizhnii-Novgorod, Odessa, Omsk, Perm, Poltava, Riga, Rostov-on-Don, Saratov, Sevastopol, Simferopol, Tiflis, Tomsk, Vil’na and Vladivostok. The only contemporary account which came close to correctly estimating the number of Security Sections was A.P.Martynov’s estimate of 26 OOs: Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.326.

62 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 8, 21 Oct. 1902, DPOO Top Secret circular no.6641, *Svod pravil, vyrabotannykh v razvitie utverzhdennago Gospodinom Ministrom Vnutrennykh del 12 Avgusta tekushchago goda Polozheniia s Nachal’nikakh Rozysknykh Otdelenii*. See also: *Ibid.*, Box 158, folder 9, 30 June 1904, Top Secret Circular no.7781, *Vremennoe polozhenie ob okhrannykh otdeleniakh*.

63 *Ibid.*, Folder 8, *Svod pravil*, article one identifies the sections principal purpose as *rozysk po delam politicheskim*.

64 *Ibid.*, *Svod pravil*, articles 7 & 8.

65 *Ibid.*, folder 9, *Vremennoe polozhenie*, article 6. This was in line with the *Svod Zakonov*, vol.1, part 2, p.362.

66 *Ibid.*, articles 13 & 16. In the interest of secrecy the lists of secret agents had to be passed on ‘by personal letters’ [*chastnymi pis’mami*] for the heads of Security Sections to the Director of the department of Police, of which no copies should be made.

67 *Ibid.*, folder 9, *Vremennoe polozhenie*, article ten.

68 *Ibid.*, folder 8, *Svod pravil*, article 29.

Security Sections were permitted to keep in contact with one another in order to exchange information.⁶⁹ Further responsibilities of the Security Section included keeping an up to date library of revolutionary publications being circulated locally and passing on copies of these to the Department of police.⁷⁰ On the first of every month the head of the Security Section had to personally provide ‘accounts’ [*otchety*] of all the activities of his section directly to the Director of the Department of Police and also provide relevant materials for the Gendarme Directorates.⁷¹ Twice a year the Security Section had to provide the Department of Police with a full list of office staff and external agents.⁷² Arrests were referred to by the bureaucratic term ‘liquidation,’ a term which could also be used in more innocent matters: meaning simply to close a case, procedure, process etc. Before a liquidation the Section chief had to provide a justification of the motives for the action to the Director of the Department of Police; though authorisation for the liquidation would have to come from the local governor. The Department of Police released funds for the upkeep of the Security Section three times a year divided into three areas: chancellery, external agency, and secret expenditure.⁷³

If the Special Section was the rudder, then the Security Section was the engine of the Okhrana. One *okhrannik*, General N.V. Russiian, described the Security Section as an incredibly dynamic place: ‘an enormous machine... the surveillance agents spied, the translators translated, the “region” wrote to the province, the “top secret” office tried to get copies of letters, the “clearing” office cleared, the office recorded and reported to higher authorities, and clerks dashed from office to office, they were always busy pounding typewriters, using hectographs, making inquiries, and writing endless memoranda.’ The whole impression is of an organisation that ‘never rested’⁷⁴ and never slept.⁷⁵

69 Ibid., *Svod pravil*, article 30.

70 Ibid., *Svod pravil*, articles 31 and 32. GARF, f.102, op.262, d.10, ll.5–8, Oct. 1902.

71 Hoover, op.cit., *Svod pravil*, article 33.

72 Ibid., folder 9, 30 June 1904, *Vremennoe polozhenie*, article five.

73 Ibid., *Vremennoe polozhenie*, article 26.

74 V.N. Russiian, ‘Rabota okhrannikh otdelenii,’ MS Hoover Institution, pp.4–5.

75 Matynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.66: Martynov noted on his visit to St Petersburg Security Section at the end of 1905 that the ordinary business of the offices only ended at 2 a.m., after this detectives arrived throughout the night to submit their reports.

Investigation Points (*Rozysknye punkty*) were effectively mini-Security Sections. About a dozen Investigation Points were set up from 1907 to 1909 to cope with the diffusion of organised revolutionary groups into even smaller cells. These stations were useful training grounds for junior gendarmes on the climb to more senior positions. But this also meant that the most talented candidate for the job was not always chosen, because the Separate Corps preferred to keep the most able officers in their own Provincial Gendarme Directorates, border points and Railway stations.⁷⁶

District Security Sections were founded by Stolypin on 14 December 1906.⁷⁷ In one sense these marked part of the process of decentralisation, which had been embraced as a prophylactic against the chaos and indecisiveness that had marked the behaviour of most provincial branches of the Okhrana during the 1905 revolution.⁷⁸ The District Security Sections were to be quasi-autonomous directors of political investigations, external and internal surveillance of subversives. The Department of Police informed all governors that these sections were ‘the central investigative establishments in the Empire controlling the *agentura* [i.e. secret agents to be controlled by a ‘central internal agency’ at the District OO] and external surveillance. Provincial and Railway Gendarme Directorates, Security Sections and also the police should henceforth report all information regarding secret investigations [*razsledovaniia*] to these central investigative establishments.’⁷⁹

Originally eight District Security Sections were established, and another five were created during the course of 1907. They were

76 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.173, *Ob uchrezhdenii rozysknykh punktov v Finlandii* (1907g.) On the same subject see GARF f.111 op.8, d.3 (1907g.); f.102, op.239 (1909g.), d.84, *Ob uchrezhdenii Kronshadskogo rozysknogo punkta*. See also: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.256, l.70 1 June 1909: on the establishment of Askhabad Investigation Point. In July 1909 Investigative Points were also established in Samara, Briansk, and Vernyi.

77 Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii*, p.288. At this point in time they also created two more Security Sections in Chita and Krasnoiarsk.

78 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.32–38; Zuckerman, ‘Political Police and the Revolution,’ pp.281–85.

79 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, DP *tsirkuliar* to all governors 8 Jan.1907, l.1. The general regulations of the District OO’s functions were exactly the same as for the ordinary OO, only with broader access to information. See GARF, f.102, op.260, d.255, *Sbornik tsirkuliarov*, ll.11–16 ob. On the 45 point lay out of ‘polozhenie’.

arranged according to territorial divisions termed a ‘security region’ (*okhrannyi okrug*) into the Northern (St Petersburg),⁸⁰ Central (Moscow), *Povolzhskoe* (Volga or Samara), South-East (Khar’kov), South-West (Kiev), South (Odessa),⁸¹ North-West (Vil’na), Baltic (Riga), Turkestan (in Tashkent), Caucasus (in Tiflis), *Privislinskoe* (Warsaw),⁸² Saratov, Perm and Siberian (in Irkutsk)⁸³ District Security Sections.⁸⁴ The larger Security Sections (including Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Kiev and Khar’kov) merely assumed the role of head of the District Security Sections- this in effect boosted their authority over the more backward Provincial Gendarme Directorates. Moscow District OO covered thirteen provinces;⁸⁵ Samara covered eleven; Kiev five; Warsaw (*Privislinskoe*) covered the ten Polish provinces;⁸⁶ North-Western (Vil’na) covered seven provinces; and Riga District Security Section covered Kurland, Estland and Livland on the Baltic coast.

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This was neither centralisation nor decentralisation: but a dual process, decentralisation of power to the provinces and centralisation of power into centres administering several provinces. In another sense the creation of these sections was a deliberate attempt at centralising the *specific* power of the Special Section. Enhancing the influence of *okhranniki vis-á-vis* the Separate Corps and the provincial governors was an attempt by the Department of Police to form a more unified chain of command: District Security Section chiefs were explicitly informed that they were, ‘under the direct control of the Director of the Department of Police, through the Special Section.’⁸⁷ This included the free-wheeling St Petersburg

80 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.295, *Severnogo Rainnago Okhrannago otdeleniia (1909g.)*.

81 In 1909 Sevastopol OO took over the duties of Odessa DOO

82 Poland and the Caucasus were dealt with rather later in 1907, see: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.255, l.80, 15 Dec. 1907.

83 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.255, l.189: On 19 Jan. 1912 the Siberian District OO split in two: Western Siberian – in Tomsk; and Eastern – in Irkutsk.

84 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, DPOO circular no.95736, 18 Jan. 1912.

85 For archival holdings on this section see GARF f.280, op.1–9 (1404 files[de la] on the subject from 1907 to 1914). Arkhangel’sk, Vladimir, Vologda, Kaluga, Kostroma, Moscow, Nizhnii-Novgorod, Orlov, Riazan, Smolensk, Tver, Tula and Iaroslavl.

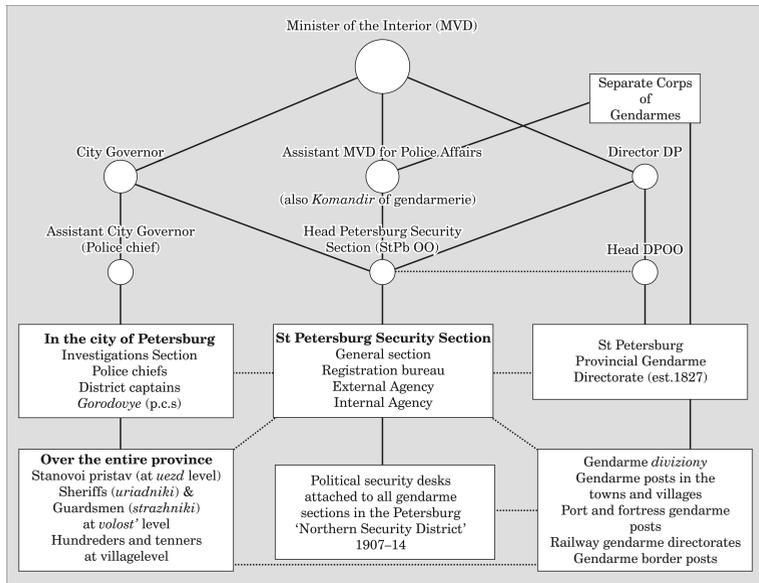
86 GARF, f.1660, op.1, dd.1–200 (1894–1916).

87 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.255, ll.7–10 ob., *Polozhenie o raionnykh okhrannykh otdeleniakh*.

District Security Section under Gerasimov. The District Security Sections therefore had the same functions and the same level of subordination *vis-à-vis* the Department of Police as the Security Sections.⁸⁸

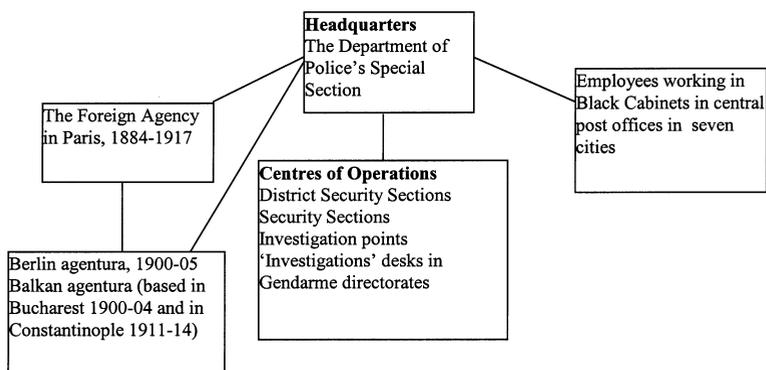
Chart 3c) Political policing in St Petersburg, 1906–1914

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88 Ibid., ll.7–16 ob. The *polozhenie* had expanded to a 45 point programme by this time still based largely on Lopukhin's original draft, updated by Trusevich.

Chart 3d) A definition of ‘the Okhrana’



Departmental ‘purges’ (*chistki*)

Dismantling the outward institutions of political policing as a means of offsetting public hostility to the secret police had been a common technique since Ivan the Terrible and has endured into the post-Soviet period; so has the public dismissal of publicly reviled ‘secret’ – or rather political – police chiefs. The Okhrana was no exception in this. As unwelcome public attention focussed on the Okhrana, these reshuffles became more frequent. Lopukhin launched a purge of staff in 1902 to try and clean up the reputation and methods of the security police. Most notably, he dismissed P.I.Rachkovskii, the head of the Foreign Agency, whom he considered to be the fountainhead of police corruption. D.F.Trepov carried out a purge over late January and early February 1905 in response to the security fiascos in Petersburg and Moscow that had contributed to the 1905 revolution. In 1909 Harting resigned as chief of the Foreign Agency after his exposure as a former-*agent provocateur* by Vladimir Burtsev. Harting’s temporary successor, V.I.Andreev, managed to secure permission of the French Prime Minister for the continuing operation of the Foreign Agency so long as he ‘separate the suspect and the weak from the permanent detectives.’⁸⁹

89 Quid. In Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka Sixteen*, p.95.

The climax of this process came in 1913–14, when the *de jure* chief of the security police, V.F.Dzhunkovskii, instigated the closure of almost all Security Sections. The significant budget reductions of the time show that this was more than simply a public relations exercise. But all the same, public relations appears to have Dzhunkovskii's principal motive in making this move. He made sure that the press was fully informed about his 'purge' (*chistka*) of the Department of Police and the removal of some of the more notorious and unscrupulous *okhranniki*, most notably Von Kotten, Gerasimov and Komissarov.⁹⁰

Beneath Dzhunkovskii's public gestures was not so much a dismantling of the security apparatus, as a process of reorganisation. Internal circulars recorded that the areas where a significant downsizing (to use a more modern and uglier euphemism) of political investigations occurred were chosen in response to the waning of the revolutionary movement.⁹¹ The responsibility for *politicheskii rozysk* in these areas remained with the same experienced Security Section staff, but they were from thereon subordinated to the local Gendarme Directorates—which created an investigation desk (*rozysknyi stol*) to house the former Okhrana bureaux. In other words, this was a deliberate ploy by Dzhunkovskii to reduce the autonomy of the *okhranniki* and create the illusion in the public eye that he was abolishing sections of the secret police. The District Security Sections were also included in Dzhunkovskii's cull. By March 1914 only Turkestan, Caucasus and East Siberian District Security Sections remained; and by February 1917 St Petersburg and Moscow were the only ordinary Security Sections still in operation.⁹² Thus many of the provincial tentacles of the Okhrana had been amputated even before the outbreak of war in 1914, yet the entire amount of money spent on police had probably risen to the 1913 level again by 1916.

90 DP Press cutting, GARF, f.102, op.244, d.360, l.6: 2 Feb.1914 *Utro Rossii* headline 'Chistka okhrannykh otdelenii' on Gerasimov's forced retirement. (see also *Vechnoe vremia*, 3 Nov. 1914) 'Vospominaniia S.P.Beletskogo,' *Arkhiv Russkoi Revoliutsii*, vol.XII, p.54. Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia*, vol.2, p.117.

91 Belostok OO lasted less than three years (1907–1910). See GARF, f.267, op.1–2, 70dd.

92 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.114.

The Foreign Agency of the Okhrana⁹³ (*Zagranichnaia agentura*)

The Foreign Agency of the Okhrana was based in the Russian Embassy in Paris. It co-ordinated intelligence gathering on the Russian émigrés in western Europe, of whom there were over 10,000 by 1905. It possessed agents in England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and even America. Émigrés whispered, and sometimes shouted, about the long arm of the tsar. Yet at its height the Foreign Agency maintained a force of only 40 detectives and 25 spies. Its effectiveness relied greatly on the co-operation of the host countries' police forces.⁹⁴ The French police also spied on Russian émigrés in Paris.⁹⁵ The Foreign Agency was forced to disguise itself beneath various 'cover firms' such as the 'Russian Imperial Financial Agency' in London from 1906–09, and the '*Police internationale autonome*' in Paris from 1910–11.⁹⁶ The most famous challenge to the Foreign Agency's secrecy came with Vladimir Burtsev's revelations of 1909. Consequently, the Foreign Agency was compelled to end all official operations as a result of outrage in the French Chamber of Deputies. It secretly reopened under the guise of the 'Bint & Sambain *Bureau de Renseignements*' (Private Detective Agency) with the tacit approval of the French Prime Minister Briand.⁹⁷ The Foreign Agency managed to retain a semi-autonomous existence from its foundation in 1884 until 1907.⁹⁸ However, the Director of the Department Trusevich reduced it to roughly the same status of a Security Section by 1907 through financial reform.⁹⁹

The Okhrana also had a Berlin Agency from 1900 to 1905, which was headed by Rachkovskii's old *agent provocateur*, A.M.Harting.¹⁰⁰

93 See: Johnson and Zuckerman dissertations cited in the bibliography.

94 GARE, f.102, op.238 (DPOO, 1908g.), d.293: on co-operation with foreign police forces. See also: Peregudova, 'Istochnik izucheniia,' p.98.

95 'Les Réfugiés révolutionnaires russes à Paris: Rapport du Préfet de Police au Président du Conseil, 16 décembre 1907,' *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, vol.6 (1965), pp.421–35.

96 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Boxes 25–26.

97 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.14–18, 114–120, 182–84. S.G.Svatikov, *Russkii politicheskii sysk za granitse* (Rostov-na-Donu, 1921), pp.10–15, 49–60.

98 For an example of the censures sent to the head of the Foreign Agency for resisting the central control of Fontanka see: Hoover, Okhrana Archive, Box 26 (IVa), folder 1, dispatch no.61, October 1886; DP to Rachkovskii.

99 Zuckerman, 'The Tsarist Political Police' (PhD. diss.), p.376. Money was passed unofficially to the Foreign Agency through the French bank *Credit Lyonnais*.

100 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.48–52, 58–59.

It was closed after being strangled of funds by the head of the Foreign Agency, Rataev. The latter's victory in the bureaucratic feud, however, was short-lived because when Rachkovskii became of head of the 'political section' of the Department of Police in 1905 he ousted Rataev and promoted Harting to the control of the Paris Foreign Agency.

In addition to Berlin and Paris, the Okhrana had a Balkan Agency. Its job was to keep an eye on Russian emigrants in Bulgaria, Serbia and Rumania and its chief points of contact were not only the Department of Police Special Section, but on a more frequent basis it was in touch with the Odessa and Bessarabia Gendarme Directorates. The Balkan Agency was headed by an official by the name of Weissman and based in Bucharest up until its closure in 1904.¹⁰¹ A new Balkan Agentura was established in Constantinople in 1911 headed by a gendarme, Captain Krechunesko. This new office was known to the Department as the 'Office of the Director of the Foreign *Agentura* of the Department of Police in Constantinople.' The Special Section wrote that: 'the aim of the Department of Police in organising the whole *agentura* in Turkey was to have an investigative organ in the Balkan peninsula, which could widely shed light on the activities and criminal schemes of Russian emigrants living in the Balkans.' It also added that this was becoming more important because the 'underground activities of members of the revolutionary parties were concentrated over the last year [1913–14] primarily abroad, and that such information from an investigative establishment *is possible only by means of having a serious secret agentura on hand.*'¹⁰² [My italics.] The Constantinople office had a wider portfolio of responsibilities, including keeping an eye on the Ottoman Empire, particularly with regard to Turkey's connections to Russian subjects involved in Pan-Islamist, Pan-Turkish and Armenian nationalist organisations such as 'Gnchak' and 'Dashnaksutiun'.¹⁰³

101 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.49. GARF f.505, (*Zaveduiushchii agenturoi departamenta politzii na Balkanskom poluostrove*) op.1 dd.1–151 (1889–1904).

102 GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.9, ch.1, l.3, DPOO to the 'Head of the Turkish Agentura', 18 Feb. 1914.

103 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.48. GARF, f.529, (*Biuro zaveduiushchego zagranichnoi agenturoi departament politzii v Konstantinople, 1911–1914*) op.1, dd.1–37. For example see the record of surveillance of Lt.Col.Izmail Khakki, adjutant to the Ottoman Sultan, supposedly an agent of Pan-Muslim espionage: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, l.240, 18 Oct.1907.

Political Policing in St Petersburg

The offices of St Petersburg Security Section¹⁰⁴ changed addresses on several occasions. All the buildings were located at the very centre of the capital city and are steeped in history. The original headquarters were located in the city governor's office at no.2 Gorokhovaia ulitsa from 1866 to 1901, later to be the first headquarters of the Cheka and the location of the assassination of Uritskii in 1918, sparking the Red Terror. From 1901 to 1907 the offices were located at no.12 on the Moika canal, they were considerably more imposing than the Fontanka HQ and were to be the target of several terrorist plots over those six years.¹⁰⁵ A group of revolutionaries even managed to bluff their way in for a guided tour of these offices during the confusion of the 1905 revolution. Nowadays the building is host to a different kind of guided tours: it now holds the Pushkin museum, as it was also the house where Pushkin died after his fateful duel in 1837.¹⁰⁶ The final set of offices was situated from 1907–17 at no.2 Aleksandrovskii prospekt. The motivation for changing buildings so frequently appears to have been not just the need for more office space,¹⁰⁷ but also a means of eluding public hostility. It was this building, and not the more famous Fontanka 16, which was to be the centre of revolutionary attacks on the security apparatus in February 1917: crowds of looters piled the Security Section's dearly achieved secret files on the Mytinskaia embankment and made a bonfire of them.

These headquarters had between four and five component parts: the 'general section' (*obshchii otdel*) sometimes referred to as the

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104 Its name changed twice: on 12 May 1886 to *Otdelenie po okhraneniuiu oshchestvennogo poriadka i spokoistviia v stolitse* and from 9 April 1887 *Otdelenie po okhraneniuiu obshchestvennoi bezopasnosti i poriadka v Sankt-Peterburge*.

105 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.29 & 64. Martynov noted that another imposing building for the political police was the Provincial Gendarme Directorate, situated on Tverskaia ulitsa in a three storey 'beautiful old baronial home,' which also became a target for terrorist attacks.

106 *Sankt Peterburg-Petrograd-Leningrad: Entsiklopedicheskii spravochnik* (Leningrad, 1992), p.465.

107 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.357 (1911g) *Zapiska POO o predstavlenii emu novogo bolee prisposoblennogo pomeshcheniia*.

‘special section’ (*osobyi otдел*),¹⁰⁸ the Registration Bureau,¹⁰⁹ the External Agency for running surveillance agents¹¹⁰ and the Internal Agency for the handling of informers and spies.¹¹¹ St Petersburg OO was without doubt the most powerful Security Section. The reasons for this were manifold: the St Petersburg Section was the oldest branch of the Okhrana. Its geographical location at the centre of power and the great weight of security responsibilities outlined above also conferred on St Petersburg Security Section a certain elevated status. Not only did it have to conduct political investigations, it was also responsible for protecting government officials in St Petersburg and foreign dignitaries visiting the capital.¹¹² Moreover it took over Moscow Security Section’s Flying Squad in 1902 (renamed the Central Detachment), which gave St Petersburg Security Section control over the best detectives in the Okhrana, operating over the entire empire and even abroad.¹¹³ As a result of its extra responsibilities, St Petersburg Security Section was much bigger than any other Okhrana station. At its height it employed 25 officials of officer rank (eight of whom were *chinovniki* and the rest were gendarmes),¹¹⁴

108 The general section was itself divided into eight ‘desks’ (*stoly*).

109 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.256, *Delo o registratsionnom biuro*, l.3. The Registration bureau in St Petersburg Security Section, headed by the gendarme, Lt.Col. Ernst, was established on 23 Jan. 1909 to keep a closer watch on all residents of St Petersburg, including the residents of hotels.

110 Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii*, p.288.

111 Globachev, ‘Pravda o Russkoi Revoliutsii,’ pp.6–10, estimated that the registration section had a staff of 30, central detective detachment a staff of 75. The *Okhrannaia komanda* (another section of detectives)– later located at 26 Morskaiia ulitsa– Globachev wrote, had a staff of up to 300 with 2 officers. He estimated that Pb OO had 600 employees in all and that the Section was divided into five parts: the investigations section (*sledstvennyi chast’*), external surveillance, the chancellery, the archive, and the *agenturnyi chast’* with case officers specialising on particular political parties. The *perekrestnaia agentura*, cross-checking or verify information from spies was a subsection of the *agenturnyi chast’*.

112 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.27, *Ob okhrane direktora Depatamenta politsii, Deistvitel’nogo statskogo sovetnika Zueva (1910g.)*.

113 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 8, 21 Oct. 1902, DP secret circular no.6641, *Svod pravil*, rule no.22. The formal status of the Central Detachment was only confirmed after Stolypin’s directive of 7 Dec. 1910 (*Polozhenie o tsentral’nom filerskom otriade*).

114 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.261, *Registratsionnoe biuro*, l.20: gives a list of officers incurring travel expenses from 1909–10. This list is probably incomplete, but includes officers who were not serving in StPbOO at the same time, so could be taken as a rough estimate of the size of the officer contingent.

around 200 secret agents,¹¹⁵ over five hundred detectives.¹¹⁶ This dwarfed the next largest Security Section (Moscow) which employed 100 secret agents and 160 detectives; and still more so the average Security Section which employed around 20 detectives and ten spies.¹¹⁷ The only secret policemen in the Petersburg region not under the control of Petersburg Security Section were in the Imperial Palaces under the Court *okhrana*.

In 1906 St Petersburg Security Section's influence grew still further when it took on the duties as the headquarters of the Northern District Security Section, supervising 'political investigations' over several provinces.¹¹⁸ This meant that it had influence over the political investigations conducted by, *inter alia*, all the gendarme railway posts in the surrounding provinces, the Finnish border points,¹¹⁹ the Arkhangel'sk, Finland, Kronstadt, St. Petersburg, Pskov, Vologda and Vyborg Gendarme Directorates, the Petersburg Gendarme Division (*Divizion*),¹²⁰ and gendarme officers acting as supervisors of secret agents in the surrounding military garrisons at Kronstadt, Kuopio, Sveaborg and Vyborg.¹²¹ St Petersburg Security Section was able to expand its influence into the semi-autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland thanks to the fact that gendarmes began to be stationed there in 1901. This new detachment was required to keep Petersburg

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115 Gerasimov, *Na lezvi*, p.50: estimated that 100 persons worked in the *okhrannaia komanda* in late 1905. It was a relatively new creation and obviously grew quite rapidly to a peak in 1912. Col. von Kotten, head of PbOO, even established a secret *agentura* in Paris to rival the Foreign Agency.

116 GARF, f. 111, op. 3 (1909g.), d. 64, l. 93: The statistics available show that there were 239 detectives serving the *okhrannaia komanda* in March 1909 and 249 in Jan. 1912 (GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, l.152).

117 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.313, ll.17–19; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.239.

118 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.111: The Northern (Petersburg) District Security Section officially covered St Petersburg, Pskov, Novgorod, Olonets and Finland Provinces

119 GARF, f.496, *Zaveduiushchii zhandarmskim nadzorom na Finlandskoi granitse*, (1905–1917) op.1, dd.1–53. The head of this section was formally subordinate to the head of the Finland Border Security (*Finlandskaiia pogranichnaia okhrana*) and to the staff of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes.

120 The slim surviving archival records are kept in GARF, f.1731, op.1, dd.1–3 (1855–1915).

121 See GARF, f.128, op.1–2, (101 files on the period 1901–1917); f.127, op.1–2 (998 files on the period 1879–1916; f.126, op.1–2, (163 files on the period 1874–1917).

Security Section informed about events relating to political investigations in Finland.¹²²

The result of delegating so much responsibility to St Petersburg Security Section was that it passed out of the control of the Special Section into a quasi-autonomous position. Gerasimov's tenure as head of Petersburg Security Section (1905–09) appears to be the zenith of this independence— particularly from 1907 onwards, as the Vice-Director of the Department of Police later complained, Petersburg OO had: 'become completely autonomous from the Special Section.'¹²³ Klimovich, the head of the Special Section from 1908–1909, added that 'this was a something of a nightmare [*koshmar*]- we could not obtain information from Petrograd [*sic*] Security Section. They considered themselves completely autonomous, having the right to report directly to the Interior Minister... and completely ignored us.'¹²⁴ The situation did not improve much when Colonel M.F. Von Kotten took over in 1910. The Deputy Director of the Department of Police, Vissarionov, lamented that: 'Always in all liquidations in Petrograd we [the Special Section] found out from the newspapers...The lists of those liquidated would be presented *post factum*. Von Kotten did so in order to defend his right from interference of the Department.'¹²⁵ The Director of the Department of Police from 1912 to 1913, Beletskii complained that the root cause of this insubordinacy was the fact that the Section heads 'had the right to present reports directly to the Minister [of the Interior].'¹²⁶

However, this was not a new phenomenon, but rather a revival of previous independence. Recently published documents have shown that St Petersburg Security Section was originally intended to be the controlling centre of the Okhrana, under the 'Inspector of the Secret

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122 *Finliandskaia gazeta*, 19 July 1901 on the formation of first gendarme detachment— the sixth infantry squadron – in Finland. See also *Finliandskaia gazeta*, 29 May 1905; 6 Jan.1908

123 B.I.Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 205, Folder 'Chrezvychainaia', *Dopros S.E.Vissarionova*, p.52. P.G.Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi rossii* (Berlin, 1923), p.80, maintained that St PbOO represented a 'huge gap' in the Department of Police's network. Kurlov complained that 'the head of this Security Section stood completely aloof,' and gave his reports direct to either the Police Director, the Assistant Minister or even the Minister himself.

124 PTsR, Vol.1, *Dopros Klimovicha*, pp.108–09.

125 PTsR, Vol.3, *Dopros Vissarionova*, p.457.

126 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, p.265.

Police' (a post created specifically for G.P.Sudeikin.) This Inspector was to be directly subordinate to the assistant Minister of the Interior.¹²⁷ But the post of Inspector was never filled after the death of Sudeikin in 1883 and official control of the political police shifted to the Fontanka HQ.

The Auxiliary Agencies of the Okhrana in St Petersburg

i) Ordinary police

The most important auxiliary resource of any secret police force is the ordinary police.¹²⁸ In the villages the Okhrana was, as many officers testified, totally dependent on the local police for all information.¹²⁹ Even in the capital itself, a city of two million inhabitants, St Petersburg Security Section was all but powerless without the co-operation of the 6000 police (the largest urban force in the empire).¹³⁰ The whole police force in St Petersburg came under a single police chief who was the second in command in the City Governor's office. Under him came the heads of police stations (*uchastkovye pristavy*) based in each of roughly a dozen city districts (*chasti* or *uchastki*) under these came the precinct officers (*okolotochnye nadziratel'ia*) and city police sergeants (*gorodovye uriadniki*). After 1903 ordinary city crowd control methods improved with the introduction of a mounted guard.¹³¹

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127 N.A.Troitskii (ed.) 'Tainaia politsiia pri Aleksandre III (Normativnye dokumenty),' *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, no.4 (1998), pp.88–91: on the creation of the post in a previously unpublished document—'Polozhenie ob ustroistve sekretnoi politsiit v imperii,' MVD Count D.A.Tol'stoi, 3 Dec.1882. GARF, 3 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d.977, ll.9–12 'Ob ustroistve i deiatel'nosti Sekretnoi politsiit.'

128 Referred to in Ruisan as *ispolnitel'naia politsiia* or *naruzhnaia politsiia*

129 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.73–74.

130 Moscow had only increased its police force from 2,335 in 1904.

131 Richard G.Robbins Jr., 'His Excellency the Governor: The Style of Russian Provincial Governance at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,' in E.Mendelsohn, (ed.) *Imperial Russia 1700–1917* (Dekalb, 1988), p.8. Outside the major cities the police ranks in descending order of superiority went from *ispravnik* (at *uezd* level), to *stanovye pristavy* (at *stan* level), *uriadniki* (at *volost* level), in between *volost* and village level were the *strazhniki* (guardsmen), and at the village level were 'hundreders' & 'tenners' (their name deriving from the number of households which elected them).

There were two flaws in the Okhrana's reliance on the ordinary police as an auxiliary force in political investigations. Firstly, because the ordinary police resources were over-stretched doing their own job as it was, before they even considered lending assistance to the Okhrana (though many critics complained at the time that they gave priority to the security police and neglected their own duties). The reason why ordinary police resources were over-stretched is not at first clear when we compare the ratio of residents to city police St Petersburg appears to have been a fairly typical European city.

Chart 3e) Metropolitan police forces in Europe

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City	Population	No. of Police	Residents/Police
St Petersburg	1,962,400	5,726	343
Moscow	1,345,749	4,843	280
Berlin	2,071,257	6,374	325
Paris	2,888,110	8,597	336
Vienna	2,031,498	4,596	442 ¹³²

However, Russian per capita spending on the police was half that of Austria-Hungary, Italy and France and a sixth that of Great Britain. As a result Russian police were extremely under-equipped, poorly educated, and paid less than most factory workers.¹³³ Instead of walking a beat, three-quarters of Russian police constables were positioned at stationary posts.¹³⁴ Neil Weissman has pointed out that

132 Robert W.Thurston, *Liberal City, Conservative State* (New York, 1987), p.87.

133 Wayne Santoni, 'P.N.Durnovo as Minister of the Internal Affairs in the Witte Cabinet; a Study in Suppression,' (PhD.diss,University of Kansas, 1968), pp.402-05. Only 3% of police station chiefs had a higher education and only 21% a secondary education. Ordinary police officers earned 205 rubles a year—their wages had been frozen since 1862. Weissman, 'Regular Police,' p.55.

134 Thurston, *Liberal City,Conservative State*, p.87. In January 1906 the government set itself the target of having one policeman for every 400 residents in cities and one for every 2,000 in the countryside. This was only achieved in the capital. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, 'Politsiia', vol.24, p.329. In 1913 the Department of Police admitted to a shortage of 1,200 patrolmen, where five of every nine police posts in the city were unmanned: Neil Weissman, 'Regular Police.' pp.48-49.

one constable with a few sergeants might have a beat of 1,800 square kilometres and fifty to a hundred thousand inhabitants.¹³⁵ From an analysis of the ordinary police we can see that the Okhrana was the best-educated best-trained and best-organised branch of the police. Indeed the Security Sections were used as the model for police reform when in July 1908 the Duma approved Stolypin's plan for the establishment of 89 city based investigative Sections (*sysknyye otdeleniia*).¹³⁶

Chart 3f) Administrators in Europe

Country	Administrators per thousand inhabitants
Russia	4
England and Wales	7.3
Germany	12.6
France	17.6 ¹³⁷

Moreover, the comparative under-government of the Russian Empire – shown in chart 3f – meant that the police took on many of the jobs which should have been left to ordinary officials, councillors, bureaucrats and social workers. The inadequacy of the ordinary police was exacerbated by the burdensome welfare functions they were expected to perform – a list so long that it filled five closely printed pages of the Summary of Laws (*Svod zakonov*) and ran to 70 items.¹³⁸

The second reason why the ordinary police were of little use to the Okhrana directors at the centre as an auxiliary force was that they were in practice subordinate not to the Department of Police,

135 Ibid., p.49. See also Neil Weissman, 'Rural Crime in Tsarist Russia: The Question of Hooliganism,' *Slavic Review*, 37 (1978).

136 Weissman, *Reform in Tsarist Russia*, p.207.

137 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, p.46; McCauley and Waldron, *The Emergence of the Modern Russian State*, p.7; Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroy*, pp.183–84; Weissman, 'Regular Police,' pp.46–50. The administrative ratio had improved vastly in all European countries, including Russia: In the 1850s Russia had only 1.3 public employees per thousand, Britain had 4.1 and France 4.8.

138 Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroy*, pp.183–84; Weissman, 'The Regular Police,' pp.47–48.

but to the local Governor. As were the Investigative Sections (*Sysknye otdeleniia*).¹³⁹ There appears to have been some problems in the hierarchy of the Investigative Sections which had to be reminded by the Department of Police that Security Sections had a right to all information they might receive of a political character.¹⁴⁰ The concierges (*dvorniki*) in St Petersburg tenement buildings were just as effective as an auxiliary source of information for astute Security Section officers who made the right contacts.¹⁴¹ Despite attempts to professionalise the ordinary police one journalist noted in 1910 that the majority of police 'still slept like hibernating bears.'¹⁴²

ii) The Separate Corps of Gendarmes

As an auxiliary resource for the Okhrana the local gendarme units were more useful than the ordinary police in assisting in the 'preservation of state order and public tranquillity.' For crowd control Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw each had a garrison of around 500 mounted gendarmes (called a *divizion*) and in the smaller cities there was usually a contingent of around 30 mounted gendarmes (called a *komand*).¹⁴³ On the face of it the gendarmerie were a formidable resource for political investigations: numbering around 14,000 in the ranks and roughly a thousand officers.¹⁴⁴ However, the resources of the Separate Corps were spread thinly over a vast area. The administration of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes had been diluted by means of dividing the five massive administrative blocks (*okruga*)¹⁴⁵ into 107 separate provincial, city and regional (*oblast'nye*) gendarme

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139 D.I.Shindzhikashvili, *Sysknaia politsiia tsarskoi Rossii v periode imperializma* (Omsk, 1973).

140 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, DPOO circular, 18 Oct. 1910.

141 Thurston, *Liberal City, Conservative State*, p.88. One source estimates that there were 17,214 *dvorniki* in Moscow in 1902. Taking this as a yard-stick, St Petersburg probably had less *dvorniki* because the tenement buildings were larger. *Russkoe slovo* estimated in 1906 that there were only 2,000 *dvorniki* in Moscow.

142 Weissman, 'Regular Police', p.65.

143 The *divizion* was headed by a gendarme colonel and the *komand* by a staff captain.

144 P.A.Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie v kontse XIX stoletii* (Moscow, 1970), pp.163–64.

145 Squire, *The Third Department*, p.89–96.

directorates.¹⁴⁶ Their role in political investigations was limited, like the police, by the plethora of other gendarme duties: 7,500 gendarmes worked on the gendarme railway posts; 5,000 gendarmes worked in customs control, on border posts and on canals and ports; and only 2,500 worked at the 'political' Provincial Gendarme Directorates.¹⁴⁷

This final category of the gendarmerie is the most obvious indicator as to why political policing in late Imperial Russia was so tangled and incomprehensible to the outside observer. The role of Separate Corps of Gendarmes had originally been conceived as the spearhead of political investigations in 1826 by tsar Nicholas I, who seemed to consider their military uniforms a guarantee of political reliability.¹⁴⁸ Yet the organisation survived the dissolution of the Third Section and was not abolished until the February Revolution of 1917. The Separate Corps of Gendarmes therefore formed a link between the Third Section and the Okhrana. This was unfortunate for the tsarist regime in many ways. Firstly, because in the eyes of society the same hated political police had survived the superficial dismantling of the Third Section. Secondly, because a very irregular and contradictory security police system evolved after 1881. One might draw a parallel with Robert Service's description of the currents of Populism and Marxism in Russia: 'there was no butcher's blow which severed the two traditions neatly and irreparably. Rather, there was a messy, complex fracture.'¹⁴⁹ This caused division in government: some advocated revitalising this once proud organisation, some would have preferred if it had been immediately abolished. Nobody supported the status quo. The individual chiefs of Provincial Gendarme Directorates still had to compile 'summaries' of the 'mood of the population' (*nastroenie naseleniia*) after 1881. They merely changed the direction of this information from the head of the Third Section

146 Otdel'nyi Korpus Zhandarmov, *Spisok obshchego sostava chinov Otdel'nogo Korpusa Zhandarmov, ispravlen po 10 iuliia 1911g.* (Printed by the Separate Corps in St. Petersburg, 1911), pp.13–15. See Miroljubov, 'Politcheskii sysk,' pp.200–04.

147 On St Petersburg Provincial Gendarme Directorate see: GARF, f.93, *Sankt-Peterburgskoe gubernskoe zhandarmskoe upravlenie 1867–1914*, op.1–2 (1859–1916).

148 P.S.Squire, *The Third Department* (London, 1968), pp.184–95; Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroys*, p.77.

149 Quid. in Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, p.366.

to the Director of the Department of Police, or even more humiliatingly to the lowly chief of the Special Section. The Separate Corps made an effort to assert corporate status by compiling a yearly summary (*obzor*) of all gendarme reports ‘on state crimes.’ But these ceased in 1901.¹⁵⁰ Political police directly loyal to the Department of Police were on the ascent, while the Separate Corps’ powers of political investigations were being slowly eroded. The role of officers on political sections of Gendarme Directorates was usually to watch the provincial towns and not the cities: the ‘crumbs’ of political police work, as one bored gendarme put it.¹⁵¹ Their intelligence operations in these provincial towns were extremely weak because they assigned only six gendarme officers to watch a whole province- covering two *uezds* each.¹⁵² The officers hardly even visited these areas as they preferred to live in the provincial capital city. The rest of the gendarme officers in these posts were already preoccupied with their primary function: the more mundane and laborious job of conducting preliminary investigations after the arrest of political offenders in preparation for the state case for the prosecution.¹⁵³ The *okhranniki* had little respect for those ordinary gendarmes who attempted to penetrate the murky world of espionage: ‘In the environs of the Corps of Gendarmes some amateurs liked to play Sherlock Holmes. But in reality they usually proved to be bad detectives.’¹⁵⁴

Co-operation between the Department of Police and the Separate Corps was also a problem because the gendarmerie had never been fully subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior. The Separate Corps had retained its own staff office since its foundation in 1826.¹⁵⁵ As a

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150 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 1. Department politsii, *Obzor vazhneishikh doznanii, proizvoivshikh v zhandarmikh upravleniakh imperii, po gosudarstvennym prestuplenii* (St Petersburg, 1892–1901, 9 vols.) V.Bogucharskii, ‘Tret’e otdelenie,’ p.86.

151 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.20

152 Ibid., pp.7, 8, 21, 29, 73 & 74.

153 They were first assigned this task in 1871 in the wake of the Nechaev trial: *PSZ*, series 2, vol.46, part 1, no.49615, art.24 (19 May 1871).

154 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.24.

155 GARF, f.110 (*Shtab oidel’nogo korpusa zhandarmov*), op.1–25 (there are 37,241 files [*dela*] on this subject). The administration was divided into six sections (*otdelenia*): section one was the staff office (1827–1917); section two’s main job was as the office of the inspectorate and supervising border points (1827–1917); section three supervised all matters concerning the Gendarme Railway-

result, the gendarmerie had three nominal heads: the ‘chief’ (*shef*) of the Separate Corps was the undisputed head from the 1820s to 1850s. However, it soon became a largely ceremonial position. A second head came in the form of the chief of staff (head of the *Glavnoe upravlenie Otdel’nogo korpusa zhandarmov*). The *komandir* of the Separate Corps occupied the dominant position in the political affairs of the gendarmerie. Matters of personnel, discipline, inspection and budget were handled by the War Ministry. It was only on matters attached to the ‘surveillance section’ of the Separate Corps dealing with political investigations and gendarme inquests [*doznaniia*] for the prosecution of state crimes that they were subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior and the Department of Police.¹⁵⁶

The inadequacy of the combined police and gendarme armed crowd control detachments to cope with mass uprisings throughout the empire is evidenced by the fact that the regime had to fall back on the services of the army on 1,500 occasions from 1883 to 1903 to curb large scale public disturbances.¹⁵⁷ This was a disastrous policy, which resulted massacres in St Petersburg on 9 January 1905 and in the Lena Goldfields in April 1912.

Reciprocal intelligence agencies

i) Black Cabinets

The most important reciprocal organ of the Okhrana was the Department (Main Directorate) of Posts and Telegraphs, because it was able to give the secret police access to all correspondence by

Police Directorates from 1893; section four handled financial and budgetary matters (1863–1917); section five investigated cases of gendarme criminal behaviour and malpractice after 1896 and monitored gendarme inquests (1875–1917); section six had handled these latter functions between 1871 and 1874; apart from these functions the staff of the Separate Corps there was a Directorate of the Police Guard (*Upravlenie politseiskoi strazhi*)—in charge of the formation of the police guard (*strazhniki*) from 1906 to 1917.

156 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.49. The gendarmerie were subordinate to the Third Section of His Majesty's Imperial Chancellery on these matters from 25 June 1826 to 6 August 1880, and from then on to the Interior Ministry.

157 Fuller, *Civil-Military Conflict*, pp.49, 144–53; Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, pp.15–21. The military themselves resented these duties and this contributed to the outbreak of 400 mutinies in 1905 and 1906.

mail and telegraph throughout the empire. There were permanent offices for intercepting private mail (known colloquially as ‘Black Cabinets’ from the French *les cabinets noirs*) based in the central post offices at St Petersburg (under M.G.Marder’ev), Moscow, Warsaw, Kiev, Khar’kov, Vilna and Tiflis. Black Cabinets operated briefly in Kazan’ from 1889 and in Nizhni-Novgorod from 1894. Operations were co-ordinated by the Cipher Section of the Department of Police, which was subordinate to the Special Section.¹⁵⁸ A detailed report in 1910 listed only 49 officials working for the Black Cabinets in total. The annual budget was 200,000 rubles. It came from various funds— some from the tsar’s own secret discretionary funds under the heading ‘extra needs [*ekstrennye nadobnosti*] of the Ministry of the Interior.’¹⁵⁹

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The decision to keep such an intrusive practice secret is not surprising. Mail perustration was illegal.¹⁶⁰ The operations were supposed to be authorised by a secret internal circular, but they still had to be kept secret from the public at large and even from government ministers.¹⁶¹ The chief of the St Petersburg Black Cabinet from 1891–1915, A.D.Fomin, was employed under the misleading title of ‘Senior Censor of St Petersburg Central Post Office’ (*Starshii*

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158 GARF, *Putevoditel’*, p.44. GARF f.102, op.265 and 267, dd.1–1306 (1883–1917). It was also known as the fifth division of the Special Section.

159 R.Kantor, ‘K istorii chernykh kabinetov,’ *Katorga i ssylka*, vol.37 (1927), pp.93 & 98. His article is based on a *svodka* by I.Zybin to vice Director of DP, A.T.Vasil’ev of 12 July 1913 on budget and proposed reform and widening of Black Cabinet operations. The staff consisted of 6 Senior censors, 13 junior censors, 13 linguists, 9 attached officers, 4 translators, and 4 postal servants. Of these 14 worked in Petersburg, 8 in Moscow, 8 in Warsaw, 3 in Kiev, 6 in Odessa, 3 in Khar’kov, 7 in Tiflis. Zybin tried to get permission to open a Black Cabinet in Riga in 1910 without success. In 1910 negotiations were ongoing to open a Black Cabinet in Vil’na, Saratov, Rostov on Don, Ekaterinoslav and Irkutsk. Police conducted a survey of these areas to see how well gendarmes co-operated with postal employees.

160 Articles 368 and 1035 of the Criminal Code (*Ustav ugolonago sudoproizvodstva*). Perustration could only take place with a court order in certain circumstances – but the Okhrana never applied for this authorisation.

161 GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.1001, l.12, MVD I.N.Durnovo to Emperor Nicholas II, 5 Jan. 1895. The authorisation was supposedly kept in a sealed envelope. However, when this envelope was opened by the Provisional Government all that was found was a copy of a letter from Minister of the Interior in 1895, I.N.Durnovo, to Nicholas II explaining the process and reasons for mail perustration.

tsenzor pri Peterburgskom pochtamte). Perlustrated materials were sent directly to the Special Section to ensure the strictest secrecy.¹⁶² In an attempt to disguise their operations, all Black Cabinets were known in Fontanka circles under the ambiguous term: ‘Secret Sections of the Censor’ (*Sekretnye otdeleniia tsenzury*). All staff involved in perlustration were made to sign an oath of secrecy.¹⁶³ Yet according to one oppositionist: ‘Many people guessed that their correspondence was being opened and read at some point or other, but they talked about it in whispers.’¹⁶⁴ Anyone with access to the Russian émigré press would certainly have been aware of the practice of perlustration due to the scandal caused by the defection of one relatively senior Black Cabinet employee, M.E.Bakai, who began writing on the subject for Vladimir Burtsev’s *Byloe* in 1908.¹⁶⁵ The new freer press after 1905 and the free speech practised in the Duma provided an opportunity on various occasions for the matter to be discussed in public in Russia.¹⁶⁶

In 1905 the Tiflis Black Cabinet was one of several to be compelled to temporarily cease activities as a result of public hostility during the 1905 revolution. When it opened again in February 1909 it had to resort to extreme methods of conspiracy: moving out of the local post office and concealing its activities even from other government departments. The head, Vladimir K. Karpinskii, established a ‘conspiratorial apartment’ as base for his activities and assumed the pseudonym ‘Milovidov.’ As cover he was attached to the Ministry of Education, ostensibly studying eastern languages. For further security he carried on him a special certificate supplied by the Minister of the Interior, which stated that his flat could not be searched without the

162 GARF, *Putevoditel’*, p.116.

163 GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.1002, 1.4, V.M.Iablochkov, head of the the Moscow *Pochtamt*.

164 Kantor, ‘K istorii chernykh kabinetov,’ p.90.

165 Bakai, ‘Iz vospominanii,’ *Byloe*, no.7 (Paris, 1908). See also ‘Okhranki i chernye kabiny,’ *Revoliutsionnaia mysl’*, no.1 (April 1908).

166 Accusations were made in 1906 by one representative in the Duma (Shingarev) that the government carried out perlustration. The SD Muranov made similar accusations in 1913. See Peter Michalove & David M.Skipton, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, vols.1&2 (Urbana, Illinois, 1989), p.130. See also V.G.Korolenko, ‘O chernykh kabinetakh i perliustratsiakh,’ *Russkiiia vedomosti*, no.174, 1 Aug.1913.

express permission of the Department of Police.¹⁶⁷ The chief of St Petersburg Security Section, Gerasimov, was given instructions in 1907 that the perlustrated correspondence be kept secret even from his own Okhrana staff. ‘Information from perlustration received by you from the Department of Police,’ the Special Section informed him, ‘is to be kept separately from other papers in a reliable [*nadezhnyi*] place under your personal responsibility, these papers are not to be transferred to the office and no-one is to receive either lists or copies of these documents.’¹⁶⁸ Information gleaned from perlustrated correspondence was never referred to as such, for fear of leaks. Instead, the report would merely read: ‘According to agent information’ (*po agenturnym dannym*). After so many warnings about the need to preserve secrecy, however, problems sometimes arose because the Security Sections became *too* secretive and failed to inform other branches of the police about relevant information gleaned from perlustrated letters.¹⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the co-operation with the Main Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs was the most successful reciprocal operation for the Okhrana for several reasons. Firstly because the Department of Police was given permission to place its own employees in secret offices of the central postal depots in the major cities of the empire.¹⁷⁰ This was undoubtedly due the fact that Posts and Telegraphs was a branch of the Interior Ministry (at the ‘Department’ level) and pressured into assistance by the Interior Ministry’s overriding concern with political security. Secondly, because there were less staff upheavals in the perlustration office of the Okhrana than any other part of the secret police. Obscurity, it seems, ensured job security. The directing head of all perlustration activities throughout the empire— the Petersburg Black Cabinet chief A.D.Fomin— held his position without interruption from 1891 to 1915 and his assistant, M.G.Mardar’ev,

167 Zybín recommended that Khar’kov Black Cabinet move out of the post office in an effort to observe a greater level of secrecy. Kantor, ‘K istorii chernykh kabinetov,’ pp.94 & 98. Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, pp.111–12.

168 GARF f.111 op.5 d.146 l.4, 6 March 1907, Special Section to Gerasimov & l.6, 3 March 1909

169 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.146, l.6 .

170 The police intercepted all mail from abroad. They also occasionally read the mail of government ministers and even the Imperial family: V.I. Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past* (Stanford, California,1939), p. 109.

enjoyed similar job stability serving from 1893 to 1917. The third reason why mail perustration worked so well was that the staff were extremely competent. The leading example was I.A.Zybin – whose genius for cracking codes was later put to great use by the OGPU.¹⁷¹ Their expertise made the Okhrana’s cipher section the leading cipher department of the tsarist government, and probably the most expert centre of cryptology in the world at the time.¹⁷² Only one code was said to have defeated Zybin, and this was an Austro-Hungarian military code, rather than the work of the revolutionary opposition. The Foreign Ministry had long directed its own mail perustration sections for spying on foreign embassies,¹⁷³ sometimes in collaboration with the Okhrana.

Their methods were based on a simple, but thorough, process: Fontanka demanded that six essential points should, if possible, be collected from the letters: 1/ the identity of the person sending the letter; 2/the identity of the person receiving the letter; 3/identify all persons mentioned in the letter; 4/an exact elucidation of the contents and aims of the letter; 5/when it was written, sent and received; 6/an explanation of phrases in the letter (particularly those of a conspiratorial nature), and decoding of ciphers. All names had to be recorded on separate cards, ‘with a reference to the secret document and kept in strict alphabetical order.’¹⁷⁴ Should the analyst encounter any difficulty in establishing the identity of any of those mentioned he

171 See: Bakai, op.cit., p.123. Zybin was vividly described by the former head of Moscow Security Section P.P.Zavarzin as: ‘fortyish, tall, thin, swarthy, with long parted hair, and with a lively piercing look. He was a fanatic, not to say a maniac for his work. Simple ciphers he cleared up at a glance, but complicated ciphers put him almost in a trance from which he would not emerge until the problem was solved.’ The most valuable information did not always come from secret sources – the police were able to crack a large number of the revolutionaries’ codes and codenames (*klichki*) from a Bund leaflet readily available in the western provinces called *O shifrah* (‘About ciphers’).

172 GARF, *Putevoditel*, p.41. GARF f.102, op.248 (1900–1917). Even the British intelligence liaison officer to St Petersburg, Samuel Hoare – who was otherwise highly critical of the tsarist intelligence services – noted that ‘the Russians excelled’ in codes and ciphers: see S.Hoare, *The Fourth Seal*, p.57.

173 The head of this section, Aleksandr Savinsky [Savitsky] (1901–1910) went on to work for British Intelligence– cracking Zybin’s codes: *ibid.*, p.2.

174 GARF f.111 op.5 d.146 (Osoboe delo 1907–1917) l.1 (1910g.), *Razrabotka sekretnykh dokumentov, poluchaemykh v Sankt Peterburgskom Okhrannom otdelenii*.

had to make use of the Security Section and Fontanka card index and the house register (*domovaia kniga*) kept at the address desk (*adresnyi stol'*) in the Security Section. This was palpably an exhausting process if the letter only referred to persons by initials or first names. The Special Section encouraged staff to use their initiative and try to locate the identities on the basis of other information in the letter (e.g. occupation, *klichki*, place of residence etc.)¹⁷⁵ The most important documents, of course, were those which, 'appeared to refer to serious revolutionary activities.'¹⁷⁶

The Okhrana staff seem to have shown a great deal of inventiveness in this job. In 1907 Kiev *okhrannik* Karl Zivert¹⁷⁷ invented a simple device to remove letters from their envelopes without breaking the seals (a technique later adopted by the KGB).¹⁷⁸ V.N.Zverev, a cryptologist brought to Petersburg by Zubatov in 1902, excelled in the laborious methods of taking a letter with invisible ink, reading the invisible message and then making an exact copy of the letter complete with the same stationary (watermarks and all), the same handwriting and the same invisible inscriptions.¹⁷⁹ Censors claimed to be able to identify suspicious mail merely by the handwriting on the envelope. To avoid the letters being opened more than once, censors left a discreet black mark (known as a 'fly'—*mukha*) on the envelopes of those opened. Technological advances also greatly helped their work. A photographic laboratory was introduced in the Special Section in 1910 by Lt.Colonel G.G.Mets in order to speed up the copying process.¹⁸⁰ Telegrams were very easy to intercept: in 1903 the newly created Security Sections were given 'open lists' (*otkrytye listi*) authorising the interception of any telegrams. Some Security Sections and Gendarme Directorates were even directly connected to telegraph lines to read the messages even before postal employees. The first documented use of bugs (*klopy*) was in 1913

175 Ibid. II.1–3.

176 Ibid. I.2.

177 Using a knitting needle shaped stick with a split down the middle. Unfortunately for the Okhrana Zivert [sometimes spelt Zievert] later turned out to be an Austrian spy.

178 David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The story of Secret Writing* (New York 1976)—particularly the chapter: 'Russkaia kriptologiiia.'

179 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.113.

180 A.T.Vassilyev, *The Ochrana*, pp.93–95.

when several rooms in the Tauride Palace Duma building had listening devices installed.¹⁸¹ After 1910 the Okhrana took a step still further and began listening in on the phone conversations of Duma representatives.¹⁸² The socialist Sukhanov later wrote that it soon became ‘conspiratorial habit’ of oppositionists not to use their own telephones for fear of police listeners.¹⁸³ There are also records in Petersburg Security Section archives of regular monthly payments of 30 rubles to an employee (by the name of E. Gristov’) of the St Petersburg City Telephone Exchange Directorate, which indicates that the Okhrana were monitoring private phone conversations as early as 1908.¹⁸⁴ The Department of Police appears to have shown little restraint in this new field of espionage: Kirill Vladimirovich, the tsar’s cousin admitted in reference to the demise of the Okhrana that ‘only now am I free and able to peacefully talk on the telephone.’¹⁸⁵ While this by no means indicates that widespread phone-tapping took place, it at least shows that many people thought that it took place.

The most important reason for the great success in this area is that the Okhrana kept its signals intelligence operations so secret that the revolutionaries massively under-estimated the extent of police mail perustration and continued to conduct important party business by post using the most primitive of codes.¹⁸⁶ The Okhrana was well aware of the conspiratorial practice of using two identical books as a key to a code.¹⁸⁷ The operations had expanded massively when the

181 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.116.

182 Raymond Pearson, *The Russian Moderates and the Crisis of Tsarism*, pp.8 and 138. Pearson points to archival evidence of phone-tapped conversations: GARF, f.102 (DPOO), op.247 (1917 g.), d.27, l.26 (8 Jan. 1917), l.46 (17 Feb. 1917) and l.58 (18 Feb. 1917).

183 N.N.Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution 1917*, ed. & trans. Joel Carmichael (Princeton, 1984), chpt. 3, p.34.

184 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.225, l.413, 22 Dec. 1908.

185 From interview with *Russkaia volia* in March 1917qud. in B.V.Anan’ich and P.Sh.Ganelin, ‘Nikolai II’ *Voprosy istorii*, No.2 (1993), p.69.

186 Many revolutionaries used the same codebook– a Bund publication called: ‘O shifrah.’ The only problem was that the Okhrana also had a copy. R.Kantor, ‘K istorii “chernykh kabinetov,”’ *Katorga i ssylka*, no.37 (1927), pp.90–99. S.Maiskii, “‘Chernyi kabinet’: Iz vospominanii byvshego tsenzora”, *Byloe*, no.13/7 (July 1918), pp.185–97.

187 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, 17 April 1907, l.12: ‘Lately in the majority of cases the key to the cipher has been the use of matching letters on pages of various publications – usually wholly legal books. Inform gendarmes to pay close attention to the books found in police searches particularly if members of the same organisation have the same books.’

Okhrana took over from the Third Section. One estimate indicated that in 1882 the Black Cabinets of Russia intercepted 38,000 pieces of correspondence and copied 3,600, in 1900 they copied 5,431, in 1904 8,642, in 1905 10,182 and in 1907 14,221.¹⁸⁸ According to one estimate the Warsaw Black Cabinet intercepted 900,000 letters a year.¹⁸⁹ The Petersburg Black Cabinet was by far the biggest because it was the central sorting office for all mail coming from abroad and going out of Russia. From this source of information the Security Section could then place persons mentioned in correspondence under surveillance to glean more information from the outside and cross-question their secret collaborators for inside information.¹⁹⁰ Mail perustration enabled the Okhrana to foil the 'Alexander Ul'ianov plot' to kill Alexander III in 1887 and the attempt by Finnish separatists and the SRs to smuggle in 15,000 rifles on board the 'John Grafton' in 1905.¹⁹¹

Not surprisingly, the strict secrecy surrounding these operations did have its disadvantages. It allowed considerable room for the abuse of power to go unchecked.¹⁹² A surviving letter on behalf of the former Assistant Minister of the Interior P.G.Kurlov to the Senior Censor sarcastically requests that if the Black Cabinets *have* to open his mail they could at least be a little more discreet about it.¹⁹³

188 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka* 16, p.113.

189 'Iz otcheta o perliustratsii za 1908g.' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vols.2 & 3 [27&28] (1928).

190 An example of the use of perustration working as a basis for further research by external and internal agents and climaxing in liquidation of a terrorist cell is given in: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.146, ll.2–3.

191 On Ul'ianov see: E.I.Iakovchenko, 'Protssess 1 marta 1887,' in *Narodnaia volia pered tarskim sudom* (Moscow, 1931), p.97. On the John Grafton affair see: Michael Futrell, *The Northern Underground: Episodes of Russian Revolutionary Transport and Communications through Scandinavia and Finland 1863–1917* (London, 1963). Antti Kujala 'The Russian Revolutionary Movement and the Finnish Opposition, 1905: The John Grafton Affair and the Plans for an Uprising in St. Petersburg,' *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 5 (1980), pp.257–75.

192 Durnovo lost his job in 1894 when it was discovered that he was pilfering the mail of the Brazilian consul who was seeing his mistress. Plehve upon becoming MVD found some of his own letters to his wife in the Department of Police archives. Durnovo upon succeeding to the same post found a copy of an intercepted private letter of his instructing that his own mail should not be perustrated!

193 GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.1001, l.26 ob., Department of Police to Senior Censor Fomin, Nov. 1916.

Evidence of the extent of the censor's intrusion has been largely obliterated due to the fact that outgoing Ministers of the Interior would usually destroy compromising documents. However, the sudden deaths occurring from assassinations offer an insight as to the extent of their excessive curiosity. Lopukhin wrote that upon clearing up Plehve's papers after the Minister's assassination, he discovered copies of his own private correspondence;¹⁹⁴ and Kryzhanovskii also recalled that after the murder of Stolypin he had to keep the deceased Prime Minister's family out of the premier's office while he cleared away perustrated copies of letters to the family's own friends and acquaintances.¹⁹⁵ He also noted that Durnovo even used to intercept the mail of the Grand Dukes.¹⁹⁶

A further consequence of the high level of secrecy was that it gave the employees of the Black Cabinets the chance to earn a little money on the side working for other government departments. On his inspections in 1910 Vice-Director of the Department of Police Vissarionov discovered that Fomin and Mardar'ev were engaged in 'moonlighting' (*vechernye zaniatii*) for the Ministries of the Navy, the Army, the Imperial Courts and Foreign Affairs.¹⁹⁷ The most blatant culprit – a brilliant cryptographer and polyglot (he supposedly knew 24 languages), V.I.Krivosh – was forced into retirement as a result.¹⁹⁸

The veil of secrecy and implied shame surrounding Imperial Russian mail perustration did much to exacerbate the Okhrana's sinister and unpopular reputation.¹⁹⁹ Odd rumours would emerge from the cloud of unknowing surrounding these operations. The Petersburg Black Cabinet, so one story went, was concealed behind a false door disguised as a yellow filing cabinet. When the Senior Censor's office was searched after the February Revolution no secret doors or rooms were found – only two perfectly ordinary offices. And contrary to another myth, none of the Black Cabinets were found to have secret elevators transferring mail directly from the mail sorting office.²⁰⁰

194 Lopukhin, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, p.13.

195 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, pp.113–15.

196 See also: Zavarzin, *Zhandarmy i revoliutsionery*, pp.156–73.

197 GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.1001, l.19, S.E.Vissarionov to P.G.Kurlov, 3 April 1910.

198 *Ibid.*, l.89, *Kopiiia spravki Departamenta politsii o V.I.Krivoshe*, 1 Feb. 1912.

199 The Black Cabinets were so secret that even one of the employees of the secret censor's office, S, Maiskii, thought that there were far more sections than in reality: see *Byloe*, no.13 (1918).

200 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, pp.111–116.

ii) The Court *okhrana*

124 The Court secret police organisation, created in 1905, was subordinate to the Court *komendant*. This was an immensely valuable position because it placed the official extremely close to the tsar. The *komendant* was directly subordinate to the Minister of the Imperial Courts.²⁰¹ The secret police force under his direction consisted of the Court *okhrana* (viz., ‘security’),²⁰² the Court Special (Secret) Section,²⁰³ the Court police, the inspectors of imperial routes, and the secret agents in the employ of the Court *okhrana*. A separate body had existed long before the Court *komendant*’s office to perform the same function of security for the tsar and his family in the Polish provinces from 1839 until it was forced to evacuate to Moscow in 1915.²⁰⁴ The Court *okhrana*’s own Special (Secret) Section acted as its gathering centre of the Court *okhrana* and was headed by the former head of Moscow OO, Colonel V.V.Ratko.²⁰⁵ All the same, it was largely confined to the more mundane work of a bodyguard service— as its bottom heavy staff list shows: 280 NCOs, four officers and a head (former Kiev OO head, General A.I.Spiridovich).²⁰⁶ Co-ordinating the security operations to protect the life of the tsar was a gruelling task: for example, security for Nicholas II’s visit to Moscow in 1912 required 2,942 policemen, 33,000 volunteers and 400 Okhrana gendarmes. Moreover, *filery* were drafted in from all over the empire and a temporary vetting office checked the credentials of over 26,000 people living in the vicinity.²⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the Court *okhrana* was on occasion a useful source of information for the Okhrana largely because the two bodies got on so well. The reason for the mutual support of these two

201 The archival holdings for the Court *komendant*’s office are kept in GARF, f.97, *Upravlenie dvortsovogo komendanta Ministerstva Imperatorskogo dvortsa (1905–1917)*, op.1–3 (719 files from 1885 to 1917).

202 Eroshkin, op.cit., p.279; PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Spiridovicha*, pp.27–28, 47 & 56.

203 The Special Section was divided into three sections: internal Court affairs, military clubs and the tsar’s itinerary and a general intelligence section.

204 GARF, f.1261, *Upravlenie imperatorskimi dvortsami v Varshave (1839–1918)*, op.1, dd.1–13 (1890–1921).

205 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros A.I.Spiridovicha*, pp.47–48.

206 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.120–21.

207 Daly, ‘The Watchful State,’ p.68.

organisations was that they had a great deal in common. The Court *okhrana* had taken its structure, methods, and most of its personnel from the Okhrana.²⁰⁸ Moreover, the staff of the Court police and Court *okhrana* underwent in-house training which was very similar to that of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes and the staff of Security Sections. It included a course in history, codes and decoding (*razshifrovka*), and Bertillon's anthropometric system followed by 'a gruelling examination by various experts'.²⁰⁹ They even shared the same instructors.²¹⁰

iii) Military Intelligence

The direction of military intelligence inside the General Staff of the War Ministry underwent a process of considerable reorganisation after the intelligence debacles of the Russo-Japanese war.²¹¹ It was transferred from the Seventh Secretariat of the First Military Statistical section of the Main Staff, to the Fifth Secretariat of the Quartermaster General's Section (Ogenkvar) of the Main Directorate of the General Staff (GUGSh) in 1906 and to the Special Secretariat of GUGSh in 1910.²¹² The Okhrana was not the only intelligence body to be buried in bureaucratic obscurity. The purpose of military intelligence was

208 Col. V.K.Kaledin, *High Treason. Four Major Cases of the St.Petersburg Personal Court Branch*, (London 1936), p.15. Kaledin's work shows some inner knowledge of Imperial Russia's intelligence services, but his works are also prone to a great deal of ludicrous invention.

209 Kaledin, *High Treason*, p.17.

210 A.I.Spiridovitch, *Les dernieres annees de la cour de Tzarskoie-Selo* (Paris, 1928), pp.430–37. See: Scheiderman, 'From the Files,' passim. Spiridovich trained both Department of Police *okhranniki* and Court *okhranniki*.

211 I.V.Derevianko, 'Russkaia razvedka v voine 1904–1905 gg.' in T.V.Khodina (ed.), *Tainy russko-iaponskoi voiny* (Moscow, 1993), pp.150–54. David H.Schimmelpenninck Van Der Oye, 'Russian Military Intelligence on the Manchurian Front, 1904–05,' *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.11, no.1 (Jan.1996).

212 For a comprehensive history of tsarist military intelligence see: Mikhail Alekseev, *Voennaia razvedka Rossii: Ot Riurikha do Nikolaia II*, vols.1–2 (Moscow, 1998); particularly, vol.2, pp.23–26. The earliest Soviet history on the subject is K.K.Zvonarev, *Agenturnaia razvedka* (Moscow, 1929). Prior to 1903 this office was known as the 'Military Academic Committee' (*Voenny-uchennyi komitet*) which was transferred to the administration of the General Staff in 1815.

primarily security of Russia's borders and collecting information on the possible future fields of war. Its staff at this time in the central office consisted of seventeen officers charged with: 'Collecting, analysing and publishing military-statistical data about foreign powers, correspondence regarding military agents, directing officers on missions, and examining technical innovations.'²¹³ On top of this its agents consisted of military attachés in the Russian embassies across the world (a system introduced in 1864) and the *otchetnye otdeleniia* (report writing sections of the military districts) which would provide statistics and detailed maps for the borderland areas. Warsaw, Kiev and the Vilnius military districts would report on the Austro-Hungarian and German Empires; while Turkestan and Caucasian Military districts reported on Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan. The Priamur Military District reported on East Asia.²¹⁴ After 1908 military intelligence gathering hitherto mostly directed eastwards, gradually settled into an equal balance between east and west: around half the resources were expended on Afghanistan, Persia and the Far East; and the other half on the western borderlands with the Hohenzollern and Habsburg Empires. Special 'counterintelligence sections' (*kontrrazvedyvatel'nye otdeleniia*) were set up along the western borders in 1911.²¹⁵ The Okhrana was called upon to assist in the establishment of these sections.²¹⁶ Denikin noted that these counterintelligence sections, staffed largely by gendarmes, were independent from the local military commanders and answerable directly to the War Minister V.A.Sukhomlinov.²¹⁷ The usefulness of military

213 Zvonarev, *Agenturnaia razvedka*, p.18.

214 Schimmelpenninck, 'Russian Military Intelligence,' pp.23–25. The First Manchurian Army's Intelligence Section handled most of the espionage during the Russo-Japanese war. However, it only had one Japanese agent, one Korean and one Chinese agent (known as 'confidentials'). See: Upravlenie general-kvartirmeistera polevogo shtaba 1-i Manchzhurskoi armii, *Otchet o deiatel'nosti razvedyvatel'nogo otdeleniia* (Moscow, 1906), pp.5–22.

215 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.34, *Tsirkuliary* 1911 g., l.146, 11 Sept. 1911 [based on the circular of 25 Dec.1910] See also GARF, f.102, op.308a (1913g.) d.34, ll.13–14.

216 GARF, f.102, op.240, (DPOO, 1910g.), d.38, *O voennoi razvedke*. The cooperation, at times very strained, continued up to 1917. See: GARF, f.111, op.2, d.301, *S kopiami snoshenii nachal'nikov kontr-razvedyvatel'nogo otdelenii* (1916).

217 Anton I.Denikin, *The Career of a Tsarist Officer. Memoirs, 1872–1916* (Minneapolis, 1975), pp.200–201.

intelligence in assisting the Okhrana in its work was negligible up to 1911. Even after 1911 the assistance that the Okhrana lent to military intelligence was not often reciprocated mainly because the army intelligence officers were considered less capable and less experienced.

CONCLUSION

Several observations can be made based on the structure of the police organs of tsarist Russia. Firstly, and most importantly, the Okhrana –unlike its predecessor, the Third Section– was a subordinate office *within* the bureaucracy; and was, *ipso facto*, subject to bureaucratic procedures, methods, rules etc. This had several consequences. Firstly, it meant that its expenses were paid by the more parsimonious Interior Ministry. The result was that the expenditure on the Okhrana was not as large as one might expect of such an infamous and seemingly omnipresent organisation.

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Chart 3g. The total budget for the Okhrana (in rubles)

Year	1902	1913
Petersburg Security Section	245,500	c.600,000
Moscow Security Section	150,000	c.350,000
Warsaw Security Section	87,000	c.150,000
The new Security Sections (c.13 in all)	300,000	1,984,524
Paris Foreign Agency	100,000	263,500 ²¹⁸
Extra		700,000 ²¹⁹
Total	882,500²²⁰	4,000,000²²¹

218 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.413; GARF, f.826, op.1, d.53, *V.F.Dzhunkovskii, Vospominaniia za 1913g.*, ll.181–84.

219 This included moneys going to gendarme railway sections employing spies and the spies supervised by the Highly Secret Agents' Bureau of the Special Section.

220 Daly, 'The Watchful State', p.358. GARF, f.102, op. DPOO 1902g., d.825, ll.167–173. For budget figures in the 1880s see: Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie*, pp.166–67; & idem, *Krizis samoderzhavii na rubezhe 1870–1880-x godov* (Moscow, 1964), p.172.

221 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.413; GARF, f.826, op.1, d.53, *V.F.Dzhunkovskii, Vospominaniia za 1913g.*, ll.181–84.

Chart 3h. Total expenditure on the Okhrana

Year	1902	1908	1910	1913	1914	1916
Total (millions of rubles)	0.8	1.4	3	4	5	3.5 ²²²

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The total amount spent on the secret police dramatically increased from 1902–1914. However, it is important to note that the level of expenditure levelled out after the extra expenses of security for the Romanov tercentenary celebrations. The expenditure on the secret police was comparatively large when compared with the Ministry of War's 'secret expenditure' which according to accounts amounted to only 150,000 rubles a year in 1913.²²³ Though the military managed through various additional channels to acquire around 1.3 million rubles per annum on 'intelligence' by 1913. The Okhrana enjoyed a fairly generous portion of the total police budget, a little less than 10% (in 1913 the expenditure on the ordinary police stood at 53,386,820 rubles).²²⁴ This is a sizeable amount for a democratic state, but hardly large enough to justify the argument that the Okhrana was a prototype of the totalitarian secret police. Yet this does show a far greater emphasis on espionage in the Interior Ministry compared to the Imperial Russian War Ministry which spent a minuscule portion

222 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.404; GARF, f.826, op.1, d.53, *V.F.Dzhunkovskii, Vospominaniia za 1913g.*, ll.181–84; A.A.Miroliubov 'Dokumenty po istorii Departamenta politzii perioda pervoi mirovoi voiny,' *Sovetskie arkhivy*, no.3 (1988), pp.80–84.

223 GDSO, 4th Duma, 1913, part III, *zasedaniia* 64, 4 June 1913, col.799.

224 GDSO, 4th Duma, part II, *zasedaniia* 31–54, 22 March–24 May 1913, appendix, cols. xxii–xxiv. This does not include 'Various expenditure on the police necessities' (6,618,636 rubles) or expenditure on the Tiflis city police (322,200 rubles.) This shows very little increase on the 1910 budget of 52,067,000 rubles: GDSO, 3rd Duma, session 3, vol.II, col.2376. The Department of Police budget for 1910 consisted of three million rubles on the Security Sections; 10 million rubles on the Separate Corps of Gendarmes; 190,000 rubles on DP staff and administration, 3.5million rubles on secret funds; 340,000 rubles on extra funds for gendarme officers; 660,000 rubles extra funds for DP staff; 330,000 rubles on miscellaneous expenses; Total: 18,020,000 rubles (this does not include expenditure by local authorities on the upkeep of the police). See Daly, 'The Watchful State,' p.359; Miroliubov, 'Politcheskii sysk,' pp.49–52; Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.53–54, & 121.

of its total budget on military espionage (around 0.07% – up to 1.3 million rubles out of 576 million rubles per year from 1908 to 1910 and 716 million rubles from 1911 to 1913).²²⁵

Figures available on the expenditure on the internal agency in St Petersburg Security Section show that money spent tripled from 1908–1914: from 24,000 rubles/year²²⁶ to 75,000 rubles²²⁷ However, the internal agency was a relatively minor expense for the Okhrana and we must therefore not exaggerate the significance of this growth. For example St Petersburg Security Section's expense on the Security Brigade (*Okhrannaia komanda* – their bodyguard service) had grown from 146,200 rubles in 1908 to 259,000 in 1912.²²⁸ This was larger than Moscow OO's entire budget.²²⁹ The Provisional government audit into St Petersburg Security Section's budget breaks down thus: 22% on the upkeep of the office staff and on the officer contingent, 53% on external surveillance, 23% on the internal agency and the remaining 2% on various extra expenditure.²³⁰ The budget statistics also show a steady growth in the influence of St Petersburg Security Section. By 1908 this section, despite the massive growth in the number of provincial Security Sections, still commanded nearly a third of the Okhrana's 1.4million ruble budget.²³¹

However, the Okhrana was a secret organisation, and as such it did not have any difficulty in finding ways to by-pass ordinary

225 Alekseev, *Voennaia razvedka*, pp.22 & 39–40.

226 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.217, *Ob otpuske kredita na sodержanie sekretnoi agentury*, ll.1–3: dispatches 21 Dec. 1907, 3 Jan. 1908 and 7 Jan. 1908. This money came out of the budget of the Department of Police. The entire budget of the Internal Agency in 1903 was 229,270 rubles– see: GARF, f.102, op.2, d.825, ll.167–71.

227 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.41–43. Total spent on the Internal Agencies in 1914 in rubles: St Petersburg PGD-5,700; Moscow OO-47,000; Warsaw OO-20,000; Kiev OO- 13,000; the remainder made it up to a total of 600,000.

228 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.225, l.334, Oct. 1908. Wages for external agents assigned to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers cost 405 rubles a month in 1908.

229 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.154–55, 20 Jan. 1912. In Moscow Security Section budget in 1916 was 228,600 rubles: it spent a quarter of this (51,920 rubles) on the Internal Agency. It spent 81,060 rubles on its external agency and 45,000 rubles on its officers' salaries. Its budget in 1902 was 112,000 rubles. Daly, 'The Watchful State,' p.357.

230 GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.1034, l.1, 25 June –17 Oct. 1917, *Protokoly osmotra dokumentov Departamenta politsii, konfiskovannykh ChSK*. The total was estimated at 1.4 million rubles during the war.

231 GARF, f.102, op.316 (DPOO, 1908g.), d.50, l.1.

budgetary rules. For this reason budgetary figures for the Okhrana can only ever be approximations. The Department of Police had a secret slush fund that by 1908 was between five and ten million rubles.²³² According to the Assistant Minister of the Interior, Kryzhanovskii, from 1905 to 1911, the Minister of the Interior received a private allowance of 50,000 rubles a year as Chief of the Gendarmes (*Shef zhandarmov*) and another 54,000 rubles to arrange his own personal security and other ‘personal requirements’ (*ego lichnye nadobnosti*).²³³ Other moneys allocated to the secret police were neatly hidden under misleading terminology: the budgetary allowance of 101,000 rubles for perustration of mail was termed ‘Credit to the Foreign Censor attached to Main Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs’.²³⁴ For surveillance of the border between Persia and Afghanistan the funds were buried in an even more obscure corner of the Interior Ministry budget (‘sanitary expenses attached to the Main Medical Directorate’).²³⁵ Other sources of income came from the Minister of Justice who paid for the upkeep of his own six police bodyguards. The Ministry of the Interior also channelled extra cash to the Okhrana in a more circumambulatory fashion: 208,000 rubles were paid for the upkeep of gendarmes in the provinces and 1,034,633 for security functions in the Imperial Court.²³⁶ On top of all this the Okhrana received an extra injection of 800,000 rubles for security arrangements surrounding the three hundredth anniversary of the Romanov dynasty in 1913. A further 700,000 rubles went to guarding high-level government officials. This meant that the entire government expense on the secret police was nearly five and a half million rubles in 1913. Dzhunkovskii made drastic budgetary cuts in 1914 but these did not hit the Okhrana until the beginning of the 1915 financial

232 PTsR, vol.1, *Dopros Klimovicha*, p.66.

233 PTsR, vol.5, *Dopros Kryzhanovskogo*, pp.403–04.

234 *Ibid.*, p.404. Other figures as high as 200,000 rubles a year by 1913 have been cited: see Lieven, ‘The Security Police,’ p.244.

235 PTsR, vol.5, *loc.cit.*, p.404. In Russian: *Sanitarnye kredity po glavnomu vrachebnomu upravleniiu*.

236 This breaks down as 688,180 rubles a year to provide security for the Winter Palace and 364,483 rubles for personal security detachments for members of the imperial family.

year.²³⁷ Money also passed *through* the Okhrana, rather than *to* it. For example, the Okhrana's secrecy proved useful for Stolypin when he used it as a channel for subsidies to the press.²³⁸

A consequence of the modest expense on the Okhrana was that the staff numbers were not particularly large and fell into the pattern of bureaucratic growth across the whole government. The civil service as a whole had grown from 112,00 employees in 1857 to 524,000 in 1900 in Table of Ranks alone.²³⁹ The Ministry of the Interior before it even took control of the Okhrana had already become by 1850 the largest government ministry with a staff of 20,000.²⁴⁰ In 1900 the Department of Police had 47,866 employees.²⁴¹ With the assistance of the commune watchmen the total number of policemen in the Russian Empire numbered around 100,000.²⁴² The Fontanka headquarters of the Department of Police had steadily increased its staff over the decades from 161 full time employees in 1895 to 387 persons in 1914.²⁴³ The Separate Corps of Gendarmes, as noted earlier, was on the face of things a very large organisation with a staff of 15,000. However, with only 2,500 in Provincial Gendarme Directorates very few were directly involved in security police work.²⁴⁴

St Petersburg Security Section employed around 25 officials of officer rank; around eight of these were *chinovniki* and the rest were gendarmes.²⁴⁵ St Petersburg Security Section at its height before the

237 Mirolubov, 'Dokumenty po istorii,' pp.80-84: places the secret police budget at 3.5million rubles in 1916; Svatikov, *Russkii politicheskii sysk*, p.7— estimated a budget of three million rubles for 1916.

238 PTsR, vol.5, *Dopros Kryzhanovskogo*, p.404. These were attached to the Main Directorate of Press Affairs. From 1905 to 1911 Kryzhanovskii paid out three million rubles.

239 G.L.Freeze (ed.), *Russia: A History* (Oxford, 1997), p.186.

240 McCauley and Waldron, *The Emergence of the Modern Russian State*, p.6.

241 GARF f.DP II, op.302, d.707, ch.2, ll.112–13.

242 Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, pp.300–01.

243 Mirolubov, 'Dokumenty po istorii,' pp.80–84. Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.90. In 1881 125 persons, in 1895 153, in 1899 174 persons.

244 Daly, 'The Watchful State,' p.79.

245 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.261, *Registratsionnoe biuro*, l.20: gives a list of officers incurring travel expenses from 1909–10. This list possibly does not include all officers, but this discrepancy is balanced by the fact that the number of those mentioned is slightly inflated because it includes officers who were not serving in StPbOO at the same time.

February Revolution had a total staff of around 740: 250 detectives in the Security Brigade (*Okhrannaia komanda*), 80 detectives in the Central detachment (*Tsentral'nyi otriad*), 70 supervisors, 40 registration detectives, 100 ordinary detectives and 200 spies and informers.²⁴⁶ This made St Petersburg Security Section about twice the size of the Moscow section, which had around three hundred employees at its height: 12 case officers, 25 clerks, 100 detectives, 60 supervisors, 10 watchmen, messengers etc, and 100 secret agents.²⁴⁷ The Paris Okhrana was minute in comparison— with three or four case officers, 40 detectives and 25 secret agents.²⁴⁸ The entire Okhrana outside these three centres probably amounted to little more than a thousand employees.²⁴⁹

A further consequence of the bureaucratic structure of the Okhrana was that it followed bureaucratic procedures in its intelligence gathering. The strict hierarchy of layers to the bureaucratic pyramid—termed ‘departmentalism’ or ‘gradualism’ (*postepennost'*)²⁵⁰—counted for a large amount of paperwork. Count L.E.Perovskii, (MVD 1841–1852) had complained of this as early as 1851: ‘It is impossible not to recognise that bureaucratic formalities have reached the point of absurdity; endless official correspondence absorbs all the attention and energies of those who execute policy, and instead of true supervision and administration we have, for the most part, only record keeping and accounting for documents.’²⁵¹ This problem was never solved in the bureaucracy: by 1900 the Ministry of the Interior was already handling an estimated 100,000 pieces of paper a year.²⁵²

246 A.Volkov, *Petrogradskoe okhrannoe otdelenie* (Petrograd,1917), pp.4–10; Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.47

247 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.239.

248 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.120–21.

249 Peregodova, ‘Istochnik,’ p.97–98.The entire External Agencies outside Paris, Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw amounted to 391 in 1914. Taking this as an indicator of roughly half the staff gives us the figure of 800. Warsaw Security Section, which was slightly smaller than Moscow, employed around 250 persons in all.

250 Orlovsky, *Limits of Reform*, p.35

251 Quotd. in *ibid.*, p.35.

252 McCauley & Waldron, *Emergence of the Modern Russian State, 1855–1881*, p.6.

It is no surprise to find that the Okhrana, as a subordinate branch of the Interior Ministry, developed the same problem of excessive paperwork. Every single piece of paperwork in St Petersburg Security Section, outgoing and incoming, was allotted a sequential number (*poriadkovyi nomer*) arranged in exact chronological order beginning at number one on the first of January every year. This means we can get a rough picture of the busiest months and years. Based on this we can estimate that 1907 was the busiest year in the history of St Petersburg Security Section²⁵³ and interestingly the busiest months every year were the revolutionary months of February and October. The number of separate pieces of correspondence also give a strong impression of the speed in which work was done— individual dispatches were written at a frantic rate and were not dwelt over very long. The overall impression is of a vast machine fighting a war of attrition and not at all a subtle battle of wits that we might expect.²⁵⁴ The introduction of the telephone seems to have done little to reduce the amount of paperwork, in the short run: often the content of telephone discussions had to be summarised on paper.²⁵⁵

‘Circulars’²⁵⁶ in the Okhrana, as in other branches of the bureaucracy, were used to try and cut through the verbosity of the bureaucratic system. Daniel Orlovsky sees these circulars in a somewhat negative light: ‘The circulars should viewed as one of the underpinnings of the Russian ministerial form of government and one of the primary factors inhibiting the development of separation of powers or the rule of law.’²⁵⁷

However, when we look at the reasons for the circular system we can see that in many ways they served the purpose of upholding the

253 GARF f.111, op.3, d.224, *Zhurnal vkhodiashchikh i iskhodiashchikh bumag okhrannoï agentury na 1907g.*, l.211: There were 2,586 separate pieces of correspondence going into and coming out of St Petersburg Security Section.

254 Qutd. in: Nurit Schlieffman, ‘The Internal Agency,’ *Cahiers du Monde russe et sovietique*, 24 (1983), pp.158–59.

255 The transcripts of telephone conversations were to be taken down on a printed form with the header: *Telefonnaia depesha*—eg: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.180, l.214, 30 Nov. 1907: Instructions for the liquidation of an SR cell and the procedure for keeping S.P.Beletskii informed.

256 For a departmental review of the main circulars at the end of the period see GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.121 ch., *Rukovodiashchie tsirkuliary*. Departmental circulars have been compiled in GARF f.102, op.260.

257 Orlovsky, *Limits of Reform*, p.37.

law in their own crude fashion. For example, one liberal bureaucrat, A.N.Kulomzin, argued that Loris-Melikov, ‘by his constant demands that it [the police] should always act legally in all its undertakings, one can with truth say that he caused its collapse; this is a strange statement but true; our police never knew anything about laws and when threatened with responsibility for infringing the law it becomes lost and prefers to sit and do nothing.’²⁵⁸ Circulars to the police providing digests of the law enabled them to be more proactive, while at the same time staying within the confines of the law.²⁵⁹

The bureaucratic system also proved the best way to cope with the bewildering complexity and enormity of monitoring the activities of the vast revolutionary underground. The Department of Police produced annual ‘summaries’ (*obzory*)²⁶⁰ distributed to all Provincial Gendarme Directorates and Security Sections.²⁶¹ Regular high level reports which were passed on up the bureaucratic ladder to the Olympian heights of the Ministerial level were termed: ‘Humble remarks’ (*Vsepoddaneishie zametki*)²⁶² or more official digests on specific subjects would be termed: ‘Humble reports’ (*Vsepoddanneishie doklady*).

The Okhrana’s conspiratorial *modus operandi* meant that a large part of its work was never committed to paper; which then also enabled it to avoid bureaucratic oversight. The overall effect was one of which its superiors frequently complained: the Security Sections were able to act first and fill in the proper forms (asking to permission to act) later. It was this unaccountability, therefore, that allowed the Okhrana to operate effectively as it was able to by-pass certain inherent bureaucratic flaws, *inter alia*: excessive stratification, inability to adapt to changing environments, and rigid adherence to proper procedures.

258 Quid. in Lieven, ‘The Security Police,’ p.259. See also: idem, ‘Bureaucratic Liberalism in Late Imperial Russia: The Personality, Career and Opinions of A.N.Kulomzin,’ *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol.60 (1982), pp.413–32.

259 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folders 8–10.

260 GARF, *Putevoditel’*, p.41. GARF f.102, op.252, dd.1–24 (1879–1902).

261 For a good example of a very broad general review of the revolutionary parties in 1914 see: GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.175 ch., *Obzor deiatel’nosti revoliutsionnykh partii*, ll.1–62.

262 For an example of the weekly ‘Humble remarks’ see: GARF, f.102, op.244, (DPOO, 1914g.), d.170ch., *Ezhenedel’nye vsepoddanneishie zametki*.

The most important aspect of the Okhrana's subordination to the bureaucracy was that it occupied a fairly low position in the power structure. The only Okhrana officer who had the power to submit *Vsepoddaneishie doklady* to the tsar was the head of the Special Section.²⁶³ These reports reveal that what little communication the Okhrana did have with the tsar was of a very basic nature (student disorders, anti-Jewish disorders, workers uprisings etc.).²⁶⁴

However, this lowly position also brought complications. The secret police had more than one master. As Martynov explained, the Security Section chief was directly subordinate to the City Governor and on regimental matters he was subordinate to the *komandir* of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes,²⁶⁵ but 'in all matters touching political investigations' he was subordinate to the Director of the Department of Police.²⁶⁶ In the Security Sections of St Petersburg and Moscow an officer was assigned for liaison with the city police.²⁶⁷ The head of the Security Section was instructed to be, 'in direct contact with the Governors and City Governors, and to report to them personally everything that might interest this senior representative of administrative power.'²⁶⁸ While City Governors were answerable to the Ministry of the Interior, the Provincial Governors had managed to preserve their *de facto* right to report directly to the tsar, retaining proud adherence to Peter the Great's original conception of the governors as the tsar's viceroys in the provinces.²⁶⁹ Another problem arose from the fact that the head of a Security Section, who was usually a gendarme captain or colonel, occupied a senior position in the sphere of political

263 GARF f.102, op.249, dd.1–34 (1881–1917). GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.41.

264 *Ibid.*, p.45. Durnovo's reports to the tsar were descriptive rather than analytic so as to keep Nicholas's attention: Santoni, 'P.N.Durnovo,' p.118. Vasil'ev described the practice of printing the reports in the style of newspaper called the 'Okhrana Gazette' for the perusal of the tsar alone: Vassilyev, *The Okhrana*, p.91.

265 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.28–32.

266 *Ibid.*, p.224.

267 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 8, 21 Oct. 1902, DP secret circular no.6641, *Svod pravil*, article 20.

268 *Ibid.*, Box 158, folder 9, 30 June 1904, *Vremennoe polozenie*, article 11.

269 Richard G.Robbins Jr. 'His Excellency the Governor: The Style of Russian Provincial Governance at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,' in E.Mendelsohn & M.S.Shatz (eds.), *Imperial Russia 1700–1917* (Dekalb, Illinois, 1988), p.86.

investigations to the head of the local Gendarme Directorate, who was usually a general.²⁷⁰ In addition, Security Section chiefs were informed that they must maintain ‘constant and close confidential-service [*sluzhebno-doveritel’nyiia*] relations with the officials of the local directorate of public prosecutions.’²⁷¹ The Special Section’s control of the Okhrana was further complicated by the fact that St Petersburg Security Section had so many responsibilities laid in its lap that it grew too large to be controlled by headquarters.²⁷²

An outline of the government ministries shows that the punitive arm of the state under the Ministry of Justice was separate from the policing and investigative arm of the state under the Ministry of the Interior. There existed, however, a grey area in the trial of *political* crimes in the last four decades of Romanov rule. The trial and execution of sentences was carried out through three different means: 1) Under the aegis of the Ministry of Justice, by the ordinary independent civil courts established in 1864. 2) Trial by military court— if the commander of the military district or the Governor gave permission— for a narrow range of crimes since the 1830s and after 1878 for crimes of armed resistance to the authorities or attacks on police or gendarmes.²⁷³ 3) After 1879 closed administrative trial by a joint board of officials from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice.²⁷⁴ Some studies have pointed to these judicial

270 Ibid., *Vremennoe polozenie*, articles 19 and 20. The Security Section was only subordinate to the Gendarme Directorate in the production of inquests (*doznaniiia*). Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 9, *Vremennoe polozenie*, article 12.

271 Ibid., article 13.

272 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros S.P.Beletskogo*, p.265. ‘Gerasimov, like the majority of Security Section heads took up a position of isolation from the Department of Police; this was just the beginning— [von] Kotten followed in his footsteps.’

273 Donald Rawson, ‘The Death Penalty in Late Tsarist Russia: An Investigation of Judicial Procedures,’ *Russian History*, vol.11, no.1 (Spring 1984), pp.29–52; David Griffiths and Allen Sinel, *The Laws of Russia. Series II: Imperial Russia, 1696–1917*. See: *Svod voennykh postanovleny 1869 goda*. Kniga XII: *Voinskii ustav o nakazaniiaakh*, 2nd ed. (St Petersburg, 1879). According to the law of 9 Aug. 1878 the offences were punishable under article 279 of the Military Statutes on Punishment. This was further codified under article 18 of the 14 Aug. 1881 Security Law [PSZ, (1881), no.350] and article 91 of the military code applied from 1905 to 1912.

274 This was further codified by the more famous 1881 Security Law. See Peter Waldron, ‘States of Emergency : Autocracy and Extraordinary Legislation, 1881–1917,’ *Revolutionary Russia*, vol.8, no.1 (June 1995); and Jonathan W. Daly,

anomalies as evidence of the evolution towards a totalitarian police state.²⁷⁵ However, these inferences ignore the fact that the personnel of the secret police took no part in these extra-legal trials except as witnesses. The preparation of the prosecution's evidence was left to the Gendarme Directorates outside the Okhrana. In all cases the defendant was permitted defence counsel and proper legal procedures were adhered to. Furthermore, as one Okhrana officer complained, even the state's prosecuting attorneys – far from working hand in glove with the political police – often 'forgot the purpose of their existence, and in the majority of cases sought to free the accused and assumed the role of defence attorneys.'²⁷⁶ Gerasimov had much the same experience: 'Usually the prosecuting attorneys sought to convince us of unimportant, formal infringements of the law. They hindered our work, certainly, and sometimes openly defended the interests of the accused.'²⁷⁷

Officials from the Security Section had the power to search, arrest and imprison persons for up to seven days on suspicion of even planning a state crime or belonging to an illegal organisation.²⁷⁸ Since 1874 the police and gendarmerie had been granted the power to arrest persons belonging to secret societies.²⁷⁹ Aside from this, the Okhrana's role in political repression was always secondary: the power of the Okhrana was not self contained – it relied on the support for recommended punitive measures from either the Ministry of Justice or the local Governor. The Okhrana's principal advisory tool in influencing the direction of political repression was inherited from the gendarmerie's job of registering a person's 'political reliability' (*politicheskaia blagonadezhnost*). A favourable judgement in this categorisation was needed from the Security Section (or, in its

.....
 'On the Significance of Emergency Legislation in Imperial Russia', *Slavic Review*, 54, no.3 (1995).

275 Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, p.307.

276 A.I.Spiridovich, 'Pri tsarskom rezhime,' p.137.

277 A.V.Gerasimov, *Der Kampf gegen die erste russische Revolution* (Leipzig, 1934), p.35.

278 This codified and placed new limits on the provisions of the unpublished decree of 1 Sept. 1878.

279 Secret societies were made illegal by a law of 27 March 1867. The powers of arrest in this regard were granted by a law of 4 June 1874: PSZ, 2nd series, vol.42, part 1, no.44402 and vol.49, part 1, no.53606.

absence, from the local gendarme directorate) for a person to enter state service.²⁸⁰ This has been seen as a sinister development towards totalitarian control.²⁸¹ All the same, the oppressive effect of a stamp of ‘political unreliability’ was being eroded by the growth of civil society and capitalism where such categorisations were irrelevant.

The most common misconception about the Okhrana is that the 1881 Security Law concentrated the punitive powers of the state in the hands of the central police *apparat*.²⁸² The reason for this misconception is the obvious fact that the Okhrana emerged at the same time as the Security Law. The terminology of the law and the role of the Security Sections also implied that the two measures were linked: The law of 1881 was abbreviated as ‘*Polzhenie ob okhrane*’ and the name of the sections for political investigations were termed ‘*Otdeleniia po okhrane*.’ The law of 1881 did not centralise the powers of political suppression in the hands of the Department of Police. In fact, it weakened Fontanka’s central control and ‘meant that the writ of the St Petersburg government sometimes did not even extend to the streets of its own capital’.²⁸³ Consequently, at the heart of the Okhrana, the Fontanka HQ, there was a great deal of opposition to the Security Law, because it was perceived as a usurpation of central power and influence by the governors.²⁸⁴

280 This measure was introduced in an unpublished Imperial Act of 1 Sept. 1878: Zaiionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhaviiia*, pp.76–77.

281 Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, p.307.

282 GARF, f.586, op.1, d.23, ll.1–14. For a published version see: PSZ, 3rd edition, vol.I, 1881, (St Petersburg, 1885), pp.261–65. ‘O merakh k okhraneniuiu gosudarstvennogo poriadka i obshchestvennogo spokoistviia.’ Commonly abbreviated to *Polozhenie ob usilennoi okhrane*. The most important measures empowering the Okhrana were in fact secret departmental circulars confirming their monopoly on investigative work. The first of these was MVD D.A.Tolstoy’s ‘Statute on Police Surveillance’ on 12 March 1883. Further important developments also occurred behind closed doors in 1898 (creation of the Special Section), 1902 (creation of Security Sections) and 1907 (Stolypin’s ‘Instructions’ on internal and external espionage and the creation of District Security Sections) and had little to do with the Security Law. P.Zaiionchkovskii, *The Russian Autocracy Under Alexander III*, pp.86–87.

283 Waldron, ‘States of Emergency,’ pp.27–28. Thurston, *Liberal City, Conservative State*, p.86. By 1905 Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Sevastapol, Kerch, Nikolaev, Rostov-na-Dona, Baku, and Yalta all had *gradonachalniki*.

284 Waldron, ‘States of Emergency’, pp.14–22. The tsar’s Ukase (*ukaz*) of 12 Dec. 1904 conceded that the 1881 law needed to be reformed. The two leading Ministers of 1905–06, Witte and Durnovo, were united in their criticism of the 1881 law. In spring 1905 the Ignat’ev commission was established to review this law.

To take any punitive action in the capital the St Petersburg Security Section needed an ‘order’ (i.e. a search and arrest warrant) from the City Governor. Even when they were granted permission from the governor, the Okhrana’s ‘punitive’ powers were limited to carrying out house searches without the courts prior approval, seizing any property regarded as suspicious and a two week preventive arrest. Following this the Okhrana had to hand the accused over to the judicial authorities and the preparation of the case for the prosecution had to be transferred to the local gendarme directorate.²⁸⁵ Moreover, in carrying out the search and arrest itself St Petersburg Security Section relied on the services of the ordinary police- viz., employees of the City Governor.

In stark contrast to these limited powers, the Governors’ extra-legal powers of political repression were manifold. From 1876 the Governor had the right to issue ‘binding regulations’ (*obiazatel’nye postanovleniia*)²⁸⁶ in addition to the normal criminal laws. These measures were codified in the infamous Security Law of 14 August 1881. In this law a City or Provincial Governor could petition the Minister of the Interior to declare his province to be in a state of emergency.²⁸⁷ There were two degrees of ‘emergency’. The most common was called ‘Reinforced Security’ (*Usilennaia okhrana*). The more extreme state of emergency– ‘Extraordinary Security’ (*Chrezvychainaia okhrana*)– was not employed until after 1905 and even then only sparingly.²⁸⁸ The whole of the St Petersburg province along with most of the empire was under a state of Reinforced Security for the whole of the period 1881–1917.²⁸⁹ This gave the Governor the power to punish transgressions of these ‘binding

285 Jacob Walkin, *The Rise of Democracy in Pre-Revolutionary Russia: Political and Social Institutions Under the Last Three Czars* (London, 1963), pp.56–58.

286 PSZ, 2nd series, no.56203, 13 July 1876.

287 Santoni, ‘P.N.Durnovo,’ p.198: In chaos of 1905 Durnovo left it to the Governors’ own discretion if and when to declare a state of emergency.

288 Daly, ‘On the Significance,’ p.614. A third ‘state’ existed, viz.: ‘rules for places not declared in a state of emergency.’ Only Extraordinary Security invested the Governor with as much power as the previous 5 April 1879 law..

289 Waldron, ‘States of Emergency,’ p.4: 1881–88 27.5million inhabitants lived under a state of reinforced security; in 1889– 22million; in 1890 17.8million; in the 1890s–20.6million; in 1903–30.6million; in 1906 70% of the Russian population; in 1912 2.3million lived under martial law and 63.3million lived under reinforced security.

regulations' or any threats to state order and public tranquillity with arbitrary arrest and automatic prison sentences of up to three months, fines up to five hundred rubles and the power to dismiss 'politically unreliable' publicly elected officials and subordinate civil servants.²⁹⁰ The Governor could forbid gatherings, shut down enterprises and prohibit residence in their area of jurisdiction.²⁹¹ To request that a prisoner be exiled the Governor had to pass the detainee on to trial by a Special Commission composed of two officials from the MVD and two from the Ministry of Justice and chaired by an Assistant Minister of the Interior.²⁹² St Petersburg employed the Security Law more extensively than any other city in the empire in the 1880s and 1890s. Between 1884 and 1895 Petersburg city and province 'banished' (i.e. banned from the specific region) 43,849 persons: compared to only 2,664 banished from the Moscow region.²⁹³ However, the scale of the Okhrana's involvement in the use of this measure has often been exaggerated: only a third of the 11,000 persons 'exiled' (a more severe punishment than banishment) between 1881 and 1904 were punished for political offences; and, to take another example: 35,784 residents were fined for traffic violations in St Petersburg on the authority of the Security Law in 1902 alone.²⁹⁴ St Petersburg Security Section's influence on the use of the Security Law was largely confined to nothing more severe than asking the City Governor to ban certain persons from residence (*vospreshat' prebyvanie*) in the capital.²⁹⁵

The Governor held the best cards when it came to punitive action. Consequently, the local Okhrana chief usually worked closely with

290 PSZ, 3rd series, no.350, 14 Aug. 1881; Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroys*, p.182. A secret Ministerial circular of 31 May 1885 even granted the provincial Governors the power to sentence peasants involved in uprisings to corporal punishment: Zaionchkovskii, *Rossiiskoe samoderzhavie*, pp.170–72.

291 This replaced a similar measure in the law of 19 Aug. 1879: PSZ, 2nd series, vol.54, part 2, no.59947.

292 Articles 33 & 34 of the 1881 Security Law.

293 Daly, 'On the Significance,' p.616.

294 R.S.Mulukaev, *Politsiia v Rossii, XIX v.-nach.XX v.* (Nizhnii-Novgorod, 1993), pp.46–47. Tiutiunnik, 'Departament politzii,' p.51. Daly, 'On the Significance,' pp.615–17. The other two thirds were peasants exiled at the request of their communes for anti-social behaviour and workers involved mostly in factory disorders.

295 Article 16 of the 1881 Security Law. Eroshkin, op.cit., p.288; Daly, 'On the Significance,' p.617.

Governor. For example, Denikin wrote that the Warsaw Governors-General, ‘drew information about life on the border exclusively from reports of their close assistants and the *okhranka*’.²⁹⁶ St Petersburg Security Section owed its autonomy therefore, partly to the fact that it managed to retain good relations with the City Governor (particularly D.V.Drachevskii the City Governor- *gradonachal’nik* - from 1907 to 1914) for most of the 1906–1914 period owing to the fact that they were all right-wingers. In fact the only disintegration of relations occurred because one particular Governor in 1906, V.F.von der Launits, was even more of a reactionary than the local *okhranniki*. The Director of the Department of Police, Lopukhin, described the Ministry of the Interior and the Special Section as: ‘completely powerless... the police and the gendarmerie were not in its hands but in those of the local Governors.’²⁹⁷ The Interior Ministry tried in vain to combat this problem. Security Sections were ordered by the Special Section in 1902 to keep their activities secret from the local Governor.²⁹⁸ This instruction had little impact because the *okhranniki* knew which side their bread was buttered on: the Department of Police only paid half of their wages (the remainder came from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes), whereas the Governors were the source of all their power.²⁹⁹

A great deal of tact and diplomacy was needed if the local Okhrana chief was to stay in favour with *both* the Department of Police and the local Governor.³⁰⁰ For example, the Moscow OO head, Martynov,

296 Denikin, op.cit., p.183. See also Kurlov, *Gibel*, p.115– on Lt.Gen.Utgod of the assistant to the Warsaw Governor General usurping political police authority in the area from the Department of Police.

297 Qtd. from Lopukhin’s letter to Stolypin 14 June 1906 exposing corruption within the secret police- Hoover Institution , B.I.Nicolaevskii Collection , Box 205, Folder ‘Letter to Stolypin’. The other Security Sections fell under even greater influence of the local Governor. The 1902 Department of Police Special Section, secret circular no.6641 appears to confirm this link to the Governor: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, Folder 8, 21 Oct. 1902. On the decentralising effects of the 1881 Security Law see: Peter Waldron, ‘States of emergency,’ pp.1–25.

298 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 9, DPOO secret circular no.6862, 30 Oct. 1902.

299 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, DP 4th Secretariat secret circular no.49484, 31 March 1912. In the circular The Assistant MVD Zolotarev had to remind Security Sections yet again that they were subordinate to the Department of Police and not to the local Governors.

300 Robbins *The Tsar’s Viceroy*s, p.194.

wrote that he avoided the set bureaucratic term *doklad* ('Report') in his reports to Provincial Governors because this would have implied that he was directly answerable to the Governor. Martynov recalled that he only felt duty-bound to report matters directly concerning the Governor, such as the 'general mood' [*obshchestvennoe nastroyenie*]: 'In my written correspondence with Governors I usually used the expression "I have the honour to present the news that..." [*imeiu chest' postavit' v izvestnost'*]' Nevertheless, Martynov was careful to avoid upsetting the Governor in the manner of other, 'obstinate heads of Gendarme Directorates who persistently wrote to Governors: "I report to Your Excellency"[*soobshchayu Vashemu Prevoskhoditel'stvu*].³⁰¹ This sort of language was seen as a snub to the Governor. Such petty-fogging points in etiquette made the difference between acknowledging the reports to the Governor as a duty or as a favour.

A last observation on the structure, implicit throughout this chapter, is that the secret police expanded and contracted on a piecemeal basis. This had its advantages (e.g. the Okhrana was responsive to change) and its disadvantages (e.g. the Okhrana's functions overlapped with various other police and governmental bodies). Secret agents were dismissed *en masse* in 1909 when the revolutionary movement appeared to be in decline. Security Sections were opened and closed according to the political climate at the time.³⁰² Petersburg Security Section retired a large number of its force of detectives before the Great War due to the decline in the number of 'political unreliaables' lurking on the streets of the capital.³⁰³ This then shows that there was no linear increment in the size of the secret police ascending— as Richard Pipes has argued— *towards a police state*. Moreover, although the Okhrana occupied a rather obscure and modest corner of the bureaucratic labyrinth in St. Petersburg, this position did bring some advantages: obscurity made it easier to

301 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.129.

302 Their duties and powers were transferred to the local Gendarme Directorates: Hoover, Okhrana Archive, Box 158, folder 11, MVD, DP, Special Section, Secret Circular No.99691, 15 May 1913.

303 Hoover Institution, Okhrana Archive Box 158, Folder 11, Top Secret Circular No.167410, 24 Feb. 1914. 98 detectives were laid off; however, a number of these did find posts in other Security Sections and gendarme directorates.

preserve secrecy. Also, with departmental co-operation the secret police were able to draw on the vast resources of the Interior Ministry: the Department of Press Affairs provided a steady stream of cuttings from domestic and foreign journals (and thus a steady flow of intelligence); the Department of the Censor kept the Okhrana's library of revolutionary literature up to date; and the Department of Posts and Telegraphs perustrated mail in abundance as prescribed by lists of suspicious persons supplied by the Department of Police. The result of the bureaucratic changes of 1880–81 was to create a less powerful but more effective political police force. It was not therefore the Okhrana's 'omnipotent' status which made it such a disturbing force. The most sinister feature of the Okhrana's structure was common – albeit in a less pronounced form – to government intelligence agencies of all political complexions throughout the twentieth century: the self-repeating infinities of a police bureaucracy: a confusion of overlapping duties and irregular chains of command. The Okhrana was unnerving because it was a labyrinth without a centre.

Chapter Four

Invisible Thread

Secret Police Personnel 1906–1914

This chapter will identify what kinds of people worked for the secret police, what their functions were, how they were organised, trained and deployed, how they differed from other government employees and how effective they were at their jobs. This approach is intended as a counterbalance to the previous chapter, highlighting the gap between the projected ideal of how the secret police were supposed to operate – as elucidated by its institutional structure – and the reality.

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Bureaucratic attempts to reform the political police in Imperial Russia usually concentrated on rationalising the structure of the *apparat*, as if fixing a mechanical flaw. This was applicable not just to internal organisation in HQ, but also to external ‘operational’ activities of the Okhrana. The Special Section tended to rely on administrative reform as its principal tool in the fight against the revolution: for example, to cope with the movement of revolutionaries into the provinces it replaced Moscow’s autonomous ‘Flying’ (*letuchii*) Detachment of ‘external [viz. surveillance] agents’ with its own ‘Central’ (*tsentral’nyi*) Detachment.¹ The Special Section also attempted to cut down on embarrassing information leaks by centralising the supervision of the most important spies (‘internal agents’) under the Highly Secret Agents’ Section (*Sverkhsekretnyi agenturnyi otdel*) in 1910. It attempted to combat Vladimir Burtsev’s counter-police by making the Foreign *Agentura* in Paris financially accountable to, and thereby subordinate to, the Special Section (in effect reducing it to the status of a Security Section).² To prevent further acts of provocation by secret agents the Special Section ordered in 1908 that the reports of agents comments had to be taken

1 *Sovetskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar’* p.43.

2 F. Zuckerman, ‘The Tsarist Political Police,’ p.376.

verbatim on a printed form which included a space for their comments.³ And to ensure the operational efficiency of all the Security Sections an office of the Inspectorate was attached to the Special Section from 1908 to 1912 under S.E.Vissarionov, who toured all the Okhrana offices around the empire.⁴

Yet, in reality this bureaucratic machine depended on the abilities of the flesh and blood staff, who were all too fallible. George Yaney has highlighted this unpredictability: 'If it is our purpose to understand Russian government, rather than to explain why it does not operate systematically, I think we shall have to root out our initial assumption that a bureaucracy is in essence a system. Let us say instead that it is a state of mind.'⁵ The system does not govern the behaviour of bureaucrats; instead bureaucrats govern the implementation of the system to suit themselves.

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Moreover, to view the Okhrana through the mechanical process of political police intelligence gathering operations, one is struck by the immense gulf between huge resources expended, the sheer bulk of daily surveillance reports, letters read, people followed etc. for very minor results in terms of curbing the revolutionary movement. Yet, this does not mean that the Okhrana had very little impact on the course of events in late Imperial Russia. When we analyse the human factor in espionage a very different picture emerges. The psychological impact of the secret police system was immense: In the final analysis, this lies at the crux of whether the Okhrana was useful or harmful to the tsarist regime. This is an observation which has been applied to espionage systems throughout history: Sun Tzu, argued that the management of personnel, 'the subtle manipulation of invisible threads' or 'the divine skein,' was the key to effective espionage operations.⁶ Or to take a more recent example: When the

3 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.189–90.

4 Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarsvennykh uchrezhdenii*, p.90; Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.222.

5 George Yaney, 'Bureaucracy as Culture: A Comment,' *Slavic Review*, vol.41 (Spring, 1982), p.106.

6 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans., Samuel Griffith (Oxford Uni Press, 1971), p.145. MOO head Martynov made a similar observation: the 'scientific' operation of an intelligence service had definite limits. Sooner or later the *okhrannik* had to fall back on his own instincts, the subtle interplay of human relations and emotions, 'knowing' people and acting accordingly. See Wraga intro to Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.x.

flight of Kim Philby revealed that the labyrinthine complexities of Cold War duplicity, double-agents, and disinformation had reached absurd proportions, one author concluded that, ‘espionage is really a branch of psychological warfare,’ and that the information gleaned from spies was less important than their utility in corroding the morale of the opposition.⁷

Part I: The Directors

The Okhrana divided its personnel into three categories: directors, external agents and internal agents. The structure of this chapter will follow their categorisation. I will concentrate on the Okhrana agents who worked in St Petersburg from 1906 to 1914. The directors of the Okhrana were what in modern parlance would be called intelligence officers, and were referred to at the time usually as ‘investigations officers’ [*rozysknye ofitsery*].⁸ Their job was to run the chancelleries of the secret police in St. Petersburg located at Fontanka 16 (the Department of Police, 1881–1917) and Gorokhovaia Street 2, Moika 12 and Aleksandrovskii Prospekt 2 (the homes of St Petersburg Security Section from 1866–1901, 1901–1907 and 1907–1917 respectively). In addition to this they had to supervise the internal and external agencies, to act as case officers to external and internal agents, to interrogate prisoners, to recruit agents, to record, process and interpret all the information coming from Okhrana sources and

7 Graham Greene preface to Kim Philby, *My Silent War* (Moscow, 1968). ‘A spy allowed to continue his work without interference is far less dangerous than they spy who is caught. How right SIS was to defend Philby and how wrong MI5 to force him into the open. The West suffered more from his flight than from his espionage. I sometimes like to imagine what would have occurred if Kim Philby had in fact, as many foretold, become C, the Chief of the Secret Service. The kind of information he would have had at his disposal as C would hardly have increased greatly in interest, and it might even have diminished: no nuts and bolts stuff, only the minutes of great vacuous high-level conferences. The moment would certainly have arrived sooner or later when the KGB thought it time to arrange a tip-off to MI5, followed by C’s successful flight and the world’s laughter.’

8 All biographical details, unless otherwise specified have been compiled from: PTsR, vol.7, pp.299–443; Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.303–19; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.323–41; & Globachev, ‘Pravda Russkoi revoliutsii,’ chpts 8–10. For longer staff lists see: GARF, f.102, op.239 (DPOO, 1909g.), dd.1–136.

to facilitate the smooth flow of information in the bureaucracy upwards and to channel instructions, orders and summaries downwards.

The staff profile is a rich source for study because the leading *okhranniki* came from a large variety of social,⁹ racial¹⁰ and educational backgrounds. Their political persuasions were impossible to pigeon-hole: they ranged from liberals (Lopukhin and N.A. Makarov) to conservative reformists (Trusevich), traditionalists (Dzhunkovskii) and reactionaries (Kurlov); from the politically indifferent professional policemen (Gerasimov and Martynov) to the indefinable (Rachkovskii – a liberal-proto-fascist); and from the benignly paradoxical (Zubatov – a monarchist-socialist) to the more malevolent variety (Komissarov a *pogromshchik* and future Cheka spy).¹¹

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Nevertheless, a rudimentary categorisation of two types of Okhrana officer can be extrapolated from a cross section of the officials holding the two principal seats of power in the Okhrana in St Petersburg: the directorships of the Department of Police and of St Petersburg Security Section.¹²

Chart 4a The Police Chiefs at the Fontanka HQ and St Petersburg OO

KEY: A '+' indicates that the official moved to the Department of Police from the Ministry of Justice procuracy; an '*' indicates a university education. A '(g)' indicates that the individual was an officer from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes.¹³

9 They certainly weren't all aristocrats—e.g.: A.V.Gerasimov; E.P.Mednikov (Head of Moscow External Agency 1894–1902 & DPOO External Agency until 1904 was an Old Believer of humble origins); and the obscurely born S.V.Zubatov and S.P.Beletskii were (after perhaps Rasputin and Witte) two of the most successful social climbers in late Imperial Russia.

10 The huge variety (even by cosmopolitan Imperial Russian standards) of different nationalities of the leading *okhranniki* from 1900–1917 included: converted Jews (S.E.Vissarionov, A.A.Harting, M.Gurovich, I.F.Manasevich-Manuilov), Poles (M.S.Trusevich, P.I.Rachkovskii), those with Germanic Lutheran background (M.F.von Kotten), Ukrainians (A.V.Gerasimov, P.K.Popov, N.N.Kuliabko, N.M.Kuzubov- the head of Odessa Gendarme Directorate), and French (V.A.Brune de St Hyppolite, Henri Bint), Bulgarian (R.G.Mollov, police director Sept.–Nov.1915).

11 A full description educational backgrounds and biographical details of all the names mentioned so far will be discussed through the rest of the chapter.

12 Known respectively as *direktor*, *nachal'nik* and *zavedivaiushchii*.

13 The three previous gendarme heads of StPbOO were: G.P.Sudeikin, 1880–1883; P.V.Sekerinskii 1884–1899; & N.V.Piramidov, 1899–1901.

Directors of the Department of Police Heads Petersburg Security Section

1902–1905	A.A.Lopukhin+*	Ia.G.Sazonov(g)	1901–1903
1905–1906	E.I.Vuich,+	L.N.Kremenetskii(g)	1903–1905
1906–1909	M.I.Trusevich+	A.V.Gerasimov (g)	1905–1909
1909–1912	N.P.Zuev ¹⁴	S.G.Karpov(g)	April– Dec. 1909
1912–1914	S.P.Beletskii*	M.A.Konisskii(g)	1909–1910
1914–15	V.A.Brune-de-St-Hyppolite+*	M.F.Von Kotten(g)	1910–1914
1915–1916	Kafafov, K.D.+*	P.K.Popov(g)	1914–1915
March-Sept. 1916	E.K.Klimovich (g)	K.I.Globachev(g)	1915–1917
1916–1917	A.T.Vasil'ev+*		

Three initial observations can be made:

- i) The Okhrana at this level was dominated by two types of officer: the bureaucrat and the gendarme;
- ii) their duties were fairly clearly divided between bureaucrats at headquarters on the Fontanka and gendarmes in ‘operations’ in the ‘field’;
- iii) there was some temporal coincidence between a change in police directors and a change in Security Section chiefs.

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The members of St Petersburg’s bureaucracy have often been defined as a distinct social category: ‘officialdom’ (*chinovnichestvo*). Officialdom was separate from the provincial, land-owning aristocracy (*dворянство*). A narrow band of landless aristocrats, whose noble status had been awarded as a result of their service in the central administration, occupied 60% of the positions in the top four ranks of the bureaucracy. They formed a sort of Russian *noblesse de robe*.¹⁵ In contrast, 60% of the Governors in the provinces were important landowners. One might argue that provincial governors were drawn from, as it were, a Russian *noblesse oblige*. St Petersburg bureaucrats appear to have been the more modern, provincial bureaucrats the more traditional. Nevertheless, the former was still a somewhat exclusive caste: the Petersburg *noblesse de robe* came from a small

14 Zuev had not worked for the procuracy, but he had been educated at the Imperial School of Law.

15 W.E.Mosse, ‘Bureaucracy and Nobility in Russia at the End of the Nineteenth Century,’ *The Historical Journal*, vol.24, no.3 (1981), p.606. 71% of the top four ranks in all were held by noblemen: Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, pp.36–37.

consanguineous world where they were educated in the same schools: the Corps des Pages, Imperial School of Law, the Juridical Faculty of Moscow University and the Alexander Lycee; lived in the same district of the capital (*Liteinaia chast'*); and ate and drank at the same clubs (usually the *Evropeiskaia* Hotel Restaurant and the Imperial Yacht Club Bar). The Department of Police bureaucrats were not as elevated in social status as the staff of the Foreign Ministry, let alone the elevated ranks the Court *camarilla*. Nevertheless, they still belonged in the middle ranks of the *chinovnichestvo*: sharing a common educational, cultural and social background with bureaucrats across the whole range of government ministries.¹⁶

It is clear from the chart that the bureaucrats were very well educated. Since 1809 the MVD, Speranskii, had made exams compulsory for middle to high-ranking positions in the Ministry of the Interior. This at least clears the bureaucrats in the top echelons of the Okhrana from the characterisation offered by the contemporary journalist and liberal Duma deputy, V.M.Gessen, who wrote in 1908: 'We can't hide the truth: police service has long been considered by us as shameful; persons possessing the intellectual and moral qualifications necessary for police service do not go into it. So it will be until the time comes when the police in general, and the gendarmes in particular, lose their inherently anti-social character.'¹⁷

A second preconception can also be partially dispelled by evidence of Chart 4a: the belief that the Department of Police was the bulwark of the proponents of the *Polizeistaat*. Around 90% of the Directors of the Department of Police had their roots in the Ministry of Justice, which was supposedly the centre of support for the antithetical concept of the *Rechtsstaat*.¹⁸ One of the primary directives issued to all Security Sections was that the: 'necessary conditions for proper investigations... are legality and the moral purity of investigatory methods.'¹⁹

16 Imperial School of Law, Moscow, Kiev and Petersburg Universities and the Ministry of Justice procuracy.

17 V.M.Gessen, *Iskliuchitel'noe polozenie* (St Petersburg, 1908), p.72.

18 D.Orlovsky, 'Recent Studies on the Russian Bureaucracy,' *Russian Review*, vol.35 (Oct.1976), pp.448–51. F.W,Wcislo, 'Bureaucratic Reform before World War I,' *Russian History*, vol.16 (1981).

19 J. Schneiderman, 'From the Files of Moscow Gendarme Corps,' *Canadian Slavic Review*, II, no.1 (1968) p.89.

The bureaucrats clung to established routines in the processing of paperwork in an attempt to impose order and rationality on their chaotic jobs. In many ways this was a benefit to the secret police as an efficient filing system is the *sine qua non* of any effective intelligence agency. The result was a thoroughness lacking in the gendarme dominated Third Section. By 1900 the Special Section had amassed a card index of 55,000 names; a library of 5,000 revolutionary publications and 20,000 photographs. By 1917 the card index was rumoured to contain up to three million names. SRs were registered on red cards, SDs on blue cards, anarchists on green cards, students on yellow cards and all others involved in politics on white cards. All houses in the city of St Petersburg were colour coded in the police records if the buildings had any connection with the movement of revolutionaries (not only if a political suspect lived there but also even if one happened to visit a building).²⁰ To disseminate a digested form of this information the Department of Police produced an 'Alphabetical list of persons under investigation', a sort of who's who of the revolutionary underground. The books were first issued in the 1880s to all Gendarme Directorates and Security Sections. While the 1889 list had only 221 names and the 1899 still only 624 names – the 1910 list contained some 13,000 names in a series of huge grey volumes.²¹ Reports were also regularly issued to the lower rungs of the Okhrana through twice monthly circulars and in a twice-weekly synopsis that was sent to the Minister of the Interior and the tsar.²²

20 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.255, *Sbornik tsirkuliarov*, ll.11–16 ob. Houses were colour coded red, white and green. The hotbeds of revolutionary activity would have information in all three colours of card piled one on top of the other.

21 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 157, folders 2–6. The full title of the publication was 'Alfavitnyi spisok lits rozyskivaemykh tsirkuliarami Departamenta politicii.' Printed by the Press of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes, Spasskaia Ulitsa, 17 (St.Petersburg).

22 Vassilyev, *The Okhrana*, p.91. On reports to the tsar leaked from 1898 see 'Tsarskii listok,' *Byloe*, no.7 (1908), pp.95–103.

The Gendarmes

The majority of Okhrana officers in the field were drawn from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes.²³ They enjoyed a certain elevated and independent status even inside the Okhrana. We can locate the reason for this when we look at their salaries. As officers of the imperial army they were considerably better paid than ordinary policemen and their income came from numerous sources (making it difficult to subordinate them to a monocratic unified chain of command). The heads of Petersburg Security Section and the Special Section (when the post was occupied by a gendarme) were paid part of their salary, 3,000 rubles a year, by the War Ministry.²⁴ On the face of it this was a fairly low wage considering the fact that an ordinary police chief (*politseimeister*) earned 4,000 rubles a year,²⁵ his assistant 2,000 rubles and the Interior Ministry bureaucrat who held Director of the Department of Police earned nearly 12,000 rubles a year.²⁶ However, the gendarme *okhranniki* also received wages from the Department of Police. Financial bonuses were often forthcoming, particularly from the Fontanka's secret fund. The head of St Petersburg Security Section received 150 rubles a month from the

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- 23 Staff lists of the Department of Police, the Security sections and Provincial Gendarme Directorates are kept in: GARF f.102 op.239 dd.1–136 (1863–1917). Further staff files are also gathered in GARF, f.102, op.270, dd.1–561 (1881–1917): these files cover a wider variety of issues which crossed the desk registers in the First Office – including recruitment, dismissals, pensions, and the journals listing all gendarme inquests from 1897–1917. See: GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.44.
- 24 Gerasimov's travel expenses for 1909 amounted to almost 1,300 rubles: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.261, l.20. Martynov similarly estimated his travel expenses, as head of Moscow OO, to be 100 rubles a month: Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.216. GARF f.102 op.244 d.325 ll.5–6, 23 Dec.1914, DPOO to Head of Separate Corps. An adjutant received pay of 1,200 a year and 200 rubles allowance to buy his state costume (civil service uniform).
- 25 There were considerable more *politseimeisters* than Security Section heads, e.g. Moscow had 6: Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.224.
- 26 GARF, f.102, op.295, d.4, ll.1–46: lists names, salaries and partial information on the service career of over 300 members of staff up to 1911 at the time N.P.Zuev was Director on 958 rubles a month. *Chinovniki osobykh poruchenii* (largely ceremonial positions) could earn over 2000 rubles a month (paid from the secret fund) as free-floating trouble shooters of the Interior Ministry, though their salaries were less regular. The head of the Foreign Agency 2,400 rubles per month also from the secret fund (though some of this probably went towards the upkeep of his *agentura*).

Department of Police.²⁷ He could also expect generous compensation for travel expenses, grants for clothes, a large state apartment and free tickets to the theatre.²⁸ The Assistant MVD in charge of police enjoyed similar privileges because his appointment also gave him the position of *komandir* of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes. This meant that the incumbent received the bulk of his salary (15,000 rubles a year) plus an automobile from the War Ministry, and a further five thousand rubles per annum plus yet another automobile from the Department of Police. The Interior Ministry also provided him with luxurious accommodation.²⁹

The gendarmes who entered Okhrana service were also better educated than Gessen's characterisation implied. Unlike 79% of police chiefs, all the heads of St Petersburg Security Section had a secondary education.³⁰ Moreover, two of them, Von Kotten and Globachev, were graduates of the elite Nicholas Academy (*Nikolaevskaia akademiia*) of the General Staff, which distinguished them as, in the words of one historian, 'the educational elite of the tsarist army.'³¹

27 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.216. P.A.Zaionchkovskii, *Pravitel'stvennyi apparat samoderzhavnoi Rossii v XIX v.* (Moscow, 1978), pp.86–89. Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.62. Clerks earned 360 rubles a year; ordinary police officers (*okolotochnye nadzirатели*) earned up to 400 rubles a year in the capital; and accountants working in the bureaucracy earned a measly 180 rubles a year.

28 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64, l.220, 22 Sept. 1910: wages for 1910: Director of the Department of Police earned 7,000 rubles a year. The Assistant head of Security Section and head of a desk within the Security Section earned 4,200 rubles a year. The assistants to the head of a Security Section desk in the capital earned 3,704 rubles 40 kopecks a year. The chief clerks in each office would earn 1,800 rubles. Detectives earned between 480 and 800 rubles a year (depending on how long they had served the Okhrana). The heads of smaller Security Sections earned 2,000 rubles a year and their assistants earned 1,200 rubles year. Officers living in St Petersburg also got an extra 25 rubles a month. See: Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.28.

29 V.F.Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1997), vol.2, p.116.

30 N.Weissman, 'Regular Police in Tsarist Russia: 1900–1914,' *Russian Review*, vol.20 (1985), 55: Of ordinary police chiefs only 3% had a higher education and only 21% had even a secondary education.

31 John Bushnell, 'The Tsarist Officer Corps: Customs, Duties, Inefficiency,' pp.771–72. Peter Kenez, 'A Profile of the Prerevolutionary Officer Corps,' *California Slavic Studies*, vol.7 (1973) pp.138, & 153–57.

Training of gendarmes began at the St. Petersburg Academy of the Separate Corps.³² The entrant was required to be of noble birth,³³ have six years distinguished service in the army and have passed an entrance exam in St Petersburg. The course lasted over a year and included some practical instruction in ‘tradecraft’: agent recruitment, cryptology, letter opening techniques, surveillance and investigation, and the history of the Russian revolutionary movement.³⁴ A large part of their education was also given over to civil and criminal law. However there were considerable flaws in the training at the Separate Corps, largely because they gave gendarmes the same course regardless of what area of service they wished to enter. Thus, the future intelligence officers received the same training as cavalrymen, border guards, railway police etc. in classes where: ‘Students aspired mainly to big city posts and railway directorates,’ and cared little for political investigations.³⁵ Lessons tended to reflect these aspirations. The bulk of the lessons therefore focussed on railway administration and reading through old files from gendarme inquests.

Clearly this frustrated ambitious young officers who thought they were about to be initiated into the occult art of espionage. ‘Our questions about political investigations were met with a mysterious silence, we would only learn about it from the real thing.’³⁶ Thus, work experience was considered the best preparation for future service in the field of political investigations.³⁷ Ideally this would consist of secondment to a small Security Section or large Gendarme

32 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.16–18. This was housed in the St Petersburg Gendarme Divizion.

33 Large numbers of exceptions were made to this rule, which had been almost become defunct by the turn of the twentieth century.

34 Dzhunkovskii’s suggested reading for trainee investigators was Lt.Col. F.S.Rozhanov’s ‘Zapiski po istorii revoliutsionnago dvizheniia v Rossii’: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 11, DPOO secret circular no.165632, 14 Jan. 1914. PTsR, vol.3, p.34. See also: Tennant Ellis, *The Department of Police 1911–1913: From the Recollections of Nikolai Vladimirovich Veselago*, MS in Hoover Institution, Edward Ellis Smith Collection Box 1, p.19. I.A.Zybin, who had run the codes and ciphers office in Fontanka since 1902, gave a six-week lecture course on cryptology.

35 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.16–20, 28.

36 *Ibid.*, p.27.

37 GARF f.102 op.244 (1914) d.325 : *O prikomandirovanii Ad’iutantov zhandarmских управлений k otdeleniiam obshchestv. bezopasnosti i poriadka...dliia izucheniia rozyska.*

Directorate, followed by appointment as head of a Security Section.³⁸ Work experience was not always particularly helpful: Martynov was attached to St Petersburg Security Section for several weeks before taking up his first major appointment at Saratov Provincial Gendarme Directorate. The head, Gerasimov, was too busy to spend much time with him and the only piece of advice he had to offer was: ‘You need to have a head on your shoulders. That is all there is to it’³⁹

There are numerous examples stored in the Department of Police archives of the process of recruiting and appointing directors of *politicheskii rozysk*. A very comprehensive example is the search for a new head of Riga Security Section in July 1908, for which Klimovich, the Special Section chief, circulated a list of ninety proposed candidates.⁴⁰ It draws enlightening comments from the network of secret police chiefs as regards what were considered the necessary qualities for a head of a Security Section. The principal questions asked when recruiting junior gendarme officers and NCOs were ‘information about the conduct, morality, political reliability and convictions’⁴¹ of a candidate in question. The principal concerns in the replies focused on concrete matters such as work experience and education; but also on subjective issues, such as the enthusiasm of the candidate for the job, temperament, resourcefulness, initiative, and ‘moral qualities’.⁴²

A fundamental flaw in the training and appointment process can be discerned in these archival records: The primary attribute required for appointment to a Security Section was work experience in the field of political investigations. This was all well and good, but for the fact the only way for a gendarme to secure work experience in political investigations was *to request* appointment to a Security Section. This posed problems because the officers in charge of appointing gendarmes to the Okhrana were in the staff office of the

38 See GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.325, ll.1–14; and f.102, op.238 (DPOO, 1908g.), d.541: for files on the procedure of sending aides-de-camp for work experience at Security Sections.

39 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.64.

40 GARF f.102 op.238 d.541 ll.1–5 July 1908.

41 GARF f.102 op.244 (1914) d.91: *O nizhnikh chinakh postupaiushchikh v shtab korpusa zhandarmov* (File on the lower ranks entering the staff of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes)

42 GARF, f.102, op.238, d.541, ll.6–29, July 1908.

Separate Corps of Gendarmes. As one *okhrannik* noted: ‘In general the Staff [office of the Separate Corps] was an opponent of [political] investigations, considering it a dirty business.’⁴³ And consequently any officer that requested work in a Security Section was deemed, *ipso facto*, politically unreliable. A.P.Martynov, later to become head of Moscow OO from 1912 to 1917, was himself ensnared in this classic catch-22: on passing his gendarme staff exams in the top set he requested a posting in political investigations. However, the staff office considered this too lowly an ambition and appointed him to the more prestigious position of *aide-de-camp* of the head of St Petersburg Provincial Gendarme Directorate. His attempt to resist this posting only soured his relations with his superior officers at staff headquarters, who later tried to sabotage his attempts to transfer into the Okhrana by posting him to a provincial border post.⁴⁴

This situation was often exacerbated by the *komandir* of the Separate Corps. All of the successive *komandiry* during the period of this study (Baron M.A. von Taube 1906–09, P.G.Kurlov 1909–11, V.A.Tolmachev 1911–13, V.F.Dzhunkovskii 1913–15) attempted to revive aspects of the older traditions of the gendarmerie: such as independence from bureaucratic interference and more active, visible roles in political investigations.⁴⁵ Kurlov complained that: ‘Investigative officers came to consider themselves in an exclusive position: they were completely ignorant of the local administration...[this ignorance] tore the soul out of this section of the armed forces [i.e. the Separate Corps].’⁴⁶ General Dzhunkovskii in particular frustrated the process of trying to create a professional security police detached from the Separate Corps. For example, in 1913 he issued the following circular: ‘Some adjutants of Gendarme Directorates have requested transfers shortly after their appointments to their posts which are motivated by a desire to acquire a more thorough acquaintance with political investigations. I consider this impermissible and officers when beginning their gendarme service [*sluzhba*] should put all their

43 A.I.Spiridovich, ‘Pri tsarskom rezhime,’ *Arkhiv Russkoi Revoliutsii*, vol.15, p.116.

44 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.32–38.

45 Kurlov, *Gibel’ imperatorskoi Rossii*, pp.78 & 105. Stolypin asked Sukhomlinov to remove von Taube in 1909 because he stood in the way of bringing the Separate Corps fully under the aegis of the MVD.

46 Kurlov, *Gibel’ imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.80.

strength into mastering *every aspect* of their work and not to choose a speciality from their first steps.⁴⁷ [My italics]. In other words he wished them to respect the broader functions of the gendarmerie and not to use this august body as some sort of preparatory school for the Okhrana. He continued further in still firmer tones: 'I ask you to remember this in future and give you notice that any similar requests, even by command, will be left by me without approval, and will incur the very strictest penalties [*budut podvergat'sia samomu strogomu vzyskaniuu*].'⁴⁸

This process was only reformed during the war, when the Director Department of Police petitioned Dzhunkovskii to end the transfer of gendarmes in Security Sections to the Russian Western Front by the Separate Corps and to compel the staff office to approve the requests of suitable gendarme aides-de-camp to transfer to Security Sections.⁴⁹

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Coalition and conflict among personnel

An analysis of the human factor, their attitudes and beliefs, inside the Okhrana indicates a less visible basis for group identity among security police. This is just as important a factor as institutional affiliation, if not more so. Rationalist bureaucratic reformers thought that it was a structural anomaly which caused this so-called 'dual-power' and the insubordinacy of the *okhranniki*.⁵⁰ However, a study of personnel shows that it was also the conflicting *attitudes* of staff that gave rise to dual-power. The bureaucrats came from outside police service and applied the same organisational methods to this work as they would to any other area of government business. In contrast to this, the gendarmes had spent their careers immersed in the practical side of political police work. Consequently, the Security Section officers often ignored the directives of the Department of Police, not

47 GARF f.102 op.244 (1914) d.325 l.2, 7 May 1913.

48 Ibid.

49 GARF f.102 op.244 d.325, ll.5–6, 23 Dec. 1914. The empty Okhrana sections included: Eastern-Siberian, Turkestan and Vladivostok District Security Sections and Investigation Points at Khabarovsk, Nakol'sk-Ussuriiskii, Blagovechensk, Novo-Nikolaevsk, Enisei, Askhabad, Nikolaev, and Rostov on Don

50 Lopukhin, *Nastoiashchee i budushchee*, pp.19, 67–69.

because they were following the orders of the Separate Corps, but because they considered that the legal-eagles at the Department of Police knew very little about the practical business of espionage.⁵¹ To cite just a few examples: The Fontanka *chinovnik*, S.E.Vissarionov's inspection tours of the empire's Security Sections of 1908–1912 had aroused the hostility of the gendarmerie, claimed one official, not because they were intrusive but because the inspections, 'did not uncover the right persons responsible for service blunders.'⁵² The Court *okhrana* chief, Spiridovich, said he couldn't co-operate with the Minister of the Interior, A.N.Khvostov, in 1915 because he was, 'an ignoramus in both politics and police.'⁵³ In 1916 the Police Director, General E.K.Klimovich, became embroiled in a feud with the MVD, Stürmer, whom he considered incapable of supervising police affairs.⁵⁴ Klimovich, like most other gendarmes, often disregarded bureaucratic proceduralism. As the first gendarme to ascend to the Directorship of the Department of Police in 1916, Klimovich expressed his contempt for superfluous paperwork in a leading circular to the Security Sections, which stated: 'Our ideal is this: the less you write the better! There is nothing worse than excessive chatter.'⁵⁵

The difference between the gendarmes and the bureaucrats derived from the fact that before entering the Separate Corps of Gendarmes the officers had to spend a minimum of six years in the ordinary armed forces. This engendered a sense of separateness rooted in their military background and a self-image as expressed by Spiridovich that they were: 'part of the Russian army summoned to stand on

51 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.55: A perfect example of this is Martynov's explanation of the unpopularity of Deputy Director DP S.E.Vissarionov- 'He was not "one of us"' (*On byl ne "nash"*).

52 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros S.P.Beletskogo*, pp.265–66. Beletskii was a friend of Vissarionov and not a gendarme so he can be counted as a reasonably reliable witness. See also: Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.214

53 A.Ia.Avrekh, *Tsarizm nakanune sverzheniia* (Moscow, 1989), p.110.

54 PTsR, vol.1, *Dopros E.K.Klimovicha*, p.72: Klimovich described police affairs under Stürmer as 'completely without a rudder, without a sail, not knowing what to do.' Stürmer did not help his reputation by consulting Manasevich-Manuilov on Okhrana affairs. Manuilov was considered a charlatan and a crook by the gendarmerie. Zuckerman, 'The Political Police, War, and Society in Russia,' pp.38–39.

55 PTsR, Vol.3, *Dopros Klimovicha*, p.286.

guard over the existing state order.’⁵⁶ The gendarmerie’s unique, separate status as an order dedicated: ‘to protecting the state and social order from the malicious attacks of revolutionary organisations,’⁵⁷ was symbolised by their rather extravagant dark blue uniforms, with white gloves, frock-coat and sultan spike of white horse hair on the lamb skin parade helmet. They were largely intended as window dressing for the mystique of power, with gendarme guards attached to the most prominent symbols of imperial rule (public buildings, imperial theatres, railways, canals, border points, etc.) Their common military background inculcated a fierce sense of duty and ‘service’ to the tsar lacking in many time serving bureaucrats. Dominic Lieven has argued that the bureaucracy by 1900 had abandoned concepts of dynastic service: ‘and were devoted instead to a vision of the common weal.’⁵⁸ There was thus a notable difference between the ideology of the gendarme and that of the bureaucrat. Yet there was also room for co-operation: according to original concept of the Separate Corps dynastic service and serving the common weal were one and the same thing.

The institutional structure did help create some sort of unity among security police to a small degree: the Special Section in particular became the centre of a process of evolving co-operation. The chart below (4b) shows that over the years heads of the Special Section had been drawn from both categories of Okhrana officers: bureaucrats and gendarmes; and in addition to this also from former spies. The Special Section’s role therefore was not just important on a structural level as the organisational centre, it also acted a melting pot for conflicting attitudes. It was in the Special Section that the Okhrana staff can be seen as truly distinct from both the bureaucracy and the Separate Corps of Gendarmes: in effect a unique, hybrid body of personnel.

Chart 4b: Heads of the Special Section

KEY (same as before): A ‘+’ indicates that the official moved to the Department of Police from the Ministry of Justice procuracy; an ‘*’

56 Schneiderman, ‘From the Files’, p.89.

57 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.12–13.

58 Lieven, *Russian Rulers Under the Old Regime* (London, 1989), p.25

indicates a university education. A '(g)' indicates that the individual was an officer from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes.

1898–1902	L.A.Rataev (Department of Police <i>chinovnik</i>)
1902–1905 (intermittently)	N.A.Makarov+*
1902–1903 (intermittently)	S.V.Zubatov (former spy)
Sept.1905–Jan.1906	L.A.Timofeev (Department of Police <i>chinovnik</i>)
1905–1906	P.I.Rachkovskii (former spy) ⁵⁹
Jan.–Feb.1906	N.A.Makarov+*
1906–1908	A.T.Vasil'ev+*
1908–1909	S.E.Vissarionov +*
Aug.–Dec.1909	E.K.Klimovich (g)
1910–1913	A.M.Eremin (g)
1913–Dec.1916	M.E.Broetskii+*
Dec.1916–Feb. 1917	I.P.Vasil'ev (g)

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Former revolutionaries and spies entered the official ranks of Okhrana staff through the unofficial 'internal agency.' The examples of this kind of leading Okhrana officer are so few that they can all be named: S.V.Zubatov, P.I.Rachkovskii, I.F.Manasevich-Manuilov, I.V. Dobroskok,⁶⁰ P.S. Statkovskii,⁶¹ M.E.Bakai,⁶² L.P.Menshchikov,⁶³

59 Rachkovskii's post was known as the 'Head of the Political Section' (*Nachal'nik politicheskoi chasti*). The Special Section had its own head at the same time.

60 Dobroskok was an informer in the SD party until 1905 when he was exposed and began working as a secret agent case officer in St Petersburg OO.

61 P.S.Statkovskii, 'S.Peterburgskoe okhrannoe otdelenie v 1895–1901gg. ("Trud" chinovnika Otdeliia P.Statkovskogo.)' *Byloe*, vol.16 (1921), pp.108–36. Statkovskii worked as an internal agent for StPbOO from 1887 spying on St Petersburg University students from 1887 to 1893; from 1893–1905 he worked in the offices of Petersburg Security Section and in the Department of Police, 1905–1912.

62 M.E.Bakai was recruited as an Okhrana spy in Ekaterinoslav from 1900 and soon after took up a position in the offices of Warsaw Security Section. He began secretly working for Burtsev while still employed at Warsaw OO, he was caught and exiled to Siberia in 1907; in 1908 he escaped from exile and went to work for Burtsev in Paris.

63 L.P.Menshchikov (1869–1932) was a member of *Narodnaia volia* until his arrest and recruitment into Moscow Okhrana's internal agency in 1887; 1889–1902 he worked in Zubatov's office; 1902–06 in the Special Section; he was sacked in 1906 for sending a letter to an SR identifying party members Tartarov and Azef as StPbOO spies; in 1906 he moved to France and began working of Vladimir Burtsev. L.P.Menshchikov, *Okhrana i revoliutsiia: k istorii tainykh politicheskikh organizatsii v Rossii*, three vols. (Moscow, 1925–32).

M.I.Gurovich⁶⁴ and A.M.Harting.⁶⁵ The first two men were the most influential of this group. S.V.Zubatov (1864–1917) was recruited as a spy for Moscow OO in 1886, he was exposed a spy in 1887 and was soon after taken on as an officer in the same Security Section. In 1893 Zubatov became assistant head of Moscow OO, and in 1895 head. He went on to become head of the Special Section from 1902 to 1903. Rachkovskii (1851–1910) was intermittently a revolutionary and Third Section spy during the 1870s, from 1885–1902 he was head of the Foreign Agency, and from 1905–06 head of the ‘political section’ of the Department of Police. The *official* employment of former secret agents in the Okhrana offices was prohibited by the Special Section after the defections to the revolutionary camp of Bakai in 1906 and Menshchikov in 1909. This rule had actually existed since 1902, but was only enforced with firmness after 1910.⁶⁶ The decision to enforce the rule was galvanised by Vladimir Burtsev’s activities exposing agents provocateurs which could have caused problems if any of them proved to be high level government employees: secret agents were ‘deniable’, official *chinovniki* were not.

Towards a unified Okhrana ethic: Tradecraft

All the same, there is no doubt that the former secret agents were the crucial ingredients in the crystallisation of a *modus operandi*, or professional ethic, for the ‘new people’ at Okhrana headquarters. In

64 M.I.Gurovich (d.1914) worked for Zubatov as a spy in the 1890s, he headed the Bucharest *Agentura* from 1900 to 1903; from 1903 to 1906 he was a leading intelligence officer in the Special Section in charge of inspecting Security Sections. Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 21 (ref 3f), folder 1a. Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.36–42.

65 Harting worked as an agent of the Third Section and the Okhrana in the early 1880s under his original name of Gekel’man; he was forced to flee abroad after his exposure in 1884; in Zurich he began working under the name of Landezen for the head of the Foreign Agency, P.I.Rachkovskii; in 1900 he changed his name to Harting and became head of the Berlin branch of the Okhrana; in 1905 he worked with Rachkovskii in the Special Section and went on to head the Foreign Agency from 1905 until his exposure in 1909. Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.304.

66 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, box 158, folder 10, DPOO Top Secret Circular no.116818, 19 Oct. 1910. Article 10 ‘Polozheniia ob Okhrannykh otdeleniakh’ (1902): prohibited former state criminals or even secret agents from taking up an official post in the Security Sections or other police organs

the final analysis engendering a shared professional ethic was the last best hope of uniting the security police. The one common denominator was their dedication to the job and a rudimentary set of shared beliefs as to how this job should be carried out. Aleksandr Martynov noted that despite the bitter rivalries in political police service, ‘there existed a kind of unwritten custom, by which all gendarme officers, serving directly in political investigations, visited each other on their journeys whenever they passed through the corresponding cities... to exchange news and information regarding investigative work.’⁶⁷ This set of beliefs was hammered out in departmental circulars giving ‘instructions’ on investigative methodology and at a series of congresses of security chiefs which were held intermittently from 1901 (leading to the creation of Security Sections) until 1915.⁶⁸ This professional ethic can be seen as a fusion of ideas from the bureaucracy, the gendarmerie and the revolutionary movement. (Or to put it another way: the lawyer, the military-policeman and the turncoat: A rather unsavoury combination!) This professional ethic had three distinguishing features.

1) Endeavours to acquire a psychological understanding of the revolutionary movement. The Okhrana ethic dictated that the first stage in combating the revolution would be to understand why the political opposition wanted a revolution in the first place and what ‘revolution’ meant: to understand their aims, desires, fears, loves and hates.⁶⁹ Amongst bureaucrats this process took the form of an insatiable appetite for revolutionary literature and taxonomic attempts to define the different strands and nuances of radical political philosophy.⁷⁰ The finest single library of Russian revolutionary

67 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.215.

68 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.277, 17 Aug.1908, 1.37, Circular by Klimovich and Belovodskii. The first congress of Heads of *District* Security Sections was held 2–4 April 1908. Dzhunkovskii carried out a survey of the revolutionary movement and methods used to combat them in 1914. Hoover, Okhrana collection, Box 158, folder 10, DP circular 20 Jan. 1914.

69 Allen Sekula, ‘The Body and the Archive,’ *October*, vol.39 (1986), pp.3–64; Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method,’ *History Workshop*, vol.9 (1980), pp.5–36.

70 Z.I.Peregudova, ‘Biblioteka revoliutsionnykh izdaniï Departamenta politsii,’ *Gosudarstvennye uchrezhdeniia i obshchestvennye organizatsii SSSR: Istoriia i sovremennost’* (Moscow, 1985), pp.108–114.

literature could thus be found in the possession of the revolutionaries' greatest enemies.

Amongst the traditionalistic and backward looking gendarmerie this process took the form of historical studies of the revolutionary movement.⁷¹ There was a distinct tendency for the gendarmerie to develop a grudging admiration (an almost narcissistic admiration of their own mirror-image) for the revolutionaries' dedication to serving the people.

Amongst the former spies this psychological understanding was strongest; indeed, it did not need to be acquired: it was innate because they themselves had once been seduced by the idea of revolution.

2) The importance of ideology. The fruit of this understanding was the insight that the true strength of the revolutionary movement resided in the intangible realm of ideas. Therefore, the revolution could not be defeated merely by tangible police measures: such as arresting the leaders of the revolutionary underground. Their ideas had to be discredited. It involved educating officers in political affairs to a point where they might be able to match the intellectual abilities of the revolutionary intelligentsia. In this way, the projected ideal of a counter-revolutionary Okhrana bears some resemblance to the Counter-Reformation Society of Jesus.

Again, the former spies were to be at the vanguard of this process. One of the first historians of the Okhrana referred to this group, with some justice, as the 'police intelligentsia.'⁷² They brought with them some of their former zeal to pull down the old ways and invent new ones. Rachkovskii in particular had a mischievous talent for disinformation, propaganda, and psychological warfare.⁷³

71 A.A.Sergeev, 'Zhandarmy-istoriki,' *Golos minuvshogo*, nos.9–10 (1917), pp.364–80; see also 'Spiridovich i ego istoriia revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.26 (1928), pp.213–20. A.I.Spiridovich, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Rossii* (Parts 1 & 2 St Petersburg, 1914 & 1916). Lt.Col.Rozhanov, *Zapiski po istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii*, (Press of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes, St Petersburg, 1913)

72 Zhilinskii, *Organizatsiia i zhizn'*, p.120.

73 For the connection with the tactics of the revolutionary movement, see: Richard H.Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsiia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Pergamon Press, New York, 1984), particularly pp.149–65.

The leading police ideologue was the former spy Sergei Zubatov. When we look at his methods it becomes clear he was hovering dangerously close to the ideological crusaders of the 'totalitarian' police. For example, in his attempts to persuade political prisoners to work for the Okhrana as spies, Zubatov, a real-life presager George Orwell's fictional interrogator O'Brien, was not content with securing compliance: he wished to convert them heart and soul to his cause. After a particularly successful interrogation he wrote, with a hint of Gogolian megalomania, 'Eugenie Gurovich has cracked. She complains that on reading Bernstein, the opponent of Marx, her head began to swim and she felt her whole mental outlook splitting at the seams...all this brings me to the thought that I have caught the breaking point of social thought and in place of a mere policeman I have become a prophet.'⁷⁴ Zubatov's messianic self-image is evocative of G.K.Chesterton's surreal farce of the duel between the Supreme Anarchist Council and the New Detective Corps. Zubatov's crusade bore some similarity to that extolled by a 'philosopher-policeman' to Gabriel Syme in Chesterton's novel: 'The head of one of our departments, one of the most celebrated detectives in Europe, has long been of the opinion that a purely intellectual conspiracy would soon threaten the very existence of civilisation. He is certain that the scientific and artistic worlds are silently bound in a crusade against the Family and the State. He has, therefore, formed a special corps of policemen, policemen who are also philosophers...it would obviously be undesirable to employ the common policeman in an investigation which is also a heresy hunt... The work of the philosophical policeman...is at once bolder and more subtle than that of the ordinary detective. The ordinary detective goes to pot-houses to arrest thieves; we go to artistic tea parties to detect pessimists.'⁷⁵

We must note of course that Zubatov was the exception, not the rule. The gendarmerie were military men with a far more direct approach to the problem. And the bureaucrats were conservative by nature and by habit. Consequently, both groups fell far short of fully embracing Zubatov's zealous schemes. Yet they did embrace his ideas

74 Qutd. in Kyril Tidmarsh, 'The Zubatov Idea,' p.341.

75 G.K.Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (London, 1908), ch.4, p.29.

in part, adapting them for more practical police action. This mixed well with the gendarmerie's pretensions towards cultivating a 'moral superiority over the enemy...[whereby] revolutionary fanaticism must be counterbalanced by fanatical loyalty to the service.'⁷⁶ Zubatov's introduction of fingerprinting and the anthropometric system was very compatible with the taxonomic instincts of the Fontanka bureaucrats.⁷⁷ Moreover, this influenced the development among police *chinovniki* and gendarme *okhranniki* of a concept of political crime, which involved arresting people for crimes they had not yet committed, but probably would commit were they to remain at liberty. To be sure, the gendarmerie continued to cling to the reactionary practice of physical interception and destruction of revolutionary literature and propaganda. But this was no longer applied wholesale, and went into relative decline. Instead, a more complex policy also began to develop: The cultivation of division among the revolutionary ideologues, stoking up hostilities between rival thinkers, enervating their movement by encouraging futile and pedantic debate on pettifogging issues.

This also made the Okhrana surprisingly more adaptable to change: it contributed to the growing tendency for the *okhranniki* sometimes to watch rather than act, to wait and see what would happen.

3) The obsession with secrecy and good tradecraft is perhaps the clearest example of how the Okhrana ethic was the result of a cross-fertilisation of ideas with the revolutionary movement. Again, the former spies were instrumental in this process: agents in the field were well aware of the need for secrecy, learned first of all as conspirators against the tsarist regime, and then as spies betraying their former comrades. This drive towards secrecy was based on a rational evaluation of one particular weakness in the revolutionary movement: their activities had to be carried out in secret. The reason why this was a weakness was first pointed out by Karl Marx: '[*Conspirateurs* are those engaged] in trying to pre-empt the

76 Schneiderman, 'From the Files,' p.89. See also: Gennadii Golovkov & Sergei Burin, *Kantseliaria nepronitsaemoi t'my* (Moscow, 1994), chpt.vii.

77 DPOO acquired a copy of E.Henry's book on fingerprinting (from the London police) and also files from the German police GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, *Tsirkuliary* 1907 g., 1.54, Summer 1907.

developing revolutionary process, drive it artificially to crisis, to create a revolution *ex nihilo*, to make a revolution without conditions for a revolution. For them, the only necessary condition for a revolution is an adequate organisation of their conspiracy. They are the alchemists of the revolution.⁷⁸ The very secrecy of certain revolutionary groups ensured that they were isolated and cut off from the masses. This weakness offered an outlet for the gendarmerie's desire for action: to them political policing was not just analytic work, but a strategic campaign against an enemy playing by similar rules. For the *okhranniki*, the only necessary condition for a counter-revolution was an adequate organisation of their own conspiracy: to penetrate and attack these isolated conspiratorial revolutionary cells. The revolutionary's use of secrecy was to be undermined by, 'an ultra-secret form of organising political investigations.'⁷⁹ The flaws in this tactic, of course, were just as applicable to the police as they were to the revolutionary movement: The *okhranniki* were merely the alchemists of counter-revolution: a useful enough ruse in the short-term, but unlikely to create long-term stability. Yet it did link the Okhrana with a long-standing tradition: The drive towards secrecy mixed well with the *cameralist* instincts of the tsarist bureaucracy, which saw rational, tactical and intricately planned government behind closed doors as the most effective means of reform.

The security police officers went to extraordinary lengths to keep their identities secret.⁸⁰ For example, the building which housed Moscow Security Section had nine external exits so that passers-by did not know whether people were entering the security police headquarters or some other establishment. The Lubianka has employed a similar tactic to this day. Petersburg Security Section at Moika 12 occupied a spacious courtyard which was used by ordinary cab drivers, so passersby did not know who were police agents and

78 Karl Marx, 1850 From: Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 1968), p.20. See also: Leggett, *The Cheka*, Prologue.

79 Chernov, 'Iz mira merzosti,' p.116.

80 On plain clothes gendarmes see: GARF, f.102, op.243 (DPOO, 1913g.), d.46, l.204, 10 May 1913; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.21; Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.97 & 146. On 'conspiracy' as an all-encompassing way of life for *okhranniki* and revolutionaries alike see: Maurice Laporte, *Histoire de l'Okhrana: la police secrete des tsars, 1880-1917* (Paris, 1935), p.34.

who were innocent cab drivers.⁸¹ Group photographs of Okhrana employees were banned after one fell into the hands of the revolutionary underground in 1911.⁸²

As with most espionage duels: this led to a symbiotic process of imitation on both sides and the escalation of conspiracy and deceit to the point where it was never entirely clear which side benefited most from the actions of a spy.⁸³ So it is no surprise to find that the process turned full circle when the Cheka gained control of the Okhrana archives after the 1919 and began to use this resource in various campaigns: to launch a witch-hunt for old employees of the Interior Ministry and former Okhrana spies (a useful method of social purging); to analyse and suppress non-Bolshevik socialists; and finally to borrow ideas from the Okhrana towards improving their investigative techniques (tradecraft).⁸⁴

81 Zhilinskii, *Organizatsiia i zhizn'*, p.6.

82 Hoover, Okhrana collection, Box 158, folder 10, DPOO top secret circular 21 April 1912.

83 On revolutionaries intensifying conspiratorial methods see: Okhrana surveillance of military and terrorist schools for revolutionaries in Paris 1907–1910, Gorky's school in Capri (1909), the Vpered group in Bologna, an anarchist school in Paris (1911) and Boris Savinkov's Paris training school. Hoover, Okhrana archive, ref.XXIVj. R.C.Elwood, 'Lenin and the Social Democratic School for Underground Party Workers, 1909–1911,' *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.81 (Sept. 1966), pp.371–79. The gendarme Novitskii considered Zubatov and his followers to be 'secret revolutionaries.' See Chernov, 'Iz mira merzosti,' p.122.

84 According to Mitrokhin and Andrew the early Cheka training manuals were based on a 'detailed study of Okhrana tradecraft.' C.Andrew and V.Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, p.31 with reference to Dmitrii Gavrilovich Evseev, *Basic Tenets of Intelligence* & idem, *How to Conduct Intelligence*. (Training manuals for the *Chekisty* in the 1920s.) Compare: 'Essential Handbook for KGB Agents,' published by the USSR Committee for State Security Moscow (Pub. In London by the Industrial Information Index, 1978), pp.23–40, 'Instruction for External Surveillance;' with instructions on the Okhrana's external surveillance: 'Instruktsiia no.298 po organizatsii naruzhnago (filerskogo) nabliudeniia,' Hoover, Okhrana, box 41, folder VIf- a 17 page document. V.Ia.Iretskii wrote: 'When one learns about the [Okhrana's rules] on how to organise conspiratorial apartments, one wonders who learned from whom: the *okhranniki* from the revolutionaries or the revolutionaries from the *okhranniki*.' Quid. in Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, p.94.

Of mice and frogs

The cult of secrecy therefore constituted a major unifying element among staff, a shared set of beliefs: ‘Their work was secret and secrecy was their motto.’⁸⁵ Secrecy also bred suspicion and fear among outsiders— not only in society at large but even among those outside the Okhrana in the government. There was little respect for the Okhrana among the Court *camarilla*.⁸⁶ Hostility could be felt even from within an officer’s own family: For example, Nikolai Vesselago, a gendarme employee of the Department of Police from 1911–1914, recalled that his uncle forbade his, ‘entering the family home with the statement that no Vesselago in the “pit of intrigue” was welcome.’⁸⁷

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The most important step in this dual process of alienation from outsiders, and crystallisation of an identity among insiders, was the division amongst gendarmes inside the Separate Corps itself. The old school of gendarme officers resented the fact that this new breed of secret political police officer had pushed them ‘into the second rank of political investigations’⁸⁸ and according to rumour earned fabulous bonuses every time they liquidated a revolutionary cell.⁸⁹ Thus, two competing systems of political policing arose: the Okhrana ethic versus the older ethic of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes. The issue of secrecy was the principal apple of discord. The more traditional gendarmes still adhered to the original model of the security police formulated by Benckendorff in 1826 that: ‘A secret police is almost inconceivable, honest people are afraid of it, but the ne’er-do-wells soon become familiar with it.’ Instead he argued they were to rely on denunciations from ‘honest folk.’ Gendarmes had to be ‘honest and gifted people, who are frequently squeamish about acting as secret spies, but wearing a uniform as government officials,

85 Zhilinskii, *Organizatsiia i zhizn'*, p.7. See also: Schneiderman, ‘From the files,’ pp.90–91.

86 See for example, Meshcherskii’s criticism of political police in the aftermath of the Stolypin assassination *Grazhdanin*, 37 (25 Sept. 1911) pp.12–15. Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.82.

87 Qutd in Tennant Ellis, *The Department of Police*, p.21.

88 Chernov, ‘Iz mira merzosti,’ p.116.

89 Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.78. Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia*, vol.2, p.117.

consider it their duty to carry out their responsibilities with zeal.⁹⁰ Dzhunkovskii was still said to be of the same opinion in 1913: ‘that if an officer went to a meeting in disguise he disgraced his uniform.’⁹¹ Meanwhile the *okhranniki* mocked such naivety: ‘Because “honest people” knew nothing about these conspiracies.’⁹²

There is a rich supply of material on this split thanks to a lengthy attack on the Okhrana written by the former head of Kiev Provincial Gendarme Directorate, General V.D.Novitskii.⁹³ Even at the turn of the twentieth century he was so out of touch that he was said to have considered the works of Lermontov and Pushkin to be dangerously subversive and to have never heard of Marx, Plekhanov or Lenin.⁹⁴ Novitskii was the paradigm of the old school: described by a local bureaucrat as, ‘a person of extremely poor education, rude, cruel and stupid, a passionate investigator [*syshchik*] without any talent for investigation... he understood only physical force and intimidation...the majority found his methods were too crude and primitive.’⁹⁵ The local Okhrana officer shared this opinion and wrote of Novitskii: ‘He was completely in the past and loved to talk about bygone days and affairs. He knew nothing of the new revolutionary movement. He did not have a modern *agentura*... Novitskii saw the opening of a Security Section in the city as a personal insult, and me his personal enemy.’⁹⁶

The most eloquent commentator on this split, the SR Viktor Chernov, mocked this as a ‘battle of mice and frogs.’ In 1910 he characterised the contrasting behaviour of the two competing groups with a theatrical analogy: the conservative style of the reactionary

90 ‘Proekt g.A.Benkendorfa ob ustroistve vyshei politzii,’ *Russkaia starina*, vol.CIV, no.12 (Dec., 1900), pp.615–16. Benckendorff’s note was handed to Count P.A.Tolstoy on 12 April 1826.

91 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, p.268.

92 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.6.

93 ‘Zapiska gen.Novitskago, podannaia na vysochaishee imia cherez kn. Sviatopolka-Mirskago,’ *Sottalist-revoliutsioner*, no.2 (Paris, 1910), pp.90–91.

94 See also: M.E.Bakai, ‘Iz vospominaniiia M.E.Bakaia. Provokatory i provokatsiia,’ *Byloe*, no.8 (1908), p.109: on Poliakov head of Smolensk PGD, who thought that all revolutionaries belonged to the same party: the ‘revolutionary democratic party.’

95 V.D. Vodovozov in his memoirs cited in Golovkov & Burin, *Kantseliarii nepronitsaemoi t’my*, p.267. See also Spiridovich, *Zapiski Zhandarma*, p.127, for a similarly critical description of Novitskii.

96 A.I.Spiridovich, *Zapiski zhandarma*, p.127. Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.47.

camp in Court and the Separate Corps under Kurlov versus the ‘reactionary *style moderne*’ of Gerasimov and Stolypin: ‘One proceeding proscenium, face to face, the other backstage: one proceeding officially – carrying out searches, seizures, arrests, formal investigations; the other – the exact opposite, conducting everything with a monopoly of secrecy...He who does not risk, does not gain—that is their slogan. The old gendarmerie would have had a completely different slogan – there’s would have been “A bird in the hand”... And so the friction grows. The Okhrana [*okhrana*] looks on the gendarmes with contempt. The gendarmes look on the *okhranniki* with mistrust. They speak different languages, they are “barbarians to one another”.’⁹⁷

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It must be mentioned of course that their professional ethic represented an ideal. The memoirs of former employees offer plenty of evidence as to how the staff often fell far short of this ideal in reality. For example, the rules of secrecy dictated that clerks could not even chat to members of different sections about the most trivial aspects of their work: ‘But of course, nobody really lived up to these rules. The officers could not resist bragging about their collaborators.’⁹⁸ And as one defector caustically claimed, ‘in spite of all the greed for material rewards, *okhranniki* of all types are stupid, ignorant and lazy.’⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the very fact that there was a thoroughly outlined set of rules as to how security police should behave, indicates the early evolution of a corporate identity: distinct from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes.

As mentioned in chapter one, this sense of alienation strengthened the corporate identity of the Okhrana: it delineated the boundaries between groups. A security policeman soon recognised places where he was treated ‘as one of us’ (*kak svoego*). Meanwhile, the ordinary gendarmes ‘were openly unfriendly’ to their fellow gendarme officers in Security Sections because they considered them to be lackeys of the Department of Police and gave them the pejorative nicknames *departamentskie* or *okhranniki*.¹⁰⁰ In reaction the *okhranniki*

97 Chernov, ‘Iz mira merzosti,’ pp.114 & 119.

98 Russian, ‘Rabota okhrannykh otdelenii,’ p.18.

99 M.E.Bakai, ‘Iz zapisok M.E.Bakaia,’ *Byloe*, nos.9/10 (Paris 1909), p.192

100 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.32 & 64: On his two weeks’ work experience in St Petersburg Security Section.

derisively referred to ordinary gendarmes as 'railwaymen.' The ambitious bureaucrats in police service were also well aware that they were considered 'not one of us' (*ne nash*) among the aristocracy of Petersburg officialdom.¹⁰¹

Consequently, a professional bond transcended background and education. For example, Martynov came from a whole family of gendarmes and yet in the course of his career as a security police officer he developed a great deal of respect for the university educated, legally trained procurators: 'They were efficient and would have made a good basis for directing political investigations [in the field], but they did not wear military uniforms, and this fact, according the understanding of the time, determined the level of reliability conferred by the "blue uniforms" to the government.'¹⁰²

The bureaucrats and gendarmes who served the Okhrana shared an ambitious streak. In contrast to this, the ordinary armed forces had a staid system for promotions which 'selected officers who truly believed that military efficiency lay in the proper accounting of threads and company moneys.'¹⁰³ The officer corps favoured either the privileged and well connected (usually taking up positions as guards officers) or those who became general staff officers (who passed the difficult exams for the General Staff Academy). One can gauge the disproportionate influence of the guards officers from a sample set of statistics: in 1912 they made up only 4% of the entire officer corps, yet accounted for 61% of full generals. The same applies to General Staff officers at this time: Only 2% of all officers were on the General Staff, yet these officers accounted for 62% of corps commanders, 68% of infantry division commanders and 77% of cavalry division commanders. In 1903 77% of captains were over forty-one years old. Even the most talented of field officers became stranded at the rank of captain during peacetime with little prospect for further promotion. It is not difficult to surmise why ambitious *junkers*, unable to gain a place in the prestigious guards corps, chose

101 Ibid., pp.54–55

102 Ibid., p.56.

103 Bushnell, 'The Tsarist Officer Corps,' p.771.

a career fighting revolutionary terrorism as opposed to the more mundane existence in the General Staff.¹⁰⁴

The sudden upsurge in Okhrana activity in 1902 meant that *okhranniki* had usually been recruited at the same time. Consequently, the heads of Security Sections and leading officers in the Special Section were all usually from the same age group (late thirties to early forties) during this period (1906–1914) which provided an additional bond. Moreover, security police service usually cancelled out the opportunity for a social life outside the Okhrana, due to the fact that the work was so time-consuming. The head of the Special Section Eremin claimed that his working day didn't end until three or four a.m. and that he had to work through Sundays and holidays.¹⁰⁵ Gerasimov, Dzhunkovskii and Martynov relate much the same tale of long hours in their memoirs.¹⁰⁶ In such a hothouse strong friendships and bitter animosities both grew rapidly. These overworked officials also came to resent their more lackadaisical associates in other branches of police service. Martynov noted that 'the majority of officers in the [Moscow gendarme cavalry] *Divizion* took to the quiet life, grew lazy and almost never sat on a horse.'¹⁰⁷ While the bureaucracy outside the Okhrana was also seen as a group of time servers, working the short bureaucratic hours of eleven to four, and relying on the slow but stable system of promotions.¹⁰⁸ This resulted in a gerontocratic high officialdom that, in the words of one Interior Ministry bureaucrat, was the preserve 'of old men who had outlived their century.'¹⁰⁹

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104 Ibid., pp.771–72. See also: Kenez, 'A Profile,' pp.153–57. S.V.Volkov, *Russkii ofitserkii korpus* (Moscow, 1993).

105 GARF, f.102, op.243, (DPOO, 1913g.) d46, l.204, 10 May 1913; Kaptelov & Peregudova, 'Byl li Stalin agentom okhranki?' p.96.

106 Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.146; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.21–22. Martynov also noted that the head of Moscow OO, Klimovich, 'lived lived day and night' in the Security Section. See also: Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia*, vol. 2, p.117

107 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.14.

108 Lieven, *Russia's Rulers*, pp.68–72: In 1856 the time intervals between promotions were set out – once every three years from ranks 14 to 8 and once every four years from ranks 8 to 5. The top 4 ranks could only be appointed by the tsar.

109 S.E.Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia* (Berlin, 1938), p.220. Levin, 'P.A.Stolypin,' p.450.

The barriers to co-operation between bureaucrat and gendarme were also not insurmountable because they both operated within the same pedantic system of titles and forms of address.¹¹⁰ For each bureaucratic rank (*chin*) there was an equivalent military rank.¹¹¹

Servile War: Patron client networks

Another important point to note was that the dominant influence on group loyalties and cohesion was not solely their background as gendarmes, spies or bureaucrats but something altogether less tangible: ‘patron-client networks’. Daniel Orlovsky defines ‘clientelism’ as ‘a form of ostensibly “irrational” political behaviour involving mutual support of individuals or dyadic groups in the

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- 110 See for example: Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia* (Dekalb, 1997), pp.37–49. John Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression: Russian Soldiers and the Revolution of 1905–1906* (Bloomington, 1985), pp.10–11. The first two ranks were known as *Vashe Visokoe Prevoskhoditel'stvo* (Your High Excellency), ranks three and four were addressed *Vashe Prevoskhoditel'stvo* (Your Excellency), all the way down to ranks nine to fourteen (*Vashe blagorodie*– Your Honour). The table of ranks was created in 1722. There were fourteen ranks in all: fourteen the lowest, one the highest. The system favoured military officers: after the reforms of 1856 a commoner entering the military acquired personal and then hereditary noble status once he reached rank 12 (*podporuchnik*- second lieutenant) and 6 (*polkovnik*- colonel) respectively. One entering the civil service had to wait until he reached rank 9 (*tituliarnyi sovetnik*- titular counsellor) and 4 (*deistvitel'nyi statskii sovetnik*-actual state counsellor) respectively. Guards officers enjoyed yet more privileges: they stood two ranks higher than ordinary officers in any army appointment.
- 111 Except fifth (*statskii sovetnik*) and fourth (*deistvitel'nyi statskii sovetnik*) for which there was no army rank. The corresponding ranks were: Rank 8 captain (*rotmistr*) – collegiate assessor (*kollezhskii assesor*). Rank 7 Lt.Col. (*podpolkovnik*) – court counsellor (*nadvornyi sovetnik*). Rank 6 Colonel (*polkovnik*) – collegiate counsellor (*kollezhskii sovetnik*) The highest rank that Okhrana officials reached was usually three: Lt.Gen. (*general-leitenant*) – privy counsellor (*tainyi sovetnik*). There were a handful who progressed to rank 2 in the police civil service: actual privy counsellor (*deistvitel'nyi tainyi sovetnik*): though not among the gendarme *okhranniki* (infantry or cavalry general) Throughout the entire history of the system, officials reached first rank on only a handful of occasions (field marshal general/*general'fel'dmarshal* – chancellor/*kantsler*). Helju A.Bennet, ‘Evolution and Meanings of Chin: An Introduction to the Russian Institution of Rank Ordering and Niche Assignment,’ *California Slavic Studies*, 10 (1977), pp.1–43.

organisational context of the state bureaucracy.’¹¹² In effect it reveals wheels within wheels, or – to use another allusion favoured by the *okhranniki* themselves – the invisible thread binding groups of individuals together. Personal contacts, loyalties, hostilities and friendships made the divisions and alliances between staff inside the Okhrana altogether less predictable than a simple case of gendarmes versus bureaucrats.¹¹³

The question of patron-client networks is particularly important in St Petersburg because they were most prevalent in the capital and the struggle between them, Dominic Lieven has written, ‘reached their apogee in the security police, whose frequently unscrupulous and ambitious officers struggled both with revolutionaries and colleagues in a black underworld impenetrable not only publicly, but also often to their own superiors.’¹¹⁴ A security police chief required a great deal of cunning and good connections to navigate and survive what the Court intriguer *par excellence*, Prince Meshcherskii, called a ‘bewildering labyrinth of deceit.’¹¹⁵

The potency of these networks lay in the fact that Petersburg was the centre of power, where the threads of consanguinity binding the leading bureaucrats in co-operation and conflict all met. The result was that high society was characterised by incessant gossip, which could make or break a career.¹¹⁶ The *okhrannik* General V.N. Russiian wrote that ‘when an officer had occasion to go to Petersburg, he did

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112 For discussions on the definition and nature of patron-client relationships see: T.H. Rigby and Bohdan Harasymiw (eds.), *Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavia*, (London, 1983), particularly Daniel T. Orlovsky’s article ‘Political Clientelism in Russia: the Historical Perspective,’ Part 2, Chapter 5, p.174: Orlovsky lists four types of clientelism- i) Clientelism of monarchical proximity, ii) clientelism of kinship (eg blood-ties, marriage) iii) clientelism of geographical location iv) institutional clientelism.

113 Ibid.

114 D. Lieven, ‘The Security Police,’ p.256.

115 Upon his appointment as assistant Minister of the Interior General V.F. Dzhunkovskii received an ingratiating letter from Prince Meshcherskii, in an attempt by the latter to draw Dzhunkovskii into his own circle of influence, that without such support he would not last long ‘in this unimaginable labyrinth of deceptions.’ [v tom labirinte obmanov nevoobrazimykh] Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia*, vol.2, p.118.

116 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, p.266: Beletskii claimed his relations with Dzhunkovskii were soured by tall stories of his unscrupulous activities. See chapter 6 for more examples.

not miss the opportunity to spread gossip about his chief.’¹¹⁷ The gravitational pull of power usually lured all the leading *okhranniki* to a post in St Petersburg at some point in their career (*inter alios*: Zubatov, Gerasimov, Spiridovich). However, the capital was also the repository of the dregs of the Okhrana – those who had reached the summit of police power by unscrupulousness (*inter alios* Kremetskii, Rachkovskii, Komissarov). The most ineffective Okhrana officers also often found themselves in senior positions in the capital: usually they were appointed by virtue of their very mediocrity as puppets of higher officials (the heads of St Petersburg Security Section Sazonov 1901–03, and Karpov in 1909; and the Director of the Department of Police, A.T.Vasil’ev). St Petersburg was also the dumping ground of the ‘ballast’ – the incompetent and lazy nonentities whom the old boy network protected by shuffling into unimportant jobs in the capital, men described by one young gendarme officer as : ‘old colonels and even generals who had displeased their superiors [who] were transferred to St Petersburg Gendarme Directorate to await their fate. They were entirely unfit for service and were only kept on through the good intentions of our bosses.’¹¹⁸

The focal point of all patron-client networks in the capital was the imperial Court. The Minister of Finance in 1903, Pleske, wrote that ‘as a minister one had no option but to play a role at Court and in Petersburg society if one was to defend the interests of one’s department and maintain one’s own position.’¹¹⁹ Support from a faction in Court was the most coveted form of patronage. However, this was a good example of the limitations on security police attempts to wield significant power in the imperial government: in the course of their ordinary duties they had no direct connection with the tsar.¹²⁰

117 Russian, *Rabota okhrannykh otdelenii*, p.19.

118 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.31.

119 Quid. in Lieven, *Russia and Its Rulers*, p.139; *Novoe vremia*, 28.9.1915, p.3.

120 For Department of Police reports to the tsar see GARF, f.102, op.255, dd.29–32. See: E.E.Smith interview of one of the last surviving *okhranniki*: ‘V[esselago]. says Tsar was never informed of penetration agents or their activities. He knew that such dirty was in progress, but not details.’ Hoover, E.E.Smith Box 1 Interview 29 Jan 1962, p.2. ‘Perepiska N.A.Romanova i P.A.Stolypina,’ *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.5 (1924), pp.102–128 (covers 1906–1909). Apart from vague demands for ‘decisive measures’ against terrorists and revolutionaries Nicholas made very few comments on how the police struggle against the revolution should be conducted.

Bodyguard duties for the imperial family, therefore, became the most coveted security jobs.¹²¹ Yet these were mostly handled by the Court *okhrana*, not its larger sibling.¹²² Witte provided an enlightening insight on this when he wrote that Petersburg Governor General Trepov had moved from this highly important post as *de facto* head of the Okhrana to the lower ranking position of Court *komendant* in order to be closer to the tsar: ‘Once Trepov...[was] ensconced at Peterhof, I noted that the Emperor’s comments on documents returned to me were being written in a long-winded chancery style...The handwriting was the Emperor’s but the words and style were not his...It was quickly evident that, far from having lost power by giving up all his previous posts for the comparatively lowly one of palace commandant, he had become even more powerful, answerable to no one, an Asiatic eunuch in a European Court.’¹²³ Another *de facto* Okhrana chief, P.G.Kurlov, was able to achieve much the same position of power by devoting himself to security measures for the tsar’s various visits around the empire (Poltava, Riga, Kiev and the Crimea), rather than focussing on political police work.¹²⁴

Mutual support networks based on common educational backgrounds stretched across the whole of the bureaucracy: the Ministry of Communication was said to be dominated by a clique of old boys from the School of Engineers;¹²⁵ the Ministry of Justice by former students of the Imperial School of Law and Moscow University’s Juridical Faculty; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by graduates of the Alexander Lycee; and the military and Court circles were dominated

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121 On protecting members of the imperial family: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.519 *Instruktsii chinam P.OO. pri nesenii sluzhby po okhrane lits tsarskoi familii* (1914g.)

122 Aside from the Court *okhrana*, the tsar also had a cossack escort of 650 men and a special regiment of 1000 men for guarding railway lines that he used.

123 Sidney Harcave (trans. and ed.) *The memoirs of Count Witte*, Chpt.X Vol.II, pp.514–5, (New York, 1990). Among the *okhranniki* whose positions were strengthened by Court contacts were Martynov whose patron was Prince Felix Isupov, Rachkovskii whose patron was the Dowager Empress, Kurlov whose patron was the tsarina, and Manasevich-Manuilov whose supporter was Rasputin. Gerasimov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.224.

124 For a detailed description of Kurlov’s security preparations on behalf of the tsar see the Trusevich *doklad* in Stepanov, *Zagadki ubiistva Stolypina* (Moscow, 1995), p.258–68.

125 D.Lieven, *Russia and Its Rulers*, p.130.

by a network from the Corps des Pages.¹²⁶ However, the staff of the Okhrana were so varied that no single clique held sway over the whole structure. There were several identifiable mutual support networks in the Okhrana in St Petersburg. The largest of these were based on educational background (the Polotskii Cadet Corps, the Nikolaevskoe Cavalry School, Moscow University, Kiev University and the Corps des Pages).¹²⁷

Familial connections worked on a less pronounced, but nonetheless influential level. Martynov's rise in the Separate Corps of Gendarmes was aided by his older brother, also an *okhrannik*. P.P.Zavarzin's younger brothers served under Martynov in Moscow.¹²⁸ V.N.Voeikov, the Court *komendant* (1913–16), was married to the daughter of Baron Frederiks, the Minister of Imperial Courts. The Director of the Department of Police from 1905–06, E.I.Vuich, was related by marriage to the deceased Minister of the Interior, V.K.Plehve. N.N.Kuliabko owed his rise to head of Kiev Security Section to the patronage of his brother-in-law, the head of the Court *okhrana*, Spiridovich. Spiridovich himself had received his first appointment to the Okhrana when his uncle recommended him to Zubatov. Familial connections could also work in a negative light: Col.M.S.Komissarov was married to his superior officer's ex-wife – not surprisingly this permanently soured the relations between Gerasimov and Komissarov.¹²⁹

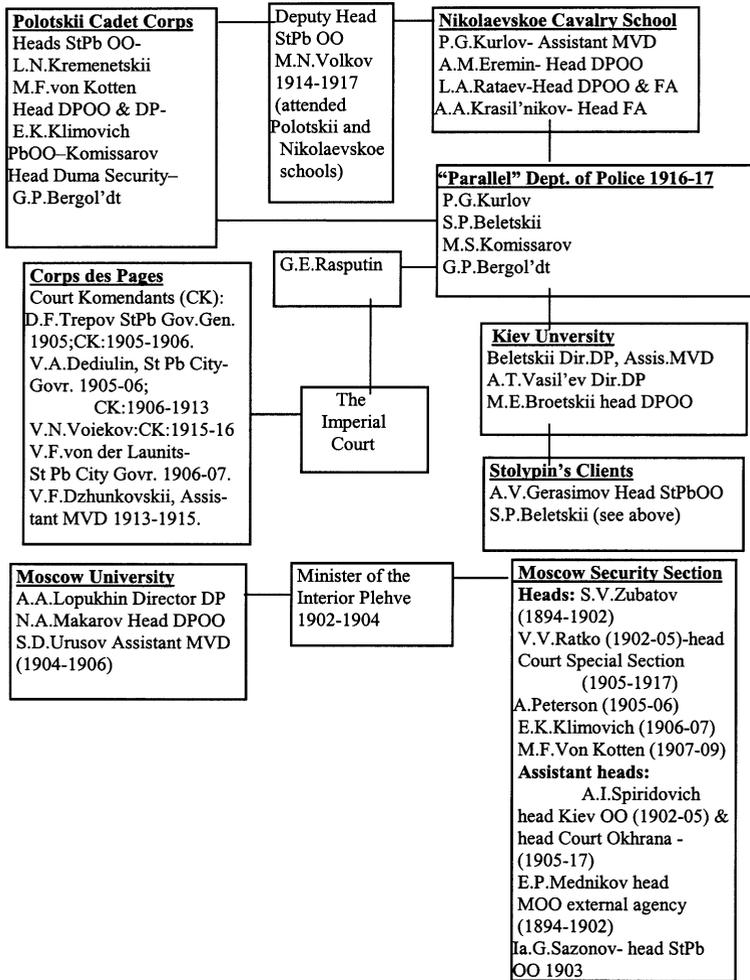
126 D.Lieven, 'Russian Senior Officialdom,' pp.210–20. The three Court *komendants*– D.F.Trepov (1905–06), V.A.Dediulin (1906–13) & V.N.Voeikov (1913–16)– were all educated at the Corps des Pages.

127 See diagram 4a. Background information on the various cadet corps can be found in: V.M.Krylov, *Kadetskie korpusa u rossiiskie kadety* (St Petersburg, 1998), passim.

128 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.215, & 224.

129 V.A.Maklakov, the Kadet deputy and brother of the Minister of Internal Affairs 1913–15, N.A.Maklakov, did not refrain from attacking his brother's policies in the Duma.

Chart 4c. ‘Families’: Mutual support groups cemented by common educational and service backgrounds.



This diagram shows how the principal networks were connected and embraced almost every leading Okhrana office. When three of the most powerful networks connected in 1916 (Polotskii, Nikolaevskoe and Kiev) the direction of the Okhrana passed out of the control of the *apparat*— creating a ‘parallel’ Department under two officers (Beletskii and Komissarov) who did not even hold an official position in any of the police bureaux.

These common backgrounds were not mere coincidences: von Kotten was promoted to the position of head of Moscow OO by Klimovich ahead of better candidates;¹³⁰ Klimovich also chose him as head of Petersburg OO in 1909. Upon taking charge of the police in 1909 Kurlov appointed fellow graduates of the Nikolaevskoe cavalry school, Eremin and Krasil'nikov, to the positions of head of the Special Section and head of the Foreign Agency, and appointed one of his cronies, Karpov, to Petersburg Security Section. Dzhunkovskii removed Eremin and Vissarionov as soon as he took over the Okhrana as a means of eroding Beletskii's basis of support.¹³¹ Chart 4d highlights the names of the *de facto* (rather than *ex officio* or *de jure*) heads of the Okhrana in the twentieth century. The three essential ingredients to achieve control of the Okhrana network were a powerful patron, a supportive group of Okhrana staff and a reliable intelligence gathering network— which was usually based on the Internal Agency. Lopukhin lost control of the secret police in 1904, despite the fact that he still held his position in the Department of Police, because he stood aloof of the dirty work of the Internal Agency and also because his patron, Plehve, had been killed. In contrast to this, Gerasimov dominated the Okhrana from 1906–09 because he had the most reliable network of secret agents,¹³² which won him the respect and consequently the patronage of Stolypin.

Chart 4d: *De Facto* Okhrana Chiefs

Years	Name	Position	Patron/s	Supporters
1901–1903	S.V.Zubатов	Head DPOO	V.K.Plehve, Grand Duke Sergei	Staff at Moscow OO, E.Azef (spy)
1903–1904	A.A. Lopukhin	Director DP	V.K.Plehve	S.D.Urusov, N.A.Makarov

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130 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.262–63.

131 Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.342. Eremin and Vissarionov were removed. PTsR, vol.5, *Dopros Dzhunkovskogo*, p.84; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.234–36. PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, p.267.

132 B.V.Zhilinskii, *Organizatsiia i zhizn' okhrannykh otdelenii* (Moscow, 1918), p.297: quoted Martynov's famous axiom that 'without a good *provocateur* [*provokator*] it is not possible to make a career.' (Though Martynov probably would have eschewed the phrase '*provocateur*').

1905–1906	P.I. Rachkovskii ¹³³	Head DPOO	D.F.Trepov, Petersburg Governor	M.S.Komissarov (PbOO), N.Tartarov (SR spy)
1906–1909	A.V. Gerasimov ¹³⁴	Head StPbOO	P.A.Stolypin	E.Azef (spy) N.A.Peshkov (DPOO)
1909–1911	P.G. Kurlov ¹³⁵	Assistant MVD	The tsarina	A.M.Eremin (head DPOO), A.A.Krasil'nikov (head FA), S.G.Karpov (head StPbOO)
1911–1913	S.P.Beletskii	Director DP	A.A. Makarov (MVD)	S.E.Vissarionov ¹³⁶ (Deputy Director DP) R.Malinovskii (SD spy)
1914–1915	V.F.Dzhunkovskii ¹³⁷	Assistant MVD	1915 The tsar & Prince Meshcherskii (head PbOO)	Brune de St Hyppolite, (Dir. DP), Col.P.K.Popov Gen.Nikol'skii (Chief of Staff Separate Corps of Gends.)
1915–17	S.P.Beletskii	Assistant MVD/1916–17:None	A.N. Khvostov (MVD) & Rasputin	Komissarov, Kurlov, Bergol'dt, Klimovich.

133 A.B. [V.Tuchkin], *Za kulisami okhrannago otdeleniia* (Berlin, 1910), p.58.

Rachkovskii's position was supposedly buoyed by his meetings with the tsar.

134 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, p.265.

135 GARF, f.435, *Kantseliariia tovarishcha Ministra vnutrennykh del general-leitenant P.G.Kurlova*, 1909–1911, op.1, dd.1–19. GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.53. Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.171: Gerasimov himself even saw Kurlov's appointment as the first sinister step in Rasputin's rise to power by loading government departments with his own cronies.

136 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.217–18, & 312–13. Beletskii's original patron was Stolypin.

137 GARF, f.826, op.1, d.53., ll.93–96. GARF, f.270, *Kantseliariia tovarishcha Ministra vnutrennykh del, Komandira otdelnogo korpusa zhandarmov V.F.Dzhunkovskogo*, 1913–1915, op.1, dd.1–138 (1911–1915). Hoover Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 11, DPOO secret circular no.165878, 20 Jan. 1914: Dzhunkovskii's involvement in Okhrana affairs can be seen to have begun in Jan. 1914. Hoover, E.E.Smith Collection, Box 1, 'From the Recollections', Appendix III. Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.219–24.

Patron client networks on one level had a beneficial effect: they helped ameliorate the friction between bureaucrats and gendarmes. For example, Martynov forged a career-long alliance with M.I.Trusevich and A.T.Vasil'ev when the latter pair were still working in the St Petersburg Procuracy for the Ministry of Justice and Martynov was stationed at St Petersburg Gendarme Directorate.¹³⁸ Gerasimov forged good relations with the leading intelligence *chinovnik* in the Special Section N.A.Peshkov. Lopukhin forged a good working relationship with the former spy turned Okhrana chief, Zubatov. Patronage was also useful in elevating able officials, and by-passing the chronically slow rank system of promotions by appointing trouble-shooting 'civil servants on special commissions' (*chinovniki po osobykh poruchenii*). In this way Stolypin was able to pluck able officials such as S.P.Beletskii out of obscurity.

Chart 4e. The Court *okhrana*. An asterisk indicates former attachment to the Okhrana. The Court *okhrana* worked very well with Fontanka because its whole network of agents had been transferred *en masse* to the Court Ministry from St Petersburg Security Section in 1905, and most of its leading officers had previously worked in Security Sections:

Minister of Imperial Courts	1897–1917 Baron V.B.Frederiks
Court <i>komendant</i>	Oct.1905–Sept.1906 D.F.Trepov*
	1906–1913 V.A.Dediulin*
	1913–1915 V.N.Voeikov
Head of Court <i>okhrana</i>	1905–1916 A.I.Spiridovich*
Head of Court Police	1905–1917 B.A.Gerardi*
Head of Court Special [Political] Section	1906–1917 V.V.Ratko*
Head of Duma Security	1908–1916 G.P.Bergol'dt*
Assistant head Court Okhrana	1910–1917 V.Kh.Nevdakhov*

Military Intelligence

The Okhrana tended to consider the General Staff's military intelligence section before the war to be an amateurish establishment.¹³⁹

138 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.49, 60–61. Trusevich's influence was crucial in securing Martynov his first Security Section posting.

139 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.265–66.

The apparent inadequacy of military intelligence was further exacerbated by lack of a unifying body which could co-ordinate the intelligence operations of military intelligence and the Okhrana: something in the mould of Austria's *Kriegsüberwachungsamt*.¹⁴⁰ It was by means of good personal contacts between the two organisations that they were able to compensate for this structural flaw.¹⁴¹ The *okhranniki* clearly admired the aspirations of military intelligence. Indeed, they sought to associate it with their own work as much as possible. For example, Spiridovich attempted to assuage troubled consciences of young gendarme officers at his Tsarskoe selo lectures in 1910 by pointing out that: 'An officer of the General Staff, who purchases a plan of a hostile fortress or of a new type of warship from a foreigner carries out a matter of significance for the state, which makes the struggle against the foreign enemy easier for the country. An officer of the gendarme corps who purchases information about leading figures of the revolutionary organisations is performing a matter of the very same importance, which can only facilitate the struggle of the Government against the internal enemy.'¹⁴²

In 1910 the military districts in the Ukraine and Russian Poland called on the assistance of the Okhrana in building up an efficient intelligence network. This was the fruit of two years' talks between the Ministries of the Interior and War chaired by the leading *okhrannik*: P.G.Kurlov.¹⁴³ The head of Kiev Military District wrote in January 1910 that: 'At the current time many persons from Gendarme Directorates have entered into relations with the district Staff office on their own initiative and given extremely useful information. Unfortunately the gendarmerie has no unified system of counter-intelligence. Every Directorate involved in [counter-

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140 Samuel Hoare, *The Fourth Seal* (London, 1930), p.52; Spiridovich, *Les dernières années*, vol.1, p.13, 421; J.F.N.Bradley, 'The Russian Secret Service in the First World War,' *Soviet Studies*, p.242.

141 GARF, f.102, op.240 (DPOO, 1910g.) d.126, *O propagande v voiskakh*.

142 Qutd. Schneiderman, 'From the files,' pp.92–93.

143 See M.Alekseev, *Voennaia razvedka Rossii*, vol.2, p.49: The Acting Director of the Department of Police S.P.Beletskii and his assistant and Vissarionov co-ordinated with the head the Intelligence Section of the General Staff, Monkevits, a joint meeting of military and police intelligence officers on 29 July 1910. This was also attended by Col.Eremin, N.N.Kuliabko, Col.Savitskii (one of the leading railway gendarmes), Major-General Zaleskii (chief of staff of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes)

intelligence] works independently.’¹⁴⁴ Kiev Military District suggested that some sort of co-ordination be established between all local railway, border, *uezd* and provincial gendarme directorates. Kurlov passed this suggestion on to all the Security Sections. The first advance in this direction was when the head of the border guards, General Ivanov, established a procedure whereby spies were permitted free passage across the Russian borders into Germany and Austria-Hungary.¹⁴⁵

The operational work of counter-intelligence was much the same as political policing.¹⁴⁶ The Security Sections were connected not least due to the fact that all the military counter-intelligence sections were directed by gendarmes, who quite naturally had a great deal in common with their fellow gendarme officers in the Okhrana. A subordinate of Colonel von Kotten at St Petersburg OO, Lt.Col.Iakubov, was appointed to a senior position in military intelligence in October 1911 as a reward for their assistance to military intelligence.¹⁴⁷ Von Kotten later moved from the Okhrana to the War Ministry himself in 1914, undertaking reconnaissance assignments behind enemy lines in Galicia and running agents in Switzerland.¹⁴⁸ Personnel links also included the notorious Captain Komissarov, who came into the Okhrana from military intelligence in 1905 (after serving under Rachkovskii, who had been dabbling in military espionage for decades). Upon the outbreak of war in 1914 several leading *okhranniki* transferred over to military intelligence: Rataev worked for the Russian military representative in France (the *nachal’nik russkogo otdela Soiuznicheskogo biuro v Parizhe*), General Ignat’ev.¹⁴⁹ Harting moved from the Okhrana into military intelligence just before the

144 GARF, f.102, op.240 (1910g.), d.38, l.7, *Komanduiushchii Voiskami Kievskago Voennago Okruga* to P.G.Kurlov, 23rd January 1910. Similar circulars were issued in Feb. and July 1908

145 Ibid., l.12, Jan. 1910.

146 GARF, f.102, d.238 (DPOO, 1908g.), d.390, *Ob organizatsii kontr-razvedki*; f.102, op.240 (DPOO, 1910), d.114, *O kontr-razvedke*.

147 In particular as a reward for their apprehension of the ‘spies’ Baron Ungern-Sternberg and Capt.Postnikov.

148 Von Kotten also went to the same General Staff Academy as N.M.Potapov, the head of the Counter-Intelligence Section of the General Staff from 1915–17.

149 Ignat’ev quid in A.Ia.Avrekh, *Masonry i revoliutsiia*, (Moscow, 1990), p.215. Rataev worked with another *chinovnik* (Lebedev) in an ‘intelligence agency’ (*agenturnaia razvedka*) in Switzerland.

Great War. Henri Bint, the head of the Foreign Agency's external surveillance, spied on Finns suspected of supporting the German war effort. Miasoedov was a gendarme before he crossed over to military intelligence in 1909.¹⁵⁰ Colonel Zavarzin's supporters at Warsaw and Moscow Security Sections – Colonels Leontovich,¹⁵¹ V.I.Sizykh¹⁵² and P.A.Ivanov¹⁵³ – left the Okhrana for military counter-intelligence at the outbreak of war. E.K.Klimovich, A.P. Martynov, K.I.Globachev, Nikolai Vesselago, R.G.Mollov, V.N. Russian and P.P.Zavarzin all crossed over from the Okhrana to various organs of White military intelligence during the Civil War.¹⁵⁴

However, patron-client networks also had their detrimental effects. Firstly it created the malaise common to all old-boy networks: incompetence was left unpunished and unscrupulousness was often rewarded. The most blatant example of a corrupt officer protected by this system was Col.Kremenetskii. Like many other *okhranniki* he was a graduate of Polotskii cadet corps.¹⁵⁵ According to departmental gossip, he made of habit of establishing revolutionary 'underground' printing presses, only to liquidate them shortly after and claim the reward (at a rate of nine a year during his time as head of Ekaterinoslav

150 Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past*, pp.682–683. Miasoedov had supposedly been passing on information leaked accidentally by Sukhomlinov to Altschiller, the head of the Austrian espionage in Russia, see: 'Iz vospominanii A.I.Guchkova,' *Poslednye novosti* 23 Aug. 1936, p.2 and 26 Aug. 1936, p.2.

151 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.224. Leontovich was the assistant head of Warsaw OO before 1914.

152 Sizykh was the assistant head of Warsaw OO from 1910–1912.

153 Ivanov (born 1872) entered the Separate Corps of Gendarmes in 1902, he was made acting head of Kiev OO after the assassination Stolypin in Kiev in Sept. 1911. In Aug. 1914 he became assistant head of the Intelligence Section of the general staff of on the Southern Front.

154 Mollov was a senior official in the DP 1915–17 and went on to direct internal government of Skoropadskii's hetmanate. Gen. V.N.Russian (Russianov) was head of of Enisei Investigation Point from 1914 to 1917. (Eric Lee, 'The Eremin Letter,' p.58). He was Chief of State Security in Omsk for the Kolchak government. N.P.Nosovich told Martynov he could not serve in the Volunteer Army intelligence section because: 'You have an odious [ie infamous] name!' (Martynov, op.cit., p.53). So Martynov went on to work for counter-intelligence with the Black Sea fleet. Klimovich served Wrangel also for many years after the Civil War, see: J.F.N.Bradley, *Civil War in Russia, 1917–1920* (London, 1975), pp.139–40; & R.Luckett, *The White generals: An Account of the White Movement and the Russian Civil War* (London, 1971), pp.360 & 370.

155 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.118.

Security Section from 1901–1903).¹⁵⁶ These rumours did not stop him from climbing to good positions in the Okhrana such as head of St Petersburg Security Section (1903–1905) and head of Irkutsk District Security Section (1905–1908). Indeed, he continued to be shuffled around from post to post leaving tales of malpractice wherever he went until he was eventually dismissed in 1916 for ‘planting’ a printing press on an SR cell. Spiridovich protected his thoroughly inept brother-in-law, N.N.Kuliabko, from dismissal as head of Kiev Security Section in 1908–09: A move which indirectly contributed to the assassination of Stolypin in 1911. Another example is Gerasimov’s dismissal of Colonel V.M.Modl’ from St Petersburg Security Section in 1905 for gross incompetence. After this Modl’ retained a senior position and was transferred to Moscow, where he became an assistant to the City Governor and was regularly consulted by the head of Moscow Security Section as an ‘expert’ on political investigations.¹⁵⁷

This sort of system also stifled innovation because those who wanted to do well in the service had to show, above all else, loyalty, usefulness and subservience *to their superiors*: ‘The official wants those below him to be co-operative and obedient rather than brilliant and creative, much less self-willed. If the subordinate would progress, he seeks to please by thinking in the same way as his superior; he should even be discreet in his achievements lest he annoy by showing up his betters.’¹⁵⁸

A particularly disruptive consequence of patron-client networks is illustrated in the chart below.

156 Russian, *Rabota okhrannykh otdelenii*, p.9; Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, Statement of I.P.Vasil’ev to the Investigatory Commission in 1917, p.225, Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.21.

157 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.220: Modl’ changed his name to Markov during the war to avoid anti-German hostility.

158 Robert Wesson, *The Imperial Order* (Los Angeles, 1964), p.234.

Chart 4f: The skittle effect: when the kingpin is toppled the rest usually follow.

<u>Ministers of the Interior (MVDs)</u>		<u>Assistant MVDs</u> ¹⁵⁹	
1902–1904	V.K.Plehve	1904–05	K.N.Rydzevskii
26.8.1904–18.1.1905	P.D.Sviatopolk–Mirskii		
20.1.1905–22.10.1905	A.G.Bulygin	1905–06	D.F.Trepov
23.10.1905–22.4.1906	P.N.Durnovo		
25.4.1906–5.9.1911	P.A.Stolypin	1906–09	A.A.Makarov ¹⁶⁰
20.9.1911–16.12.1912	A.A.Makarov	1909–11	P.G.Kurlov
26.12.1912–7.5.1915	N.A.Maklakov	1911–13	I.M.Zolotarev ¹⁶¹
5.7.1915–26.9.1915	N.B.Shcherbatov	1913–15	V.F.Dzhunkovskii
27.9.1915–3.3.1916	A.N.Khvostov	1915–16	S.P.Beletskii
3.3.1916–7.7.1916	B.V.Sturmer	March -Oct.'16	A.S.Stepanov
7.7.1916–16.9.1916	A.A.Khvostov	Oct.-Nov. 1916	P.G.Kurlov
18.9.1916–27.2.1917	D.A.Protopopov		

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The patron-client networks were so influential that each Minister saw it as a necessity to appoint his ‘own’ Assistant Ministers. And each Assistant Minister in turn would attempt to appoint his own heads of Department and so on down the bureaucratic pyramid.¹⁶² This was useful for creating departmental unity so long as the Minister’s position was stable. But when a Minister fell his ‘family’ of supporters would also fall: a bloodless version of the Stalinist *chistki*. So, when the government was unstable at the top – particularly with the onset of ‘ministerial leapfrog’ from 1915–1917 – trouble spread throughout the Okhrana. The more obscure offices of the bureaucracy were often left unruffled by the turbulence of political power struggles. For example, St Petersburg Black Cabinet, St Petersburg Provincial Gendarme Directorate and St Petersburg Criminal Investigations Section (*Sysknoe otdelenie*) had only one chief each over the period 1905–1914.¹⁶³ However, the Interior Ministry was at the centre of the power struggle in tsarist polity, and the Okhrana in St Petersburg was at the centre of the power struggle for control of the Interior Ministry. The Okhrana was consequently

159 In charge of Police affairs and, unless specified otherwise, the *komandir* of the Separate Corps.

160 The *komandir* in these years was Baron von Taube.

161 The *komandir* in these years was V.A.Tolmachev.

162 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros M.S.Komissarova*, p.73.

163 The heads were respectively: A.D.Fomin (Foreign Censor attached to the Main Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs) 1893 to 1915; M.Ia.Klykov 1905–1914; & V.G.Filippov, 1904–14.

far more severely affected by internecine bureaucratic conflict than any other government institutions of comparable rank: thus from 1905–1914 there were six successive Assistant Ministers in charge of police, the special Section had seven successive heads, Petersburg Security section had six different chiefs.

Most damaging of all: in competing for patronage the Okhrana dissipated its resources in pointless court intrigues, a servile war for imperial favour.¹⁶⁴ This ranged from Rachkovskii's scheming against 'Philippe the Hypnotist' in 1902 to the endless schemes and plots which surrounded Rasputin from 1909 to 1916.¹⁶⁵

Part II The External Agency

The second category of Okhrana agents were grouped into what was known as an External Agency in every Security Section. They were a force of detectives used for tailing political suspects and protecting government officials. The Department of Police termed them *filery*. The word derived from the French 'filer' (literally: to shadow or to tail). The surveillance teams of *filery*, despite elaborate training to disguise their presence, were a familiar sight to the *cognoscenti* on the streets of the capital. One revolutionary wrote that: 'Those of us under surveillance always recognised the external agents without difficulty from their particular manner of conducting themselves, from their constantly wandering, furtive eyes, always avoiding a direct, open glance at the face. The *okhranka* always taught them that in order to hide one's face they must avoid meeting the eyes of the person under surveillance.'¹⁶⁶ Their appearance was a curious juxtaposition of the inconspicuous and the blindly obvious. Sergei Witte noted that they: 'can usually be spotted by their umbrellas and

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164 S.P.Beletskii, *Grigorii Rasputin: iz zapisok* (Petrograd, 1923).

165 GARF, f.612, *Rasputin Grigorii Efimovich (S 1906 g.- Rasptin-Novykh), krest'ianin sela Pokrovskogo Tobol'skoi gubernii, favorit sem'i imperatora Nikolaia II. 1869–1916*, op.1, dd.1–69 (1907–1924). St Petersburg Security section kept Rasputin under close surveillance from around 1910 and most of the surveillance files still survive GARF, f.111, op.1, d.2973 (1910g.), d.2974 (1911g.), dd.2975–76 (1912g.), dd.2977–78 (1913g.), d.2979 (1915g.), d.2980 (1915–16gg.), dd.2981–81b (1916g.).

166 Zhilinskii, *Organizatsiia i zhizn'*, p.10.

bowler hats.¹⁶⁷ This attempt at urban camouflage gave rise to another nickname: ‘Green coats’ (*gorokhovy pal'to*).¹⁶⁸ There are two possible explanations how they acquired this moniker, first used by Saltykov-Shchedrin: either, after their all too familiar regulation issue ‘civilian’ great-coats or from the name of the street (*gorokhovaia ulitsa*) in Petersburg which acted as headquarters of St Petersburg Security Section from 1866–1901. To be sure, the hunted revolutionaries were accurate in their descriptions of the quasi-military appearance of most detectives: They were usually non-commissioned army officers. And their frequent visits to Security Sections was a familiar sight, due to the fact that they had to make daily reports to a gendarme ‘supervisor’ (*nadziratel'*). This supervisor, based at the Security Section, then had the task of processing all the information recorded in the detectives’ daily surveillance diaries (*dnevnik*) from the Central Detachment and the Detective Agency. Gerasimov established a separate office in St Petersburg (Moika 64) for the plain-clothes detectives to meet their supervisors in greater secrecy.

The External Agency accounted for a half of the Okhrana’s total Security Section staff. In St Petersburg they accounted for an even greater proportion (roughly 60%).¹⁶⁹ Petersburg OO’s External Agency employed 500 persons at its height, the second largest Security Section, Moscow, employed 160 in its External Agency,¹⁷⁰ and the average number employed at a Security Section was only 17.¹⁷¹ The immensity of the St Petersburg’s External Agency was due to the fact that it had not one but three separate forces of detectives: in addition to its ordinary ‘Detective Agency’ (*filerskaia agentura* – 210 agents), it had a bodyguard service called the ‘Security Brigade’ (*Okhrannaia komanda* – 250 agents), and an elite ‘flying

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167 Witte, *Memoirs*, p.433.

168 I.P.Belokonskii, “‘Gorokhovie pal'to’: (“Pamiatnaia knizhka” professional'nago shpiona).’ *Minuvshie gody*, 9 (Sept.1908), pp.290–312.

169 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.56.

170 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.239: 12 case officers, 25 clerks, 100 detectives, 60 supervisors, 10 watchmen and 100 secret agents.

171 GARF f.102, op.260, d.313, ll.17–19. (pp.97–98 Peregodova ‘Istochnik izucheniia,’ *passim*. Most of them were occupied in watching the students and the workers. There were 12 in Baku, 15 in Vil’no, 15 in Ekaterinoslav. OOs: in Enisei OO there were 12, Irkutsk OO 30, Kiev OO 25, Lifliand 24, Minsk 12, Nizhegorod (Nizhni-Novgorod) 12, Odessa 15, Perm 12, Saratov 15, Tiflis 30, Tomsk 20, Finland 20, Khar’kov 15, Estland 16.

squad' of around 80 of the most experienced surveillance operatives—who could be dispatched all over the empire and even abroad – called the 'Central Detachment' (*tsentral'nyi otriad*).¹⁷²

The Central Detachment officially took over the functions of Moscow's 'Flying Squad' in 1906.¹⁷³ Most of the personnel from the Flying Squad under E.P.Mednikov had moved *en masse* to St Petersburg Security Section when Zubatov took over the Special Section in 1902. St Petersburg's position as centre of the External Agency was secured by the Director of the Department of Police, Trusevich. He did this firstly by compiling a survey of 'instructive examples' of external agent activities from all Security Sections in July 1907, which then formed the basis of the circular 'Instructions for External Surveillance.'¹⁷⁴ Secondly, by establishing a 'School for Detectives' (*shkola filerov*) attached to St Petersburg Security Section.

As a result of this last innovation, leading detectives from all over the empire took leave to attend training classes at St Petersburg Security Section. It took around two years to properly train a detective. One Petersburg OO chief, Colonel von Kotten, specialised in this area of training. He laid particular emphasis on the detectives' powers of recall.¹⁷⁵ They were taught to memorise the uniforms of the local regiments, schools and universities. They were fortunate that the three groups in which they had the most interest—workers, students and soldiers, were readily identifiable by their mode of dress. Von Kotten would also drill into them all the local train timetables, and the location of different *drozhki* ranks. Most importantly he systematised the process of describing the physical features of a person under surveillance in standard 'surveillance diaries' in a strict sequence: sex, age, height, build, hair colour, nationality.¹⁷⁶ Von Kotten even

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172 A.Volkov, *Petrogradskoe okhrannoe otdelenie*, pp.4–10; Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.47.

173 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.273: the Flying Squad consisted of 50 men and cost 31,800 rubles a year in 1901.

174 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 41, folder 6, *Instruktsiia no.298 po organizatsii naruzhnago (filerskogo) nabliudenie*. Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.187–92.

175 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.276.

176 For a published example of a surveillance diary see: Belokonskii, 'Gorokhovoe pal'to,' pp.290–312. This based on satirical article *Russkie vedomosti* (no.195, 1907). But this time published contents of surveillance diary of external agent in all its ungrammatical glory. The surveillance diary was acquired from 'I.N.P'—

prescribed the range of syntax to be used to avoid ambiguity or confusion: hair had to be brown not chestnut, black not dark, red not ginger.¹⁷⁷ He distributed taxonomic charts based on the Bertillon system of measuring and classifying the different shapes of criminals' features (noses, ears, limbs etc.)¹⁷⁸ Surveillance took two forms: stationary and mobile. Stationary surveillance was placed on buildings, hotels and cafes frequented by known revolutionaries in order to acquire descriptions – and, if possible, identification – of all persons entering or leaving the building.¹⁷⁹ Most importantly for tailing people, they were taught how to describe a person's 'gait' (*pokhodka*):¹⁸⁰ 'quick', 'nervous', 'slow' 'important' etc. They were also taught to work in pairs and the use of simple disguises (usually as taxi drivers, road sweepers or salesmen) to avoid being spotted.¹⁸¹ The bulk of the practical lessons were taught by Captains Basov, Glasfel'dt and Obolonskii on subjects such as the use of firearms, and familiarisation with the different devices for exploding bombs.¹⁸² The trainee detectives were also given excursions onto the streets of St Petersburg to watch surveillance work in progress and to teach them how to identify revolutionaries and staff of secret police. Other elementary lessons included Russian history, government and geography, literacy and arithmetic.¹⁸³ Other lessons were given in 1912 by more senior

... ..
 who found it on a market in a pile of used books. The book was written from 14 June 1894 in Orel. It looked like a school text-book, to be folded and carried in the pocket.

177 On the standardisation of the surveillance diary: Hoover, Okhrana, Box 153, folder VIIIc (2), DPOO *obzor* no.86, 20 May 1904. Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.276.

178 Hoover, Okhrana Archive, Box 158, folder 7, *Rozysknyi al'bom* (St Petersburg, 1913): this 'investigative album' contained anthropometric tables and was issued to all Security Sections.

179 A good example of this is the surveillance of Rozhdestvenskaia street, House no.5, flat 8 in Oct. 1908 which was the meeting place of the SD State Duma deputies Shurkanov, Voronin, Poletaev and Chkheidze: GARF, f.111 op.2 d.87 (1908g.) ll.1–17.

180 GARF, f.111, op.4, d.23, ll.1–39.

181 The list of Petersburg OO's disguises and outfits for 1911–1913 survives in the archives: GARF, f.111, op.2, d.196, ll.17–21.

182 Even in the quiet periods of Okhrana activity in the capital attacks on detectives were reported: such as that on Aleksei Ivanov Shabanov, who was shot four times and stabbed to death on the night of 16–17 April 1910: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309.

183 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.171–82, June 1912.

officers: Colonel Savitskii (formal investigations), A.V.Gerasimov and A.I.Spiridovich (investigative theory), V.I.Lebedev (anthropometry), I.A.Zybin (codes and ciphers), and S.E.Vissarionov (on law and the structure of government).¹⁸⁴ Copies of the daily timetables for the training programmes of the Security Brigade survive in St Petersburg Security Section records. Three different timetables are printed—presumably this meant that there were three groups undergoing education at any one time. In 1914 the size of groups were specified as 30 at the least, 40 at the most.¹⁸⁵ The lessons went on from eleven in the morning until four in the afternoon, from Monday to Saturday.

After training it was specified that the *filer* had to spend a probationary period at a Security Section for two months after which the agent would receive a permanent appointment. Education didn't end there: new agents were attached to senior *filery* and were required to return to the Security Section for fifteen days additional training every year.¹⁸⁶

Agents from the Central Detachment were sent on numerous trips abroad in order to observe the émigré revolutionary leaders who met and socialised out in the open in Paris, London, Zurich and Berlin. The first trip took place in 1909 and continued until 1914 when the final trip was cut short by the outbreak of the Great War and the detectives had to be brought home.¹⁸⁷

The Security Brigade—first known as the *Okhrannaia agentura* (Security agency)—was founded on 1 January 1883 as part of Petersburg OO: 'with the exclusive aim of providing physical security' for the tsar and his family.¹⁸⁸ Its duties gradually expanded and by 1906 it was responsible for providing bodyguards for all the state's leading dignitaries.¹⁸⁹ The Security Brigade therefore continued to function

184 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.274: P.N.Durnovo called for the closure of the 'Flying Squad' in July 1906. In view of this the Assistant MVD.Makarov decided to move these *filery* to Petersburg.

185 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.63a, ll.171–78.

186 *Ibid.*, ll.174–78.

187 GARF, f.111, op.2, d.219 (1913), *Delo tsentral'nogo filerskogo otriada*, passim.

188 Hitherto the security of the MVD had been carried out by uniformed NCOs from the Separate Corps of Gendarmes.

189 Rather like the process of change (in reverse) of the KGB's Ninth Directorate which evolved into the Presidential bodyguard service in the 1990s.

after its primary responsibility (protecting the life of the tsar) – and half of its staff – were taken over by the newly created Court *okhrana* in January 1906.¹⁹⁰ It was different from the Detective Agency and the Central Detachment in that it was not used for tailing political suspects. Nevertheless the personnel received the same training as the two other sections of the External Agency and staff were frequently shuffled from one department to another. The Security Brigade, occupying part of the separate building at Moika 64, was directed by one of the assistant heads of Petersburg OO.¹⁹¹ Five or six other gendarme officers specialised in supervising the agents of the Security Brigade.¹⁹²

From 1906 to 1914 the Security Brigade significantly increased in size only once – to around 400 during the Romanov celebrations.¹⁹³ At its height the bodyguard service was divided into four detachments (*otriady*) of around 100 persons, each *otriad* was divided into four or five groups (*obkhody*). Each detachment as a whole was headed by a senior detective (*starshii agent*) and reported to a gendarme case officer.¹⁹⁴ This organisation appears at first glance to be extremely large. However, its chiefs insisted that the manpower was entirely insufficient for the job: 50 persons were constantly absent due to illness. The tsar's visits to the capital drained the resources of the Security Brigade still further as it had to provide the Court *okhrana* with 100 agents to secure the route of passage through the city and up to 50 persons to police a theatre any time the tsar visited with an extra 50 to 70 on the route of his coach to and from the theatre. The Security Brigade's numbers were also greatly depleted by the duty of protecting visiting dignitaries: for example, St Petersburg Security Section was in charge of the security operations in Reval for the visit

190 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.162–66: for StPbOO potted history of the *Okhrannaia komanda*.

191 1905–11 Lt.Col.L.M.Luk'ianov, 1911–14 Lt.Col.A.Ozerovskii, 1914–17 Lt.Col.M.N.Volkov. The four heads of the columns in 1914 were Captains Obolonskii, Glasfel'dt, Basov and Kozlovskii.

192 From 1905–1914 these included Captains K.K.Deksbakh, Kozlovskii, Stolbin, Nevdakhov, Glasfel'dt, Basov & A.A.Obolonskii, and Lt.Col.M.N.Volkov.

193 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64, 1.93, March 1909. By 1915 it was back down to 250 again.

194 Captains Glasfel'dt, Kozlovskii, Basov and Stolbin: GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.215–222, 15 Sept. 1913.

of Edward VII in June 1908.¹⁹⁵ Gerasimov was present at the Anglo-Russian meeting on the *Shtandart* yacht of 27 May (9 June N.S.) 1908.¹⁹⁶ He recalled that the tsar chose the location because he was determined to ensure that Edward VII did not visit St Petersburg, as he was worried that the English king would want to go walk-about in the terrorist infested streets of the capital. Meanwhile, the Okhrana's principal concern was the political reliability of a group of German musicians serenading the Anglo-Russian entente.¹⁹⁷ The Court *okhrana* was responsible for protecting the tsar but twenty of Gerasimov's agents were in charge of protecting king Edward and a further 23 agents were assigned to protect the Prime Minister Stolypin.¹⁹⁸ The Brigade chief complained that the shortfalls had led, 'to extreme overstrain [*pereutomlenie*] of the staff and it clearly affects their attentive execution of duties.'¹⁹⁹

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The rosters of security postings have survived largely intact in the archives. Chart 4g lists all the permanent bodyguard duties of the Security Brigade and the number of agents necessary for each posting during a sample year (1912). To have one bodyguard at a fixed post of round the clock security took three detectives working eight-hour shifts. During the daytime they usually appointed two persons to each post on eight-hour shifts.²⁰⁰ An asterisk indicates 24-hour security.

195 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.15, ll.24–32, April-June 1908. Fifty agents under Captains Luk'ianov and Nevdakhov were sent to Reval in April 1908. They arrived a full month before the arrival of the king to secure the area. The agents were told that it was in preparation for a visit from the Swedish King.

196 F.R.Bridge, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary 1906–1914: Diplomatic history* (London, 1972), pp.96–97.

197 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.128. The Petersburg OO chief considered that the musicians' grey hairs were sufficient evidence of political reliability and allowed them to continue: 'So it happened that at the moment of the birth of the Anglo-Russian agreement, the speeches of diplomats were accompanied by German singing.'

198 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.15, l.56.

199 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.154–55.

200 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.154–55, 20 Jan. 1912.

Chart 4g. The allocation of bodyguards from the Security Brigade in 1912

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Location/Person to be protected	Number of Agents assigned
1) Empress Maria Fedorovna:	12
2) Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich	21*
3) Princess Maria Pavlovna	5
4) Chairman of the Council of Ministers	30*
5) Minister of Foreign Affairs	2
6) Minister of Internal Affairs	32*
7) Assistant MVD	2
8) Minister of Justice	11*
9) Minister of Education	12*
10) Lt.General Kurlov	2
11) Bishop Evlogii	3
12) Director of the Department of Police	3
13) Senator Krivtsov	3
14) Colonel Eremin (at the entrance to the Department of Police Special Section)	3*
15) Head of the Prison Directorate	5
16) Finnish Governor General (in Helsinki)	9
17) Collegiate Assessor Efimov (in Helsinki)	2
18) State Secretary P.N.Durnovo	3
19) St Petersburg City Governor	2
20) Major-General Gerasimov	1
21) General Markov	4
22) For guarding St Petersburg Security Section	11*
23) Marinskii Theatre	8
24) Mikhailovskii Theatre	7
25) Aleksandrovskii Theatre	1
26) State Council (when not in session)	1
27) State Council (when in session)	4
28) State Duma	2
29) The electricity station	1
30) Training at the Security Section	5 ²⁰¹
TOTAL	206 ²⁰²

201 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.156–57, *Svedenie o ezhednevnom rashode agentov Okhrannoï komandy*, 1912.

202 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll. 102,154–55, 20 Jan. 1912. The cost of the Security Brigade was 259,000 rubles in 1912. This increased by 123,500 rubles for the additional security arrangements in 1913.

Recruitment

Col.M.F.Von Kotten, the head of St Petersburg Security Section (1910–1914), wrote that he applied six criteria to the recruitment of external agents: age (they had to be young), height (slightly lower than average), good eyesight, lack of physical defect or distinguishing features, race (he said Cossacks made the most reliable tails) and profession (former shop keepers, bailiffs and prison guards were his preferred choice).²⁰³ The same questions were asked about new detectives as about new officers: police and gendarme stations were assigned the task of ‘secretly gathering information from his place of birth about the reliability, conduct, morality, and whether or not [the candidate] has ever been on trial or under investigation...’²⁰⁴ The selection procedure indicates the great degree to which military ethics survived in the Okhrana mentality. A typical example of a candidate turned down is the case of Dmitrii Gur’ev in April 1910. Petersburg Security section researched his service history in the armed forces and found him unsuitable due to a list of heinous offences while in the army including: playing billiards, smoking when it was forbidden, reprimands for poor and dirty attire and for poor attendance.²⁰⁵

Such fastidiousness appears to have been a little misplaced. It has often been said that the only question Napoleon asked when choosing a general was: ‘Has he luck?’ Had the Security Section only been able to ask one question when choosing a detective, then it should well have been: ‘Has he a drink problem?’ For a wage of 50 rubles a month the Okhrana could hardly afford to be any more selective. The most common reason for dismissal was drunkenness on duty. Veritable alcoholics seemed to survive for decades of service in the External Agency with a few minor reprimands. A good example in point is the case of Dmitrii Vasil’ev Gerasimov, an n.c.o. at Warsaw Gendarme Directorate up to 1892 before achieving a place in St Petersburg Security Section’s External Agency. He was transferred to Poltava ‘Security Section’ [sic] in 1901 due to misconduct. He

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203 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.275–76.

204 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.5 (1908g.), l.5, 26 Nov. 1907.

205 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.20, l.39, April 1910.

was soon moved back to Petersburg OO due to drunkenness in 1904. The drinking clearly continued as he was fined three rubles for being drunk on duty in June 1906 and was fined a further 25 rubles when he was found unconscious with drink in a Petersburg police station in January 1908. D.V.Gerasimov was transferred to Reval in July 1908 but was soon after spotted by his supervisor to be drunk on duty yet again and was told that any ‘repetition would lead to [him] being dismissed’. Nevertheless, he did repeat the offence when working as one of Stolypin’s contingent of bodyguards in the Winter Palace on 20 March 1909. Surprisingly, he still wasn’t dismissed, but was issued instead with a ‘final warning’ from his namesake, the head of Petersburg Security Section, General Gerasimov.²⁰⁶

The Okhrana chiefs were caught on the horns of a dilemma whenever dealing with incompetent, lazy or dissolute staff. To sack them was to run the risk of the agents selling secrets to the likes of Vladimir Burtsev or revealing to the local revolutionary underground the identities of the undercover surveillance agents. But to keep them on was to risk compromising the Okhrana still further. Francesco Leone, a detective serving the Foreign Agency, began working for Burtsev after the Okhrana dismissed him.²⁰⁷ Agafonov cited the example of A.Litvin who was able to secure himself from dismissal on charges of embezzlement and extortion by threatening to leak information to Burtsev.²⁰⁸ This also occurred among higher level Okhrana officers who had been recruited from the revolutionary movement. For example, L.P.Kvitsinskii, a *chinovnik* at Petersburg Security Section and the Special Section was caught embezzling office funds – yet he couldn’t be sacked, because he had previously worked as a spy for the Okhrana: thus, after dismissal he would probably have raised a scandal. Despite the clear problems in dismissing him the alternative path chosen by the Okhrana appears a little misguided: Kvitsinskii was promoted to the lofty position of head of Turkestan District OO, then Lifliand Provincial Gendarme Directorate and eventually became the assistant head of Moscow

206 GARF, f.111, 0–.3, d.64, 1.112, March 1909. The two Gerasimovs shared the same patronymic– it would be interesting to discover if they were in fact brothers– which might explain why D.V.Gerasimov was not dismissed.

207 Hovver, Okhrana Collection, Index no.XXVIIa, Box 216.

208 V.K.Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.121.

Security Section.²⁰⁹ St Petersburg OO secured itself against the eventuality of being compromised by its detectives by keeping them in the dark about everything but the job in hand. As a further precaution, black books of unreliable detectives were circulated to prevent them taking up employment in other Security Sections after they had been sacked.²¹⁰

Conclusion

An idea of the physical and mental strain from the work of a detective can be inferred from the calculation— on one staff roster of 1912— that there were eight persons in the Petersburg OO force whose health had been permanently ruined from the constant work; eight others who were frequently ill; and the recent loss of two detectives: one due to cholera, the other to suicide.²¹¹ The job was a psychologically enervating half-life: following individuals in all weathers, whom they only knew by an invented codename, which took them all over the city and frequently into dangerous situations. Unlike the anonymous directors and secret agents, they were frequently recognised and had to endure the general contempt of society on a daily basis. Moreover, they were ill-paid and frequently criticised by their own superior officers in the Okhrana. The disillusionment this caused is evident from training circulars, which stressed that: ‘apart from teaching the practical skills of external surveillance, one must draw attention to the theme of morality in their service. One must convince the detectives that their service is not at all shameful (as many of them think it to be) but on the contrary, they save the lives of many people and avert evil criminal acts. In particular, one must stress that their work involves the seizure of bombs, arms and other materials leading to the liquidation of the terrorist activities of revolutionaries.’²¹² In spite of all their difficulties, these agents were among the most loyal

209 I.P.Vasil'ev statement published in Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.225.

210 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, secret circular no.116817, 19 Oct. 1910.

211 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64a, ll.152–53, June 1912.

212 Popov, head of Khar'kov OO 1907, qutd. in Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.282.

servants of the Okhrana.²¹³ The Security Brigade staff figures for 1911 show that of the 246 filery: 23 began working for the Security section in the 1880s, 24 in the 1890s, 79 from 1901 to 1905, and the remaining 121 from 1906 to 1911.²¹⁴

Despite its failings the External Agency performed a vital task in verifying information received from perustrated mail and from the Internal Agency. Catastrophes such as the murder of Stolypin, Plehve, Karpov and Sudeikin by their own secret agents could have been prevented had the External Agency been correctly used. All four cases resulted from a failure to cross-check information from the Internal Agency by watching their own spies. It is a testament to the skill of the detective service that the revolutionaries imagined the streets of St Petersburg to be teeming with thousands of watchers, when their real numbers never exceeded 250.

One revolutionary described the external agents in 1907 as ‘the principal cogs [*glavnymi kolesami*] in the mechanism of the police state.’²¹⁵ The defector Mikhail Bakai claimed that it was impossible for a known revolutionary to evade the attention of the police in the capital for more than three months.²¹⁶ However, these were perhaps more a reflection of the paranoia of the fugitive than reality. Yet their victims, political fugitives, also seemed to pity these wretched figures. ‘Finally the “green coat” passes the completed “final report” into the hands of the higher police representatives, who soon reap the rewards, all of them higher and higher up the bureaucratic ladder, but the poor spy remains completely in the dark, not even understanding the hugely significant role he plays in defending the existing order of things.’²¹⁷

213 Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, pp.26–27.

214 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.64, ll.428–59.

215 Belokonskii, ‘“Gorokhovoe pal’to,”’ p.290.

216 M.E.Bakai, ‘Iz vospominanii M.E.Bakaia: Provokatory i provokatsiia,’ *Byloe*, no.8 (Paris, 1908), pp.108–09. Michael Futrell, *The Northern Underground: Episodes of Revolutionary Transport and Communications Through Scandinavia and Finland, 1863–1917* (London, 1963), pp.112–13. Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police*, p.38.

217 Belokonskii, ‘“Gorokhovoe pal’to,”’ p.312. Note the use of the term ‘spy’ for external agent. See also M.Gorky, *The Life of a Useless Man*: who seems, naively, to have thought that external agents often later became spies, i.e. entered the Internal Agency— a procedure strictly prohibited by Fontanka.

Part III: The Internal Agency

The Internal Agency of the Okhrana was the collective name for the various groups of informers and spies who supplied inside information on the political opposition. There were three types of informer according to Fontanka terminology.²¹⁸ The piece-worker (*shtuchnik*) was the lowest level of informer who provided only occasional tit-bits of information. The auxiliary agent (*vspomogatel'nyi agent*) was an individual with access to the political underground but not privileged to the inner workings of the revolutionary parties. Finally the best kind of informer was termed a 'secret collaborator' (*sekretnyi sotrudnik* or *seksot*). The Department of Police defined the highest level of spies thus: 'Secret collaborators must be members of one of the revolutionary organisations about which they supply information or in extreme cases be in close contact with serious members of this [party], only then will the information be valuable.'²¹⁹ The principal organisational *diktats* were contained in the so-called 'Stolypin directives' of 10 February 1907. They referred to the Internal Agency as, 'the only absolutely reliable means which can guarantee the information possessed by the investigative institution.'²²⁰

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The terminology used by the secret police in gathering information on the revolutionary movement provides an interesting insight into how they viewed their opponent: 'enlightenment' (*prosveshchenie*) and 'illumination' (*osveshchenie*) were among the most common words used. The Internal Agency was, therefore, the *sine qua non* of the Okhrana's field intelligence: 'without the Internal Agency' Gerasimov wrote in his memoirs, 'the director of the political police is blind. The internal life of a revolutionary organisation, acting underground, is a wholly separate world, completely inaccessible to

218 GARF f.111 op.7 d.7 l.34 (25 Feb. 1909).

219 Quid. by the Investigatory Commission while interrogating Vissarionov: PTsR, vol.3, p.448.

220 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.132,198–99. An updated set of directives was distributed on 19 Feb. 1911. For the section on the Internal Agency see: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, *Instruktsiia po organizatsii i vedeniiu vnutrennego nabliudeniia*. This was part of a 188 point set of instructions on political investigations as a whole.

those who do not become members of the organisations.’²²¹ All other sources of information were seen by the security chiefs as merely supplementary details– to be used to flesh out important facts and check the reliability of the internal agent.²²²

The reliance on the Internal Agency was based on long experience of its usefulness. It had been extremely effective in crushing the last wave of revolutionary parties in the 1880s: Plehve and Sudeikin decimated People’s Will in the capital thanks to their spy Sergei Degaev;²²³ and A.S.Skandrakov, the head of Moscow Security Section, was able to annihilate the leading cells of Black Repartition (*Chernyi peredel*) in 1884 thanks to information of his spy, S.K.Belov. The level of success– albeit with disastrous side effects to be discussed later– was repeated by the secret police chiefs in the last two decades of Romanov rule. The Okhrana effectively took control of SR party’s terrorist campaign when their agent Evno Azef was appointed head of the SR Battle Organisation in 1906. They also dominated the SR party in Moscow by virtue of the fact that the regional head of terrorist activities there up to 1909, Zinaida Zhuchenko, was also an Okhrana spy. The result of this campaign was that the Okhrana weakened the SR party in Russia to the point where Moscow and Petersburg Security Section chiefs were in disagreement as to whether the SR party was still in operation inside the empire by 1912.²²⁴ Not that the SR leadership abroad were safe from police harassment: From 1910–14 of the 140 registered members of the SR party in Paris fourteen were spies.²²⁵

221 Gerasimov: *Na lezviu*, p.56. The necessity of some form of secret *agentura* was embraced even by the most liberal Okhrana chiefs, e.g. see: Lopukhin, *Nastoiashchee i budushchee*, p.25.

222 M.Balabanov, *Ocherki po istorii rabochevo klassa v Rossii*, vol.II (Moscow, 1930), p.170. I.V.Alekseev, *Provokator Anna Serebriakova* (Moscow, 1932), p.13. Tidmarsh, ‘The Zubatov Idea,’ pp.342–43.

223 N.A.Troitskii (ed.) ‘Tainaia politsiia pri Aleksandre III (Normativnye dokumenty),’ *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, no.4 (1998), pp.88–91. Sudeikin was born in 1850. He made his name at the age of only 29 through his innovative use of spies in Kiev. He was transferred to Petersburg in 1881. Shortly after, he recruited Degaev, one of the heads of People’s Will. Degaev however, was exposed by party confederates and forced to exonerate himself through the murder of Sudeikin, which he carried out on 16 Dec. 1883. See also: N.A.Troitskii, ‘Degaevshchina,’ *Voprosy istorii*, no.3 (1976).

224 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.48. Moscow said not, Petersburg said they were.

225 Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.42.

The Okhrana also responded to the growing threat from the Social Democrats in the last decade before the February Revolution.²²⁶ The Bolsheviks in particular appear to have been riddled with Okhrana spies including the editor of *Pravda*, Miron Chernomazov, and their most prominent representative in the Duma, Roman Malinovskii. It was rumoured that at the Prague conference of January 1912 ten out of the thirteen Bolshevik delegates were Okhrana informers. As Dominic Lieven noted, police penetration of the revolutionary underground had ‘reached almost comic proportions.’²²⁷

The effectiveness of the Okhrana in this area led the opposition to conclude, syllogistically, that the Internal Agency was huge: the first socialist historian of the Okhrana, Agafonov, estimated that the Okhrana employed up to 40,000 spies.²²⁸ The Provisional Government investigator into the abuses of power by the tsarist police, Iodlovskii, claimed that the Internal Agency had become the most important prop to the tsarist regime.²²⁹ However, the Provisional Government Investigatory Commission only managed to uncover 600 informers in all in 1917.²³⁰ Paris Internal Agency never exceeded 22 at any one time.²³¹ Moscow Security section at its height had 147 informants and St Petersburg 200.²³² Recent surveys of the archives have uncovered that the Department of Police only employed 10,000 informers in its entire history – with never more than 2,000 working for them at any one time.²³³ An impression of size was given by dint of the Okhrana’s tactical sleight of hand: it concentrated on recruiting agents in the parties’ central apparatus. This created the illusion of omnipresence.

226 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.170–71.

227 Dominic Lieven, ‘The Security Police,’ p.246.

228 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.203, & 216.

229 GARF, f.5802, op.2, d.239, l.21, circular of 21 July 1908: cited by I.Iodlovskii at the Extraordinary Investigatory Commission. See also Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.334.

230 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, index no.3f, boxes 21–25.

231 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.122–37: 12 SRs, 5 SDs and 5 anarchists.

232 S.B.Chlenov, *Moskovskaia okhranka i ee sekretnye sotrudniki* (Moscow, 1919), pp.61–84: 52 of these in Moscow were SDs, though only 15–18 were in action at any one time. Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.225.

233 Peregudova, ‘Istochnik po izucheniiu,’ p.96: around one fifth were employed at one time or another in the SD party. Vassilyev, *The Ochrana*, p.38: The last Director of DP, Aleksandr Vasil’ev, insisted that the size of the internal agency had been greatly exaggerated and that it never exceeded 1,000– which was a slight underestimation.

Nevertheless a great deal of mystery still surrounds the Internal Agency, particularly regarding their penetration of the liberal movement and the rumours of high level Bolshevik spies who were never uncovered. The archival records do not offer all the answers because surveys were intermittent and incomplete. The Russian State Archive (GARF) collections hold references to St Petersburg Security Section's 'Lists of secret agents.' Yet it is not entirely clear whether these lists are classified or no longer exist.²³⁴ Fragments of individual files of the more active secret agents have survived and from this a figure of the very minimum number of secret agents can be gauged. There 185 individual files for secret agents identified by their codenames from the period 1910 to 1916 working for St Petersburg Security Section.²³⁵ Gerasimov estimated that there were just under 200 secret agents serving St Petersburg Security Section at any one time: an impressively large figure. Yet his tenure as chief may well have marked the peak of St Petersburg Security Section.²³⁶ Moreover, the estimate cannot be verified because Gerasimov claimed he destroyed a large section of secret agent records upon leaving office.

The Security Section in Petersburg also had a secondary resource of spies in the provinces as part of their broader mandate as a *District Security Section* after 1907.²³⁷ St Petersburg Security Section's

234 I was denied access to the following files when requested: GARF, f.111, op.4 d.1, *O sotrudnikakh petrogradskogo okhrannago otdeleniia (1908g.)*; f.111, op.4, d.2, *O sotrudnikakh petrogradskogo raionnago otdeleniia (1909g.)*; f.111, op.4, d.3, *O sotrudnikakh severnogo raionnago okh. otd. (1910g.)*; f.111, op.4, d.24, *Perepiska o sekretnykh sotrudnikakh pri raionnom okh.otd.* [for 1911 and 1912]; f.111, op.5, d.417, *Perepiska i spiski o sekretnykh sotrudnikakh pri severnom raionnom otdelenii (1912g.)*; f.111, op.5, d.450, *Spiski sekretnykh sotrudnikov vspomogatel'nykh agentov zhandarmskikh gubernskikh upravlenii (1913g.)* The opis' has a note by these files: 'To transfer to S/O' (*peredat' v S/O*) dated 1972. Presumably S/O stands for *sekretnyi otdel* ('secret section': i.e. classified). Upon making enquiries I was informed that these files no longer existed.

235 GARF, f.111 op.4 (1908–1917gg.) dd.4–188. There are 19 personal files of secret agents for 1910, 17 for 1911, 21 for 1912, 23 for 1913, 37 for 1914, 29 for 1915 and 39 for 1916/17.

236 Mikh.Korbut. (ed. and comp.), 'Uchet departamentom politsii opyta 1905 goda,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.xviii/5 (1926), p.225: Published *doklad* of von Kotten to MVD, 8 Oct.1913. He stated that in July 1905 Gerasimov was able to secure an extra 43,000 rubles for Petersburg OO a year including 20,000 extra for the Internal Agency.

237 GARF, f.111, op.4, d.23 (1910). f.111, op.7, dd.3 (1912), 4 (1911), 7 (1909), and 8 (1913).

budget for its network of spies was more than ten times the Internal Agency budget of Petersburg Provincial Gendarme Directorate and accounted for 14% of the entire Okhrana Internal Agency budget.²³⁸ These records show that at its peak, St Petersburg District Security Section supervised the activities of 244 informers who were employed by officers in the surrounding provincial gendarme sections.²³⁹ Only 20% of these secondary informers listed were fully fledged ‘secret collaborators’ and even these only earned between 40 and 75 rubles a month. Petersburg OO’s higher budget probably indicates that spies in the capital were paid a great deal more, not that there were more spies. The work of spies in the provinces appears to be less specifically directed at political parties: they mostly reported on the armed forces and the ‘general mood.’²⁴⁰

Internal agents were supervised, like the external agents, by a case officer who was usually a gendarme.²⁴¹ Each case officer had roughly ten secret agents under his supervision. Despite Department of Police claims to the contrary, virtually all high level secret agents were recruited when a member of an illegal political party was arrested.²⁴² They were then offered their Faustian deal: release from prison and exile and a generous wage in return for the occasional bit of information. This process of recruitment was performed by the Security Section officers. These were usually gendarmes, though former secret agents made the best case officers. The best of these, Sergei Zubatov, described the process of recruitment as something

238 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.41–43: In 1914 the annual budget in rubles stood at St Petersburg OO:75,000; St Petersburg PGD 5,700; Moscow OO:47,000; Warsaw OO:20,000; Kiev OO:13,000; All other sections 379,000; total: 550,000.

239 All figures for 1911 taken from: GARF, f.111, op.7, d.4, ll.1–127, Jan. 1911. All figures for 1912 taken from: GARF, f.111, op.7, d.3, ll.1–188, March–June 1912. For 1913 see: f.111, op.7, d.8. St Petersburg District OO’s field of supervision covered: St Petersburg, Vologda, Kronstadt, Pskov, Arkhangel’sk, Novgorod, Finland and in the military garrisons in Vyborg, Kuopio, and Sveaborg.

240 The overwhelming majority of secret collaborators were SDs and SRs. Around 90% of the agents in the army were auxiliary agents earning only 10 rubles a month.

241 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.25.

242 The Department of Police promulgated the claim that all internal agents were undercover policemen in *Novaia Rus’* 19 April 1909.

akin to an intellectual and psychological seduction.²⁴³ It usually took place inside his office rather than in the cell, in friendly conversation around the samovar. Unfortunately few case officers had the flair of Zubatov, as Spiridovich lamented: ‘The idealtic type of collaborator is the most desirable and the most valuable but, on the other hand, also the most rare.’²⁴⁴

Accusations of the use of torture during interrogations were levelled at Warsaw Security Section. These were well publicised by the Polish nationalist-liberal press in Austria-Hungary. One account in Polish was published in the Cracow newspaper ‘New Reform,’ and a copy was made by the Special Section in 1910. The paper alleged that Captain Aleksandrov, of Warsaw Security Section, had devised ‘machines for crushing and smashing fingers during questioning.’ Further stories were circulating that Aleksandrov would conduct his interrogations in a field next to a cemetery late at night where the prisoners would be gagged and beaten with leather belts. One victim, Vladislav Ostrovskii, a member of the Polish Socialist Party, claimed to have been beaten unconscious and developed amnesia as a result. Another victim, Stanislav Romanevskii, also a member of the Polish Socialist Party, claimed to have been tied to a tree and told he was about to be executed—shots were fired, but into the sky to frighten rather than kill him.²⁴⁵ These stories were corroborated by an Okhrana officer who claimed that Warsaw Security Section used ‘to beat statements out of the accused’ when Col.P.P.Zavarzin was head from 1906–1909.²⁴⁶ There were some accusations of beatings and torture also at Riga Security Section.²⁴⁷

243 Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.97. Zubatov learned his technique from the man who had recruited him from the revolutionary underground, the head of Moscow OO in the 1880s, N.S.Berdiaev.

244 Qutd in Schneiderman, ‘From the Files,’ p.92.

245 Press cutting from *New Reform* (no.54) entitled ‘Secrets of the Security Section’, 1 Feb. 1910: GARF, f102, op.240, d.38, l.19.

246 The last head of the Special Section, I.P.Vasil’ev’s statement to the Extraordinary Investigatory Commission, qutd. in: Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.224. A former employee of Warsaw OO made similar accusations: M.E.Bakai, ‘Iz zapisok M.E.Bakaia,’ *Byloe*, nos.9/10 (Paris 1909), p.194: Bakai claimed that the security police in Warsaw transferred their prisoners to the ‘torture chamber’ (*zastenok*) of the head of the Investigative Section, Grin.

247 See: Karl Mitsit (“Martyn”), ‘O pytakh v Rizhskom sysknom otdelenii,’ *Byloe*, 13 (Paris 1910), pp.139–48.

Some Soviet historians attempted, without any real success, to dig up evidence of the Okhrana's use of torture.²⁴⁸ Prisoners were undoubtedly maltreated at times by the officers at the Security Sections. But in most of these cases maltreatment was not severe: such as the interruption of sleep, stinginess with food rations, poor living facilities in the Security Section cells, 'absent minded' officers failing to inform the prisoner of his or her right to a defence attorney etc.²⁴⁹ Solzhenitsyn pointed out the yawning gulf between the methods of the NKVD and those of the Okhrana when he recounted one incident, 'in Kresty prison in 1938, when the old political hard-labour prisoner Zelensky was whipped with ramrods and with his pants pulled down like a small boy, he wept in his cell: "My Tsarist interrogator didn't even dare address me rudely."'”²⁵⁰

Whenever possible the Okhrana preferred that its spies were people who had already entered the illegal political parties before being persuaded to work for the police, because they had already penetrated the underworld as genuine revolutionaries and thus did not have to invent cover stories etc. However, the Okhrana had to be careful how it launched the agents back into the revolutionary milieu because if their arrest was common knowledge then their sudden return from prison would be seen as suspicious. One Special Section chief, Eremin, specialised in arranging prison breaks for his new recruits, without actually informing the prison authorities. His organisation

248 See: M.N.Gernet, *A History of Tsarist Prisons*, three vols. (1941–48). Mihajlo Mihajlov, *Russian Themes* (Trans. Marija Mihajlov, London, 1968), p.112–wrote: 'The penal servitude Dostoevsky went through was like life in a sanitorium compared with Solzhenitsyn's camp.' V.G.Chertkov a prison doctor made accusations that the Third Section deliberately maltreated prisoners, confining them to mental institutions, freezing them one day in their cells and then turning up the heat to unbearable levels the next: to induce illness even to the point of death. V.Chertkov, *Stranitsii iz vospominanii (dezhurstvo v voennykh gositaliakh)* (Moscow, 1914), pp.27–32; Bogucharskii, 'Tret'e otdelenie,' pp.124–25.

249 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, *Tsirkuliary*, 1.14 30 April 1907 reminds security police that according to the criminal code articles 1035 (11) and 1035 (20) prisoners have a right to ask for a witness to be present during interrogations.

250 A.Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956* (London, 1974), p.132. Though another victim of both the tsarist and Soviet systems might not have given such a positive appraisal of the Okhrana: Maria Spiridovna was allegedly beaten and sexually assaulted in police custody following her assassination of a Tambov *okhrannik*, G.N.Luzhnovskii, in 1904.

of the escape of the Maximalist Semen Ryss was so convincing that his prison guards were tried and sentenced to hard labour. This system was supported by the fact that the security of tsarist prisons was notoriously bad and the frequent escapes of revolutionaries from prison were not seen as anything out of the ordinary.²⁵¹

Protecting the agent's cover story did not end with release from custody. The Special Section strictly forbade using secret agents for trifling work, such as external surveillance, because it could ruin their cover. Maintaining cover became more and more difficult the longer the agent served, because liquidations inevitably alerted the underground to a spy in its midst. A good example of the handling of this sort of problem was the case when Zinaida Zhuchenko reported to her case officer, Mikhail von Kotten (future head of Petersburg OO), in January 1906 that her group was planning to assassinate the notoriously reactionary Governor of Minsk (and future head of the Okhrana), General P.G. Kurlov. Instead of liquidating the cell, von Kotten asked Zhuchenko to pass the bomb on to him— which he then defused and returned to Zhuchenko to be used in the assassination attempt. All went ahead as planned and when the bomb was hurled, very accurately, at Kurlov the only injury he received was a slight wound where the bomb had bounced off his head. The bomb-thrower meanwhile was swiftly caught, tried and hanged.²⁵²

It has been pointed out that women made up a very small percentage of the Okhrana's spies: only 13 of the 371 informers in Moscow, Warsaw and Paris uncovered in the wake of the February Revolution were women.²⁵³ One might have expected a higher proportion considering the fact that women made up 15% of the SR party shortly after 1902 and a slightly greater portion of the terrorist branch.²⁵⁴ The principal reason for this was possibly due to the fact that case officers were always men, who might have been too

251 Edward Ellis Smith, *The Young Stalin* (London, 1968), pp.448–54: Stalin himself escaped from exile and prison on an estimated 13 occasions: Smith saw this as evidence that Stalin was an Okhrana agent.

252 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Gerasimova*, p.258.

253 Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, p.91.

254 O.V.Budnitskii (ed.) *Zhenshchiny-terroristki v Rossii* (Feniks Press, Rostov on Don, 1996). Amy Knight, 'Female terrorists in the Social Revolutionary Party,' *The Russian Review*, vol.38 (April 1979).

squeamish too apply the same bullying tactics they used on male arrestees. All the same, it must be stressed that the Internal Agency employed a far higher percentage of women than in any other area of the Okhrana. One instruction in the rules of recruitment for 1913 specifically excluded women from service in the chancelleries of the Department of Police.²⁵⁵ There was only one woman, Elizaveta Petrovna Salomirovskaia, listed as a member of staff in the Special Section from 1905 to 1911.²⁵⁶ The police archives include a selection of dozens of applications from women in 1907. This collection of women's applications may indicate that numerous women did work temporarily in office jobs for the Okhrana in 1907. Firstly, because many of the applicants were related to members of staff, they would hardly have wasted time in applying had the ban been in operation. Secondly, because the applications were not general requests but directed towards specific jobs particularly as typists in the filing section, the registration section, and other reference sections where knowledge of foreign languages was needed.²⁵⁷

Women were often useful as surveillance agents: revolutionaries after all were expecting the clichéd flatfoot in his bowler hat and khaki-green raincoat. The *komandir* of the Separate Corps and *de facto* Okhrana chief Kurlov employed a female bodyguard from 1909 to 1911, because she would attract less attention as his escort during attendance at the numerous social functions his position entailed.²⁵⁸ But on the whole, there are very few women recorded on the staff lists of St Petersburg's External Agency before 1914.²⁵⁹

Zubatov's well-known advice on the agent–case officer relationship provides something of an insight on this male dominated world: 'you, gentlemen' he is reported to have said, 'should look upon a collaborator

255 GARF, f.102, op.295, d.107, ll.88–89, 9 March 1913 & undated 1915. 'Special order banning the service of women in the Department of Police' (*osboe rasporyazhenie o nedopushchenii na sluzhbu v Departament Politsii lits zhenskago pola*).

256 GARF, f.102, op.295, d.4, ll.1–46. She was earning a fairly good salary (150 rubles a month).

257 GARF, f.102, op.295, d.107, passim.

258 Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.275 (from Trusevich report).

259 Women began to be employed in considerable numbers by military intelligence in the First World War. For example, the army's job of perusing mail to watch its own troops was performed by women after 1916—see M.Lemke, *250 dnei v tsarskoi stavke* (Petrograd, 1920), pp.405, 436–37, 442.

as a mistress with whom you are involved in an adulterous affair. One incautious step and you will ruin her.²⁶⁰ Some officers appear to have taken his advice a little too literally. Col. von Kotten supposedly had an affair with his top SR secret agent Zinaida Zhuchenko. Zubatov himself was very close to Anna Serebriakova. Gerasimov even married one of his spies.²⁶¹ The idealistic collaborators were also often women, such as Maria Vil'bushevich. This may also be the reason why these female agents were the most reliable and longest serving, Serebriakova served from 1885–1909, Vil'bushevich and Zhuchenko served from 1893–1909.

Preserving good relations with the secret agent was a difficult task. The subject of monetary rewards had to be broached tactfully: the agent was to be treated like a mistress, not a prostitute. Nurit Schleifman compiled data on the 'secret collaborators' working for the Foreign Agency from 1902 to 1914. These constituted a group among the highest level of secret agents: and yet 33 of the 39 top level agents in SR, SD and anarchist circles earned less than 100 rubles a month.²⁶²

Thus, money was hardly likely to be the sole incentive for the Okhrana's spies: due to the simple fact that the work wasn't well paid. Only a select few rose to earn significantly high wages: Roman Malinovskii earned 500 rubles per month, and upon his hurried 'retirement' he received a pay off of a further year's wages (6,000 rubles).²⁶³ At Moscow OO Lev Beitner earned 750 rubles a month for spying on Vladimir Burtsev; and Zinaida Zhuchenko, head of the SR party in Moscow, received 200 rubles a month pension after her exposure in 1909.²⁶⁴ Agents serving abroad were often the best paid: M.A.Zagorskaia reporting on the SRs earned over a thousand

260 Qutd in S.A.Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.97. Several of St Petersburg OOs best agents (Tartarov, Gapon) were murdered by revolutionaries after they were uncovered; two other members in the Battle Organisation, Ian Berdo and Mishel' Komorskii, committed suicide after they fell under suspicion in Feb. 1910. See GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, ll.10–18.

261 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.54–66.

262 Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.61.

263 PTsR, Vol.5, *Dopros V.F.Dzhunkovskogo*, p.85. Compare this to Karpov's widow who only received a total of 1,500 rubles in compensation from the Department of Police: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.262, l.80, 16 Dec. 1909.

264 Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.29.

rubles a month (3,500 francs); and Anna Serebriakova, a close contact of Lenin's wife, was in the service of the Okhrana for 24 years and earned up to 150 rubles a month.²⁶⁵

The collaborators were seduced into Okhrana service more through a combination of desire to avoid prison and an enjoyment of the power and its perquisites that their role gave them rather than through simple monetary inducements. Various secrets police chiefs were reputed to anaesthetise the troubled conscience of an agent and staff alike after a liquidation by treating all to a luxurious meal and heavy drinking session (*kutezh*).²⁶⁶ Gerasimov seems to have earned the trust of Azef through carefully building up a relationship of mutual respect: he regularly invited Azef to his own home and consulted him on broader police business. This appears to have flattered the agent's ego. Malinovskii was cajoled into further acts of treachery through perquisites such as a direct phone line to the Department of Police and an exemption from the normal agent responsibilities of mandatory reports on any criminal acts that they heard about.²⁶⁷ Col.P.P.Zavarzin even gave Malinovskii Moscow Security Section reports on the SD party for his perusal, criticism and correction of the finer points of internal party politics.²⁶⁸

Service in the secret police seemed to promise certain troubled individuals a sense of self-worth, of belonging, of serving a cause. It was, of course, a promise hardly likely to be fulfilled. Many security police officers harboured ambiguous views of the individuals upon which the Okhrana system depended. One officer, V.N.Russiiian, saw the spy as the 'true hero' of the Okhrana but also recognised that he was usually: 'an adventurer who wants to play an important role. Some provocateurs, however, exhibit an element of sadism. To derive

265 Peregudova, 'Istochnik po izucheniiu,' pp.96–98. Other SD agents included M.L.Briandinskii regularly earned 100 rubles a month and often up to 630 rubles in a month; A.Lobov was known to earn as much as 750 rubles a month, A.A.Poskrebiukin earned 200 rubles a month; there were 50 agents earning 60 rubles a month. See also: Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.221

266 According to Bakai liquidations were followed by heavy drinking sessions at Mednikov's apartment on 40 *Preobrazhenskaia ulitsa* or at fashionable restaurants (*Malyi iaroslavets* in particular) Bakai, 'Iz vospominanii,' p.166.

267 R.C.Elwood, *Roman Malinovskiy: A Life Without Cause* (Newton, Mass., 1977), pp.35–38; Nicolaevsky, *Aseff: the Russian Judas*, pp.27–30.

268 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros S.P.Beletskogo*, pp.281–82.

pleasure from a double degradation of people— this seems to me to be one of the main emotional reactions of these people. To dominate people, to send them to the gallows, to play with them as a cat plays with a mouse...’²⁶⁹ The Internal Agency embodied the shared characteristics of the Okhrana and the revolutionary movement. Martynov condemned Grigorii Gershuni in his recruitment of volunteers whereby, ‘he preyed upon the psychologically imbalanced to draw them into terrorism.’²⁷⁰ The Okhrana was little different in this regard.

The Perils of Conspiracy

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*The spy believes only in espionage, and if you escape his snares, he imagines that he is going to fall into yours.*²⁷¹

Generation after generation of alchemists in the imperial Chinese court claimed to have discovered elixirs for prolonging life. However, these elixirs were often brewed from a dangerous cocktail of ingredients. One historian of science, Joseph Needham, traced a whole series of Chinese emperors who probably died from elixir poisoning. Yet the alchemists continued to be valued and to concoct these elixirs, merely becoming more cautious in the handling of ingredients. The key ingredient in the Okhrana’s elixir, the Internal Agency, was also potentially toxic. The internal agent system was based on a volatile paradox: spies were forbidden ‘to occupy themselves with so-called provocation – i.e. taking part in criminal actions or leading other people to do this while playing a secondary role.’ While in the same set of instructions the agent was ordered ‘not to refrain from playing an active role in party work in order to secure their position in the organisation.’²⁷² In a revolutionary organisation virtually all party work involved ‘criminal actions’. It was therefore impossible to obey *both* instructions. The Department of Police often had to

269 Russian, *Rabota okhrannykh otdelenii*, p.24.

270 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.42.

271 Saint-Marc Girardin, quoting from the Marquis de Custine’s *Russia in 1839* in *Journal des Débats*, 4 Jan.1844.

272 Hoover, Box 158, folder 9, *Vremennoe polozenie*, article 8 and 9.

reprimand officers for permitting ‘excessive activism on the part of their secret agents’– which was *bureaucratise* for spies carrying out criminal acts on behalf of the revolutionary parties.²⁷³

Revolutionaries gave this kind of excessively active agent the odious moniker of *provocateurs* (*provokatory*) and made them the focus of their attacks on the immorality of the tsarist regime. As one defector put it: ‘As a former staff member attached to Warsaw Security Section I can categorically assert, on the basis of given facts that provocatorial methods in the work of the Department of Police, the security sections and gendarme administrations form the very basis of the [security police] system.’²⁷⁴

The Okhrana officers coped with the ambiguities of the Internal Agency by giving the agents a certain amount of leeway– as Trusevich put it ‘we made a distinction between collaboration and provocation.’²⁷⁵ It was their misfortune however that society at large did not. The term derived from the French *agent provocateur*. In implying that all spies working for the police were engaged in provoking radicals into illegal acts it was, however, a misnomer in many cases. The general Russian interpretation of their word for provocation (*provokatsiia*) had undergone a subtle transformation since it had entered the language through Polish. The English word ‘provocation’ is probably closer in meaning to the Russian word *podstrekatel’svo* than to *provokatsiia*. This marked a linguistic coup for the opponents of the political police on a par with Lenin proclaiming his fraction to be the majority wing of the SD party. Thus, the socialist historian Agafonov defined *provokatsiia* simply as agents working for the Okhrana.²⁷⁶

Consequently, the broad mass of society looked upon the use of spies with great contempt.²⁷⁷ Thus, the Okhrana came to be seen as

273 Kurlov, *Gibel’ imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.115: Vissarinov on Warsaw OO’s misconduct in 1910.

274 M.E.Bakai, ‘Iz zapisok M.E.Bakaia,’ *Byloe*, nos.9/10 (Paris 1909), p.192. See the same issue, pp.251–55.

275 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Trusevicha*, p.211.

276 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, p.190. And he claimed in turn that the Department of Police definition of provocation was simply agents who refused to obey their orders.

277 Even Dostoevsky in his arch-conservative old-age is famous for saying that should he hear of a plot to kill the tsar he would not report it to the police for fear of being thought an informer. G.Hosking, *A History of the Soviet Union* (London, 1985), p.21.

morally inferior to the revolutionary movement. This is even true of opinion in ruling circles: Dominic Lieven has paraphrased ultra-conservative Prince Meshcherskii who expressed the opinion: ‘that at least the revolutionaries’ abominations were the product of commitment to ideals, while those who used unscrupulous tactics against them were motivated by nothing but the desire for power, money, and the perquisites of office.’²⁷⁸ A further example of this can be found in former Prime Minister Witte’s expression of horror upon hearing that the head of the Foreign Agency and former spy, Harting, was invited to a meal with the Dowager Empress: ‘In homes lacking in modern plumbing there are servants whose duty it is to clean the necessary places and one cannot do without them, but one doesn’t invite them to dinner.’²⁷⁹ Even Kurlov, one of the least scrupulous police officials, acknowledged the moral and legal ambiguity of the use of spies: ‘legal? – no, but necessary? – yes.’²⁸⁰ The Internal Agency could therefore be seen as partially counter-productive because it created the very thing it was supposed to destroy: opposition to the tsarist regime. It was even accused of being the central cause of the radicalisation of the revolutionary movement.²⁸¹

Another result was that many of the Okhrana’s warnings went unheeded. In August 1913 arrested subversives in the Baltic fleet were released because Meshcherskii convinced the tsar that the evidence against them had been fabricated by the Okhrana.²⁸² Military intelligence, noted one its officers, was also hampered by moral objections to spies: ‘ever since the exposure in 1909 of the *agent provocateur*, Azeff... Russian officialdom cherished a rooted antipathy to double spies.’²⁸³ It also meant that the Okhrana was obstructed in its efforts to prevent subversion in the armed forces: Anton Denikin reflected the general contempt for the Okhrana’s spying on the military when he wrote that it created an ‘oppressive atmosphere.’²⁸⁴

278 D.Lieven, ‘The Security Police,’ p.255.

279 Witte, *Memoirs*, vol.3, ch.7, p.673.

280 PTsR, Vol.3, *Dopros P.G.Kurlova*, p.204.

281 GARF, f.5802, op.2, d.239, l.21, circular of 21 July 1908: cited by I.Iodlovskii at the Extraordinary Investigatory Commission. See also Ruud & Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.334.

282 Lieven, ‘The Security Police,’ p.241.

283 Kaledin, *K-14*, pp.17–18.

284 Anton I.Denikin, *The Career of a Tsarist Officer. Memoirs, 1872–1916* (Minneapolis, 1975), pp.200–201.

The deep hostility to espionage is revealed by the fact that even Burtsev's attempts to defend the revolutionary movement by means of espionage were abominated in the SR party. Vera Figner commented to him: 'What a dark figure you represent, Vladimir L'vovich! You stride about like the angel of death bearing the scythe, even worse than the angel of death...like a black phantom with long, twisted fingers...From your black bag you pull out broadsheets on informers, on betrayal, on selling one's soul, on crimes against comradeship, against friendship, against everything that man holds precious and sacred. You sow suspicion, you sow loathing and contempt for people, for mankind in general...You want the institution of espionage itself. You want endless exposures, condemnations, proofs, judgements. Is that creative work?'²⁸⁵

Nevertheless, Vladimir Burtsev had managed to cast the Okhrana into a state of moral ignominy in the eyes of society through uncovering some of their leading spies.²⁸⁶ This proved a useful tool for alluding to broader issues of political reform in the post-October Manifesto years of a relatively free press. This also made the handling of the Internal Agency extremely difficult for the Okhrana. In this milieu it was impossible to regulate the use of the Internal Agency by law and so recourse was taken yet again to internal circulars and further acts of concealment and duplicity.²⁸⁷ The threats of exposure also placed a great deal of psychological stress on the individuals who had been recruited as spies. They betrayed and sacrificed their whole social circle to an organisation with which their only point of contact was a single case officer. Most secret agents lasted less than two years. One of Sudeikin's leading agents in People's Will,

285 Nurit Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, pp.38, & 192–93. Another example is the case of Mikhail Rips, who was shunned by his party comrades after he had joined the Okhrana in order to destroy it from the inside.

286 Hoover, Nicolaevskii Collection, Box 3, folder 8, V.Burtsev, *Moia bor'ba s provokatorami 1912–1914*. GARF, f.1723, *Men'shchikov Leonid Petrovich*, op.1–2, 512 files from 1866–1932. A unusual example of the revolutionaries using the Okhrana's tactics against them was the case of Nikolai Kletochnikov who worked for the police in Petersburg from 1879–1881 and passed on lists of secret agents amongst the Populists: 'Iz zapisok N.V.Kletochnikova,' *Byloe*, no.7 (1908). There were also concerns about Kerenskii exposing OO spies prior to the war– GARF, f.111, op.4, d.76, l.28, agent 'Rutyntsev' report Sept. 1913.

287 PTsR, Vol.3, *Dopros S.E.Vissarionova*, p.447–49.

Grebchenko, ended his career in a mental asylum as a result of the stress and trauma of his acts of betrayal. Another example is the secret agent Iuliia Vasil'eva Egorova. Her files in St Petersburg Security Section record that she had been convicted of several crimes, sacked from three different jobs in St Petersburg Security Section, exposed as an *agent provocateur*, diagnosed as mentally ill and attempted suicide at Odessa railway station before the Okhrana saw fit to warn other Security Sections against employing her.²⁸⁸

There are several interesting letters from one spy exposed by Burtsev, 'Stroimlov', to his former case officer, Von Kotten, in 1911. These letters reveal the conflicting emotions of a spy suddenly dismissed by the Okhrana without being told why: confusion, a guilty conscience, frustration, and outward idealistic fervour: 'Why have I been dismissed?' he wrote at first. 'Surely it cannot be about what I got up to in Kurgan?... I cannot bring myself to believe that you do not trust me, that you do not believe in my sincere desire to be of use in the struggle against what I consider to be the evil enemies of Russia.' But soon after he discovered that Vladimir Burtsev had published information about his collaboration with the secret police, and then Stroimlov was embittered and suspicious, even of his own case officer: 'That scoundrel Burtsev is evidently well-informed... The question that interests me is where did the information come from? I expect that this is also a question which interests you. From the Department or the [Security] Section? You did not tell the Department about me, so clearly it must have come from the [Security] Section.'²⁸⁹

The most common result of the mental traumas of treachery was that the agent began to regret agreeing to work for the Okhrana. Maria Vil'bushevich was a typical example of one of Zubatov's convertees: She was a one time convinced revolutionary who had been persuaded to see the error of her ways after being arrested and interrogated by Zubatov. Once converted to the police cause she was returned back into the bosom of the Jewish revolutionary underground in Minsk. She later wrote to Zubatov that she was plagued by doubts: 'when I came here I began to think deeply of what I seek and what

288 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, 14 Oct. 1910.

289 GARF, f.111, op.4, d.35, ll.24 ob.-28, letters to Von Kotten 19 & 28 Oct. 1911.

you have done to me. I begin to hate you. That feeling grows every day and if it reaches a certain limit, the whole affair will end ill for both you and me. I cannot say that you have misled me... but if all your talk of the Tsar, God and the soul are just skilful means of winning over an *exultee* young girl to help you rise to a higher position— that would be too hard... I need only be convinced that you are not what I believed you to be, and I will confess my guilt of provocation before all the people... An honest man can only betray people when he knows that he is betraying them into the hands of an honest man.’²⁹⁰

In the next and most dangerous stage of this disillusionment the agent began to focus all of his or her resentment on the case officer. Case officers were frequently murdered by their own spies: either out of pure hatred or compelled to do so by the revolutionary underground after the spy was unmasked (as a means of expiating their guilt). The *narodnovolets* Degaev killed the St Petersburg Security Section chief, Sudeikin, in 1883.²⁹¹ Spiridovich was wounded by one of his agents (the SD Rudenko) while he was head of Kiev OO in 1905. The head of Petersburg Security Section, Karpov, was blown up by one his own spies (Petrov) in December 1909. This last case showed that inexperienced case officers, who did not work with the proper degree of caution were like lambs to the slaughter when attempting to handle a hardened and embittered revolutionary/spy.²⁹²

Gerasimov was one of the few heads of a Security Section to escape harm from terrorist attacks. However, this was due more to the obsessive caution he brought to his job, rather than a lack of terrorists wanting to kill him. Gerasimov felt so unsafe that he frequently changed address, lived under an assumed name and never wore his gendarme uniform.²⁹³ He even refused to appear at the trial of the

290 Quid. in Kyril Tidmarsh, ‘The Zubatov Idea,’ pp.344–45.

291 A.Pribyleva-Korba, ‘Sergei Petrovich Degaev,’ *Byloe*, no.4 (April 1906); idem, ‘Degaevshchina: materialy i dokumenty,’ in *ibid*.

292 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.262. ‘K ubiistvu polkovnika Karpova’ & ‘Delo Petrova’ in *Znamia truda*, no.25 (January 1910), pp.3–9. Karpov took up duties as acting head of PbOO on 12 April. He was not officially appointed to the post until 27 Oct. 1909.

293 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.97. In 1907 Gerasimov received an invitation for an audience with the tsar. On these occasions it was customary to wear full dress uniform. However, he’d been in plain clothes work for so long that the only uniform he possessed was ‘extremely threadbare.’

Nikitenko SR terrorist cell, which he himself had liquidated in 1907, for fear that the defence lawyers would pass on a description of his identity. When it became clear that his testimony was necessary to secure a conviction and the death sentence for these terrorists, Gerasimov finally agreed to appear at a closed court session dressed in disguise and affecting a bad case of gout (so that he could remain seated and thus disguise his height).²⁹⁴

One hitherto unexamined case of a terrorist attacking his case officer is that of the Maximalist Mikhail Rips, who shot and wounded the future head of Petersburg Security Section, von Kotten, in Paris in May 1909. These attacks provided unpleasant publicity for the Okhrana and wonderful opportunities for publicity for the revolutionaries: Rips went on trial in Paris from 14 to 15 June 1910 (N.S.). Von Kotten astonished all concerned when he decided to go to the trial in person and as a French newspaper commented, the Russian émigré community in Paris were, 'equally astonished that the Colonel [von Kotten] has had the temerity to register at a hotel under his real name.'²⁹⁵ The trial proved an excellent platform for Rips to orate (through his French translator) on the iniquities of the tsarist regime. Rips' defence consisted of placing von Kotten on trial for his acts of 'provocation'.²⁹⁶ The trial dwelt on the harsh treatment of Rips by the Okhrana. He had been arrested in February 1909 then transferred to the custody of Moscow Security Section. It is not difficult to see why the agent turned against his case officer when we examine the details of Rips' recruitment by Colonel von Kotten. Rips claimed that he was kept waiting in his cell for 27 hours without food or a bed. During the interrogation von Kotten warned Rips that he faced a long period of exile in Siberia. Then von Kotten proposed a *quid pro quo*: release from his sentence if he agreed to work for the

294 Ibid., p.106–7: 'The success of my work,' he explained to the court, 'hangs on the fact that no-one in the revolutionary movement knows what I look like. Therefore, I never appear in public.'

295 Press cutting 14 June 1910: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 185, folder 2b.

296 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 185, folder 3, Vol.1, pp.5–23. On the terrorist career of Mikhail Rips, see: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.23 l.2, 5 Jan. 1909. In 1905 he tried to kill a policeman and in the latter half of 1906 he prepared an attempt on the life of Moscow City Governor Reinbot— for which he was arrested. (DP circular does not mention that he was recruited by von Kotten at this time).

Okhrana. He refused to allow Rips to go back to prison. When Rips asked what working for the Okhrana entailed, he claimed the colonel 'replied with an ironic smile: "I am proposing that you enter our service as an *agent provocateur*."'”²⁹⁷ After protracted interrogations Rips claimed he decided to play along with the colonel and use the situation to his own advantage. The more likely explanation was that Rips' role as a spy was discovered by Burtsev when the former arrived in Paris and he agreed to expiate his sins by killing the Mephistophelean spymaster.

Instances of revolutionaries deliberately entering the service of the secret police purely to accomplish a terrorist act became lamentably frequent in the last years of the Okhrana.²⁹⁸ Solomon Ryss was arrested in Kiev and was apparently convinced by his interrogators to work for the Okhrana as an internal agent in return for his release from prison – in an escape staged by the head of the Special section, Eremin. Upon beginning his espionage work for the Okhrana, Ryss convinced the Department of Police to cease surveillance of the Maximalist group in order to protect his position in the party. Ryss was in fact still loyal to the Maximalists and the cessation of surveillance gave them the opportunity to organise the attempt on Stolypin's life at his dacha killing 27 people in August 1906.²⁹⁹

These incidences led the Okhrana to confront the uncomfortable question on a number of occasions: was the Internal Agency of more use to revolutionary movement than it was to the tsarist regime? For example it seems highly paradoxical that the agent heralded as the most successful Okhrana spy, Evno Azef, was also rumoured to have masterminded a total of 28 terrorist attacks on government officials.³⁰⁰

The case of the leading police spy in the Bolshevik fraction, Roman Malinovskii, was even more ambiguous. He had become a high level

297 Hoover, loc.cit., p.20.

298 Many of these cases were probably a method that exposed agents used as an *ex post facto* alibi for their service in the Okhrana, in order to escape revenge attacks from the revolutionaries. For example, St Petersburg's loyal agent Metal'nikov, working among the SRs, later claimed he had entered the service of the Okhrana 'with revolutionary aims in mind.' GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.1, St PbOO *obzor* to Director DP, 28 March 1912.

299 Spiridovich, *Partiia Sotsialistov-Revoliutsionerov*, pp.311–13.

300 Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii*, p.283.

spy in 1910 and his election to the Duma had been made possible by the assistance of the Department of Police.³⁰¹ In the Duma Malinovskii proved an inspiring orator, speaking on 22 occasions in the first session of the Fourth Duma and on 38 in the second session, he signed 54 interpellations and made five legislative proposals.³⁰² This could hardly have been defined as doing only the bare minimum in order to preserve his cover. The Deputy Director of Fontanka claimed: ‘when I came to read his speeches in the Duma, I concluded that it was impossible to continue working with him.’³⁰³ Lenin explained the reason for his support of Malinovskii when he told the Extraordinary Investigatory Commission that: ‘I do not believe Malinovskii was involved in provocation because the Okhrana would not have gained as much from it as the party.’³⁰⁴ Lenin’s words could be interpreted in a number of ways. It might have been a hint that he deliberately sanctioned Malinovskii’s work as a spy because he was more useful to the party *as an Okhrana agent* than if he had not worked for the Okhrana at all. Then again, Lenin may well have just been covering up for the embarrassing fact that he had been duped. Whatever the truth of the matter, Lenin was certainly reluctant to hear any more about the affair. Malinovskii returned from exile in 1918. Lenin refused to see him despite his repeated appeals and the unfortunate spy was executed shortly after his return to Russia.³⁰⁵

The Internal Agency was intended to work like an infectious disease inside the organism of the revolutionary movement—spreading mistrust, suspicion, dissent and disorder in the ranks of the opposition.³⁰⁶ Yet ‘mistrust’ was a difficult virus to control. On the

301 Malinovskii said at his own trial in 1918: “Do you think that I was elected to the Duma as a result of your [ie Bolshevik] support? Not at all! I became a member of the State Duma thanks to the efforts of the Police Department.” qutd. in Elwood, *Roman Malinovskii*, p.83.

302 Ibid., p.29.

303 PTsR, vol.5, p.219.

304 Lenin to the Investigatory Commission, 1 June 1917, qutd. in Golovkov & Burin, *Kantseliaria*, p.93. See also Hoover, E.E.Smith Collection, Box 10, Testimony of Chkheidze; & Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 206, folder ‘Malinovskii’.

305 The summary of Malinovskii’s crimes by the Moscow Soviet can be found in : Hoover archive, Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 206, Folder ‘Malinovskii’, *Vechernie Izvestiia*: “Delo predatel’ia Malinovskogo”, 5 Nov. 1918.

306 Fear of betrayal, one SD wrote, was like ‘an extremely noxious poison, which seeps into all the pores of the organisation, kills all its tissues, and eventually paralyses its activities.’ Quid Elwood, *Russian SDs in the Underground*, p.25.

one hand, Martynov argued that building up mutual trust between the case officer and spy was the most effective means of a successful security operation.³⁰⁷ On the other, Spiridovich told his students training for service in the security police that: ‘The memories of Lt. Cols Sudeikin and Karpov, who perished as heroes carrying out their duty, must serve as a warning to officers of the Corps and always remind them that unwarranted confidence in the collaborator sometimes leads to catastrophe.’³⁰⁸ And Kurlov decried: ‘the excessive trust being placed by investigative officials in their secret agents.’³⁰⁹ Thus, the Okhrana itself soon contracted the infectious disease of mistrust. Officials and fellow Okhrana officers began to fear that the *okhranniki* were in league with the terrorists. The last head of the Special Section claimed that the principal reason Stolypin asked Gerasimov to escort him to Tsarskoe selo on his visits to the tsar was because he was concerned that Gerasimov might organise a terrorist attack on his life, and that an attack was unlikely if Gerasimov was in the firing line.³¹⁰ The Department of Police placed Gerasimov and his associates under surveillance.³¹¹ Rumours persisted that Azef was about to revive the SR terrorist campaign in league with Gerasimov long after the former had disappeared into obscurity in flight from an SR death sentence.³¹² The Department of Police kept a broad section of middle ranking Okhrana employees, suspected of connections with Burtsev, under surveillance.³¹³

307 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.219–20.

308 Qutd in Sneiderman, ‘From the files,’ p.96.

309 Kurlov, *Gibel’ imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.112.

310 I.P.Vasil’ev’s statement to the Investigatory Commission, published in Shchegolev, *Okhranniki, agenty, palachi*, pp.223–24.

311 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.170–76: A suitably Kafkaesque end to his career. Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Boxes 92 to 99. See also Boxes 210–21 on defectors. Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, folder ‘Chrezvychnaia,’ Doproso Beletskogo, pp.27–28. Gerasimov’s friends in the Special Section and Petersburg OO, N.A.Peshkov and I.V.Dobroskok, were constantly followed.

312 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.113, St PbOO to DPOO, 30 Oct. 1912.

313 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Index no.XXIVb, Box 211: the list of employees abroad who fell under suspicion included: Sorkin, Mel’iakovich, Yanitskii, Leiba Finkelman (see also Box 143, folder 1c p.453, March 1911, Borisov, Leone, Joulia, Jollivet, Pilenas-Wallenrod, Sushkov, Tiercelin, Lt.Benson, Bakai, Menshchikov, Leroy and Rips. St Petersburg Security Section was monitoring Burtsev in Paris in 1912 because rumours had reached them that a gendarme colonel had visited Burtsev several times; see: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.109, St PbOO to DPOO, 12 Oct. 1912. For further details of the suspicion of Sushkov see: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, index no.VIh, Box 42.

The Police Counter-attack

Not all precautions taken were as unnecessary and paranoid as the conspiracy theories surrounding Gerasimov. The Okhrana developed a fairly thorough system of controls around the Internal Agency following the revolutionary movement's counter-attack against police espionage.

Stolypin's 'Instructions on the Organisation Conduct of the Internal Agency' (*Instruktsiia po organizatsii i vedeniiu vnutrennego nabludeniia*) marked a concerted effort to reform espionage methodology.³¹⁴ In many ways however, the advice given was for the most part very vague. Security Sections were advised to: 'choose agents with special caution [*s osoboï ostorozhnosti*]' Little was offered in the way of practical advice as to how they would distinguish the treacherous spies from the loyal ones.³¹⁵

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Nevertheless, the instructions did set out a strict and practical procedure for handling secret agents. Meetings between the case officer and the informer had to take place in secret Department of Police flats known as conspiratorial apartments (*konspirativnye kvartiry*)— a kind of 'safe-house.'³¹⁶ Petersburg OO head Karpov hadn't adhered to these rules and had allowed his agent Petrov to move into the conspiratorial flat. The Director of the Department of Police pointed out that case officers should never allow the agent to be alone in the conspiratorial apartment and they should always arrive before the agent when meeting in a public place or a restaurant.³¹⁷ It was instructed that the identities of agents were to be known only to their case officers and the Special Section's central Highly Secret Agents' Section.³¹⁸ Moscow and St Petersburg Security Sections

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314 PTsR, Vol.3, *Dopros S.E.Vissarionova*, p.447–49.

315 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.295, l.16, 25 Jan. 1910.

316 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.58: these were supposed to be known to no more than three to five agents. The top five to seven agents were handled by the head of St Pb OO himself.

317 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.295 (1910g.), l.1, 18 Dec. 1909.

318 Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosdrstvennykh uchrezhdenii*, p.90. GARF, f.111, op.5, d.312, ll.266–67, SPBOO report, 20 Sept. 1911: Malinovskii was not known to St Petersburg Security Section as a spy. This is clear from the fact that they had him searched and arrested three times in 1910. He was only released on every occasion because no incriminating evidence could be found. The case officers often seemed to show a dry sense of humour in their choice of codenames for

followed the Special Section's lead and centralised the handling of their top informers in an Agent Section (*Agenturnyi otdel*) in 1910.³¹⁹

The Okhrana began running parallel agents to verify information received by each informer. The Special Section also established a Cross-checking Agency (*perekrestnaia agentura*)³²⁰ which verified the Internal Agency's information by reference to their card index, external surveillance reports, and perustrated mail. In the words of the training guide: information received was to be treated 'with a strictly critical and sober attitude.'³²¹

In 1909, in the wake of the Azef scandal, St Petersburg Security Section undertook a massive purge of its informers – the overwhelming majority of those dismissed were SRs.³²² A large number of agents had already retired when Gerasimov vacated his position as head of the section.³²³ Secret agent blacklists were regularly issued from thereon.³²⁴ But the head of the Special Section, Colonel Klimovich, was emphatic in his support for the continuing use of spies: 'the internal agency, when used correctly, is one of the most powerful weapons in the struggle with the revolution and predicting [terrorist] attacks, and therefore [the Department of Police] considers its future preservation and development essential.'³²⁵ So the recruitment of agents continued. But, in theory, the *okhranniki* had to be more selective. Zuev and Kurlov issued a circular in 1909 prescribing a strict set of rules for Security Sections when recruiting secret collaborators.³²⁶ The Special Section was particularly keen to root

... ..
example their leading anarchist agent close to expropriators, Bentsion Dolin, was codenamed 'Lenin.' Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 21, folder 13 and Index VIIIb, Box 63, folder 2.

319 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.189–90. GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.116.

320 Vassilyev, *The Ochrana*, p.59.

321 Scheiderman, 'From the Files,' p.96

322 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.7, ll.68–69,72, March 1909. On the information available in the archives: of the 16 SR and 7 SD informers listed to be working in the provinces, 1 SD and 8 SRs were dismissed. Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, xvb, 1d, MVD, Special Section circular no.130947, 7 June 1909.

323 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.58.

324 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, secret circular no.118537, 26 Nov. 1910: the list had 136 names on it.

325 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.23, l.35, 5 Feb.1909.

326 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.7, l.117, 18 April 1909. GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, l.187a, 3 Oct.1907 The Department of Police reacted to the 'persistent rumours that [Okhrana officers] ...use secret collaborators as surveillance agents,' reminding staff that this was strictly forbidden.

out ‘extortionists’ or ‘blackmailers’ (*shantazhisty*) and ‘provocateurs’ (*provokatory*) from among the Internal Agency.³²⁷

The Instructions came under review at the 1912 congress of political police officers organised by the MVD Makarov and chaired by S.E. Vissarionov (1908–1913 Vice-Director of the Department of Police).³²⁸ In 1913 the rules concerning the recruitment of spies became much stricter when Dzhunkovskii became the Assistant Minister of the Interior.³²⁹ He dismissed the leading exponents of the Internal Agency in St Petersburg (von Kotten, Komissarov, Gerasimov and Beletskii) with a fanfare of publicity. Dzhunkovskii intended this as a symbolic break with: ‘the active system of secret collaborators, traitors [*predatel’i*] giving information about revolutionary circles.’ On the grounds that he found this system: ‘dangerous and intolerable.’³³⁰

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The Okhrana’s other response to the attacks on the Internal Agency was to launch a systematic counter-espionage campaign against Burtsev. The Okhrana’s first attempts at combating Burtsev were rather unsuccessful: In 1908 Burtsev’s assistant, Mikhail Bakai had begun writing letters to leading *okhranniki* in an effort to persuade them to follow his lead and defect. In an elaborate attempt at a double-bluff Gerasimov commissioned his assistant, I.V. Dobroskok, to reply

327 GARF, f.111, op.4, d.23, ll.1–39: for records of agents dismissed for these offences throughout the empire in 1910. GARF, f.111, op.7, d.7, l.115, April 1909: For example, the correspondent of the *Krimskii vestnik*, Anatol’ev Gefpert, was dismissed by the Special Section because he had a history of alcoholism and extorting money out of the authorities on false pretences. A few further examples: Sebastopol OO’s agent Mikhail Petrov Kislenko was dismissed because he was a well known ‘blackmailer and thief’; St PbOO fired one of their Finnish agents, Matia Sikonen, living in Vyborg, for extorting money and blackmail; and Enisei PGD fired an auxiliary agent, Shulim Borukhov Rozentsberg codename ‘Palestinskii’ [Palestinian], because he had an ‘inclination towards provocation’. GARF, f.111, op.4, d.23, ll.4 (Jan. 1910), l.8, (April 1910), & l.27 (Oct. 1910).

328 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Vissarionova*, pp.450–51. Other questions covered were whether to Foreign Agency should be allowed an independent *agentura*, whether secret agents should be placed in schools, and whether St Petersburg Security Section should be allowed to carry out liquidations without consulting the Department of Police.

329 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros S.E. Vissarionova*, p.449.

330 Qutd in *Utro rossii*, 2 Feb. 1914. DP Press cutting, GARF, f.102, op.244, d.360, l.6: 2 Feb.1914 *Utro Rossii* headline: ‘Chistka okhrannykh otdelenii’. (see also *Vechnnee vremia*, 3 Nov. 1914).

to Bakai and Burtsev in order to feed them false information. Burtsev, however, was one step ahead of the Okhrana: he realised that the correspondence was being ghost written by Gerasimov, but remained in contact in order to gauge what false information Gerasimov wanted to feed him.³³¹ As a result Gerasimov's double-cross backfired when Bakai and Burtsev wrote to Dobroskok with a list of suspected *provocateurs*: the first and last names on the list were invented names, the second was an SR suspected of provocation and the third was Azef. Dobroskok replied that the second was not a provocateur and that he had not heard of Azef. For a leading *okhrannik* to claim he had not heard of Azef was stretching credulity. Moreover, Dobroskok confirmed that the (non-existent) first person named on the list was definitely a provocateur! Burtsev took this as confirmation of Azef's guilt: confirmation from the horse's mouth.

After this débâcle the Okhrana pursued a more simplistic, but also more effective, strategy against the counter-police. Burtsev became the Okhrana's most watched man, overtaking even the terrorist Boris Savinkov.³³² His assistant, the *okhrannik*-defector, L.P.Menshchikov, was watched almost as much as Burtsev.³³³ The Okhrana managed to infiltrate two spies into Burtsev's trust by 1914: a Madame Richard (codenamed 'Jane') and Lev Beitner (Burtsev's contact on *Novoe vremia*).³³⁴ They realised that the most important thing was to cut Burtsev off from funding – for without money he couldn't buy information from malcontent police officials. With this in mind the Department of Police began sending agents to visit Burtsev, posing as defectors as a means of wasting his time and money. By 1913 it was becoming clear that Burtsev's sources were drying up and that the Okhrana were winning their war against him. One of the Okhrana spies, Francois Jollivet, reported from a meeting with Burtsev in Paris in December 1913 that: 'Burtsev now seems less conversant with

331 Nurit Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, pp.139–40. Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, no.95, *V.L.Burtsev o gen. Gerasimove*, box 4, folder 4.

332 The level of interest paid in Burtsev and his publications is evidenced by the size of the Department of Police *fond* on Burtsev in the Russian archives: GARF, f.5802, *Burtsev Vladimir L'vovich*, op.1–2, 2447 files.

333 GARF, f.102, op.240 (DPOO, 1910g.), d.88, *O chinovnike Departamenta politzii, L.P.Menshchikov*.

334 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Index no.XIa, Box 102, folder 2, DPOO to Foreign Agency, 15 Jan. 1910: Beitner earned 1,000 rubles a year.

the affairs of the Russian police. He no longer declares as frequently as he did in the past that he is waiting for information from Petersburg.³³⁵

Moreover, Vladimir Burtsev had taught the Okhrana a valuable lesson: The psychological impact of constant espionage on the morale of the revolutionary parties was often just as useful as the information supplied by the spies. Burtsev's trial of Azef had been a great trauma to the SR party.³³⁶ Vera Figner said to Burtsev during the proceedings: 'Do you know what you will have to do if your accusations are proved groundless? You will have nothing left but to shoot yourself for all the harm that you have done the Revolution.'³³⁷ By 1909 Burtsev's exposures proved not to be groundless after all. Nevertheless he does appear to have done the 'Revolution' a great deal of damage. The general consensus in the SR party was that terror was 'bankrupt' and consequently a period of depression settled over the party, from which it never fully recovered.³³⁸

The Azef affair clearly influenced the Vice Director of the Department of Police, S.E. Vissarionov, in the composition of his circular in 1911, 'about the psychological advantages of constant shadowing' [*o psikhologicheskikh preimushchestvakh sploshnoi slezhki*] because it would sow 'mutual mistrust' [*bzaimnoe nedoverie*] amongst the revolutionary cells.³³⁹ Yet, this was no side-product of the true utility of the secret police, it was its very essence. Rachkovskii had realised this decades before when he wrote that: 'I am endeavouring to demoralise [the émigré radicals] politically, to inject discord among revolutionary forces, to weaken them, and at the same time to suppress every revolutionary act in its origins.'³⁴⁰

The case of the dismissal of Malinovskii and his flight abroad on 4 May 1914 may well be an example of the Okhrana applying the valuable lessons of their struggle with Burtsev. Dzhunkovskii claimed

335 Hoover, Okhrana Archive, 28 Nov./11 Dec. 1913, no.1892, xxiv c, folder 2.

336 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, p.270.

337 Nicolaevsky, *Aseff: The Russian Judas*, p.253.

338 N.R., 'Bankrotstvo terrora i delo Azeva,' *Burevestnik*, no.15 (March 1909), pp.12–14.

339 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, Vissarionov to all OO heads, 10 March 1911.

340 Qutd. in R.J.Johnson, 'The Okhrana Abroad 1885–1917,' p.28.

that he demanded Malinovskii's dismissal as soon as he discovered that he was an Okhrana spy.³⁴¹ He claimed that 'a spy in the Duma sickened me.'³⁴² However, there is reason to doubt his version due to the fact that he eschewed prosecuting Beletskii, thus missing the opportunity to score considerable publicity for his reform plans and a little *kudos* for himself. Dzhunkovskii offered the rather lame excuse that he 'simply didn't want a scandal.'³⁴³ If he didn't want a scandal then why did Dzhunkovskii leak his version of events to the President of the Duma, Rodzianko, as soon as Malinovskii had fled the country?³⁴⁴ The most convincing explanation is that Dzhunkovskii knew of Malinovskii's Okhrana service since his Moscow Governorship.³⁴⁵ But he only reached the conclusion in 1914 that the dismissal and exposure of Malinovskii would be more useful as a publicity stunt to sow 'mutual mistrust' and embarrass the SD party, and the Bolsheviks in particular, by exposing their most popular orator and Lenin's model proletarian socialist (a 'Russian Bebel') as a fraud. Moreover, it proved an excellent opportunity for Dzhunkovskii to undermine his rivals among the directors of the Okhrana, who relied on Malinovskii to support their powerful positions in the secret police.

Conclusion

The Internal Agency shows the great depths to which the tsarist regime was prepared to sink in order to protect itself against political opponents. The majority of its secret agents were a venal procession of cowards, drunkards, socio – and psychopaths. The Azef, Rips and Bogrov scandals would bear witness to the old axiom that there was no such political alchemy which could transform swinish instincts into golden behaviour. Unfortunately, however, if the government was to have any chance of defending itself against the vast revolutionary political underground, it needed to use secret agents.

341 PTsR, Vol.5, *Dopros V.F.Dzhunkovskogo*, p.86. GARF, f.826, op.1, d.53, *Vospominaniia V.F.Dzhunkovskogo za 1912g.*, 1.313.

342 PTsR, vol.7, *Dopros Dzhunkovskogo*, p.168.

343 PTsR, vol.5, *Dopros Dzhunkovskogo*, p.84.

344 PTsR, vol.7, *Dopros Dzhunkovskogo*, p.167–68.

345 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, p.280.

Zubatov commented that: '[I]t should always be borne in mind that one single, even weak, secret collaborator in the milieu to be investigated, produces infinitely more material for the uncovering of an anti-government plot than a society in which the Chiefs of Security are known. Therefore, nothing and no one can replace the secret collaborator in the revolutionary milieu.'³⁴⁶ Like the precarious June third system of this era, the Internal Agency was a 'sad necessity.'³⁴⁷

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346 Quid. in Kyril Tidmarsh, 'The Zubatov Idea,' p.342.

347 From the Octobrist, Guchkov's statement that the June third laws were: 'an act of sad necessity.'

Chapter Five

The People's Wrath

Terror and Counter-Revolution in St. Petersburg

This chapter outlines the counter-revolutionary measures taken by the Okhrana in St. Petersburg from 1906 to 1914. The purpose of this is to answer four questions: How did this apparently anachronistic organisation survive the onset of a constitutional system? What were the Okhrana's priorities: reform, protecting *status quo* or reviving unfettered autocracy – *status quo ante*? Which groups did it consider to be its principal enemies? How did the Okhrana change from 1906 to 1914?

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On the face of it there were several good reasons for assuming that the Okhrana was about to be dismantled in October 1905. Firstly, because it was perceived to have been irredeemably discredited by the events of 1905. The spark for the revolution came from a former Okhrana agent, Father Georgii Gapon, when he led the Bloody Sunday march to the Winter Palace. The abilities of the Okhrana as a counter-terrorist security force were also thrown into doubt by a wave of assassinations of leading government officials over recent years: most notably MVDs Sipiagin and Plehve and the tsar's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich. By October 1905, 'the chaos was all encompassing,' wrote one *okhrannik*, and political investigations had 'ground to a halt.'¹ Not only was the Okhrana considered professionally incompetent, it was also the object of universal loathing – even its leading spy, Azef, described it as, 'the living symbol of all that is most repressive, cruel, mean and revolting in autocracy'² In an atmosphere where public opinion had acquired unprecedented potency this unpopularity boded ill for the secret police. The tsar

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1 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.59. See also: Gerasimov, *Na lezvi s terroristami*, p.17.
2 Boris Nicolaievsky, *Aseff: the Russian Judas* (London, 1934), p.129

had already conceded in 1904 that *perestroika* of the political police apparatus was inevitable.³ By the end of 1905 even abolition appeared to be a likely prospect.

Abolition also seemed likely because it was assumed that the Okhrana would no longer be needed. In the October Manifesto of 1905 the tsar promised to establish a legislative Duma and a free press.⁴ When political debate was brought out into the open the majority assumed that the conspiratorial political underground would wither away, and with it the need for a secret political police force. There was little or no opposition to this prospect in October 1905. Indeed, all of Russia, including the leading security policemen, heaved a collective sigh of relief. For example, the head of the Okhrana, Rachkovskii, upon hearing of the promulgation of the October Manifesto, commiserated with his subordinate, Colonel Gerasimov: ‘This is a bad affair for you. Now there will be no more work for you to do.’ Gerasimov, exhausted by a year of revolution and the collapse of his network of informers, replied, ‘No-one will be as glad as I. I shall readily go into retirement.’⁵ *Glasnost*, it seemed, would remove the need for the secret police. The Okhrana had already been denied any influence in acquiring new functions in 1905 – such as the monitoring parliamentary affairs.⁶

There was a legal basis for supposing that the Okhrana occupied an untenable position. The October manifesto promised a written constitution binding the executive arm of the government to legality (*zakonnost*). Russian liberals took a rather optimistic view that the use of secret agents, external surveillance and arbitrary police powers—the three pillars of the Okhrana— would be incompatible with a *Rechtsstaat*. Moreover, the Okhrana was considered to be, in the

3 W.E.Mosse, *Perestroika Under the Tsars* (London, 1992), ch.12.

4 SZ, vol.1, part 1, art.56: according to the Fundamental Laws no act, even an imperial *ukaz*, had force of law without publication by the Senate. Article 96 of the Fundamental Laws stated that when funds were allocated, the voice of the people’s representatives should be heard. Marc Szeftel, *The Russian Constitution of the Duma Monarchy* (Brussels, 1976).

5 Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.38.

6 GARF, *Putevoditel*’ (Moscow, 1994), p.32. N.P.Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1968), pp.283–84: this task had been passed on to the ‘Special Secretariat concerning the elections to the State Duma,’ which was subordinate to the fourth secretariat of the DP.

words of its harshest critic Vladimir Burtsev, the ‘pillar of Russian reaction’⁷ and by that very fact incapable of adapting to the new circumstances of a constitutional monarchy. This perception has been taken on board by Nurit Schleifman, along with many other historians of the secret police, who has argued that the seeds of the Okhrana’s demise were already planted in its ‘inability to adapt to the changing circumstances.’⁸

However, contrary to expectations, the Okhrana survived. It survived because it proved all four assumptions to be false. From 1905 to 1906 the Okhrana underwent a process of regeneration. The effect of the appointment of ex-Director of the Department of Police, P.N.Durnovo, as Minister of the Interior was like a surge of electricity into the Okhrana’s dying batteries, as one St Petersburg gendarme described: ‘Everyone started to work, the machinery went into action [*poshla v khod*]. Arrests began... [Even St Petersburg Provincial Gendarme Directorate] also awoke for its slumber and we plunged into investigations as never before [*kak nikogda*].’⁹ As a result the Okhrana managed to claw back both prestige and influence. In St Petersburg the Security Section Chief, Aleksandr Gerasimov, took control of the counter-revolution and was finally given authorisation to suppress the revolutionary upsurge. He began with the mass of arrest of representatives of the Petersburg Soviet. Gerasimov saw no contradiction between a constitutional regime and a secret political police force: ‘Even in Republican France’ he reassured his demoralised subordinates, ‘they have police such as us. We will still be needed.’¹⁰ St Petersburg Security Section directed the arrest of nearly 2000 people in the capital alone from 25 December 1905 to 25 January 1906. In all, the Interior Ministry arrested 70,000 people in the time that elapsed between the promise of a new constitution and the promulgation of the Fundamental Laws.¹¹

7 Burtsev’s phrase in *Budushchee*, no.4, 12 Nov. 1911.

8 Nurit Schleifman, *Undercover Agents in the Revolutionary Movement* (Hong Kong, 1988), p.54. Frederic Zuckerman, ‘Political Police and Revolution: The Impact of the 1905 Revolution on the Tsarist Secret Police,’ *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.27 (1992), pp.279–300

9 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.59.

10 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.40.

11 ‘Materialy k istorii russkoi kontr-revoliutsii,’ *Katorga i ssylka*, LXVIII (1930), pp.42–57. W.Santoni, ‘P.N.Durnovo as Minister of Internal Affairs,’ (PhD diss. Kansas, 1968), pp.118–20.

Moreover, the concession made to liberalism on 17 October was not the panacea most expected it to be. In fact it encouraged the ambitions of malcontents throughout Imperial Russia. The Special Section reported that revolutionaries were pouring back into Russia upon hearing the news of October Manifesto.¹² Peasant *jacqueries* ravaged central Russia from 1905–1907, destroying around 2000 estates – estimated at 25 million rubles of damage.¹³ Strike action increased in October, November and December of 1905. The St Petersburg Soviet grew in influence to the stage where the Interior Minister Durnovo was too frightened to close it down, for fear that this act would feed the flames of revolution. The SR party's terrorist campaign, particularly under the new Maximalist cells, continued apace over 1906 to 1907: It claimed further victims such as the Petersburg City Governor, V.F.von der Launits; the Petersburg Chief Military Prosecutor, General Pavlov; the head of the military expedition which crushed the Moscow uprising, General Min; and the head of the Main Prison Directorate, A.M.Maksimovskii.¹⁴ Suicide bombers also nearly succeeded in killing the Prime Minister and Interior Minister, P.A.Stolypin, when they blew up an entire wing of his dacha in August 1906. From 1906 to 1907 an estimated 5,946 government officials were killed by 'revolutionary' attacks.¹⁵

The Okhrana's priority remained crushing the revolutionary and terrorist movements. P.I.Rachvskii issued a list to all Security Sections of the most important targets of surveillance in 1905, with the instruction that 'the first duty of officers of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes is to cultivate detailed knowledge of the character, aims and methods of these secret organisations.'¹⁶ The list included, even at the height of liberalism's revolutionary stance against the tsarist

12 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 9, DPOO, Top secret circular no.14430, 13 Nov. 1905.

13 Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police*, pp.171–72. See *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol. 32 (1929), pp.158–82 on the counter-revolution in the countryside of 1906. V.N.Ginev, *Bor'ba za krestianstvo i krizis russkogo neonarodnichestva, 1902-1914gg* (Leningrad, 1983). M.Perrie, 'The Russian Peasant Movement of 1905-1907: Its Social Composition and Revolutionary Significance,' *Past and Present*, vol.57 (1972), pp.123–55.

14 Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi Rossii*, pp.83–4 & 134.

15 Stepanov, *Zagadki*, pp.33–34.

16 Box 158 Hoover, folder 9, Rachkovskii DP circular 24 Aug.1905.

regime, only a few liberal organisations. Top of the list were the SRs, then anarchist communists, SDs, Jewish workers' parties, Polish socialists, Latvian SDs, Armenian nationalists (Droshak/Dashnakt-sutiun), the Georgian Social Revolutionary federalist party (Sakartvelo), the Party of Active Resistance in Finland, Zionists, and the ostensibly liberal Union of Liberation.

Yet the liberals, fearing a more extreme swing to the left, briefly rallied behind the tsarist regime after October because they realised that strong police measures were needed if the state, and with it the new constitutional order, were to survive. Stolypin appealed to the moderates to support his brutal counter-revolution on the grounds that: 'The struggle is being waged not against society, but against the enemies of society.'¹⁷ And to the tsar he wrote that: 'The punishment of a few prevents a sea of blood.'¹⁸ Thus, a reluctant alliance was formed between the moderate liberals and the tsarist regime. The liberal M.O.Gershenson summed up this new pragmatism in the *Vekhi* (Landmarks) publication of 1909, when he wrote that Russian society should fear the masses, 'more than all the government's executions, and must bless this regime which alone, with its bayonets and prisons, still protects us from the people's wrath.'¹⁹ The Okhrana chief, P.G.Kurlov, noted – with undisguised contempt – that the bourgeoisie only agreed to finance 'the hated police' because they had been 'frightened by the excesses of 1905, sensing a serious danger to their pockets.'²⁰

Mutual respect was thin on the ground and this was not to be a particularly stable alliance. For all their pragmatism, the liberal assumptions about the nature of a constitutional compromise with autocracy were somewhat naïve. Russian liberal ideologues had adhered to theoretical concepts instead of formulating practical measures for handling the most pressing problems. This can be seen

17 Quid in Hosking, *The Constitutional Experiment*, pp.23–24.

18 Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.34. P.N.Zyrianov, 'P.A.Stolypin,' *Voprosy istorii*, 6 (1990), pp.54–75.

19 Quid. in D.Lieven, 'The Security Police, Civil Rights and the Fate of the Russian Empire,' in Olga Crisp (ed.) *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989), p.262. For Stolypin's detailed instructions to Governors on 15 Sept. 1906 on how they should conduct the counter-revolution see: 'Mobilizatsiia reaktsii v 1906 g.,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.32 (1929), pp.158–72.

20 Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.101.

from their over-zealous opposition to the Okhrana: In many ways it could have served the liberal cause: it was, after all, just an instrument, and therefore highly adaptable. D.H.Bayley has observed that: ‘The character of government and police action are virtually indistinguishable. A government is recognised as being authoritarian if its police are repressive, democratic if its police are restrained.’²¹ Yet this idea can also be reversed: if the regime is repressive, then so are the police; if the regime is democratic, then so are the police. As Frederic Zuckerman has argued: ‘the forces of order only reflect a state’s political character they do not determine it.’²² The police actions from 1905–1907 were a *reflection*, rather than the *cause* of, the survival of arbitrary rule. The Fundamental Laws were promulgated six months after the October Manifesto; a great deal had changed in this period.²³ Even after the convocation of the first Duma, 60 of the provinces – covering roughly 70% of the population of the empire – were under a state of emergency.²⁴ Stolypin introduced even more extreme measures, under some pressure from the tsar, with the institution of the Field Courts Martial in August 1906. In less than eight months these courts had sentenced 683 people to death. In the entire course of the counter-revolution from 1906–07 the tsarist state executed an estimated 1102 people in all.²⁵ The Fundamental Laws deeply disappointed many of the liberal optimists: Miliukov referred to them as the ‘worsening of the worst European constitutions.’²⁶ Article 87 of the Fundamental Laws gave the tsar the right to pass laws without the Duma’s consent by Imperial Ukase (*ukaz*). The secret police continued to flourish because the opposition parties were never legalised and had to continue, therefore, to operate

21 Also qtd. in Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, p.ix. See: David H.Bayley, *Patterns of Policing: A Comparative International Analysis* (New Brunswick, 1985), p.189.

22 Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police*, p.9.

23 M.Szefel, *The Russian Constitution of April 23, 1906: Political Institutions of the Duma Monarchy* (Brussels, 1967).

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 172–73.

25 19 Aug. 1906, *Polozhenie o voenno-polevykh sudakh*. This was abolished in April 1907. After April 1907 they merely changed over to the similar *voenno-okruzhnyi sud*. Stepanov, *Zagadki*, pp.31–34. R.Arskii, ‘Epokha reaktzii v Petrograde (1907–1909 gg.),’ *Krasnaia letopis’*, no.9 (1924), pp.63–106.

26 Hans Rogger, *Russia in the Age of Modernisation and Revolution, 1881–1917* (London, 1983), p.220.

underground. Even the moderate liberals in the Kadet party were left outside the ‘respectable’ stream of Russian politics.²⁷ A free press and a vociferous Duma generated massive interest in political affairs amongst the populace without actually making politics fully respectable. Consequently, the Okhrana remained suspicious of even moderate critics of the tsarist regime. Therefore, if anything, the election of the State Duma created more work for the political police.

All sources agree that the 1905 revolution had a profound impact on the officers of the secret police.²⁸ In the most tangible sense this manifested itself in the annual security measures to counteract demonstrations and disorders on the 9 January anniversary of Bloody Sunday.²⁹ Sources disagree, however, as to the nature of the intangible psychological impact of the revolution on the *okhranniki*. What is certain is that the secret police derived several object lessons from this experience, which profoundly influenced their actions from 1906–1914. Their actions in this period elicit the transformation of political police behaviour in two areas: firstly in their methodology and secondly in their evaluations of which groups were most dangerous to the state.

The Great Night-Time Institution: Liquidations

The methodological change in the Okhrana occurred in the attitudes towards ‘liquidations’. This was a bureaucratic term: meaning to bring something to a close, balance an account, the end of an affair or – in the context of the police – to make an arrest. It had yet to take on the sinister undertones of the Stalinist era. This was the principal weapon

27 GARF, f.102, op.240 (1910 g.), d.27.

28 Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, pp.143–46. Spiridovich, *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie*, Part 2, pp.158–59; idem, ‘Pri tsarskom rezhime,’ *Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii*, vol.15 (1924), pp.201–204. For the similar atmosphere of fear in Moscow and Warsaw see: M.A.Osorgin, ‘Dekabr’skoe vozstanie 1905g. v Moskve v opisani zhandarma,’ *Golos minuvshago*, nos.7/8 (1917), pp.359–60. *Boevyia predpriiatia sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov v osveshchenii okhranki* (Moscow, 1918), pp.102–07. P.P.Zavarzin, *Rabota tainoi politzii* (Paris, 1924), pp.73,98, 126, 130.

29 F.L.Aleksandrov and L.M.Shalagnova, ‘Den’ 9 ianvaria v Rossii v 1908–1917 (Obzor dokumentov TsGIAM),’ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, vol.1 (1958), p.215.

of the political police. The technique of ‘liquidation’ remained much the same as it had been before 1905. Liquidations of political groups were carried out by the ordinary police on the instructions of St Petersburg Security Section based on the authority of article 34 of the 14 August 1881 Security Law. In the interest of conspiracy, Security Section officers preferred to avoid attending these arrests. Nevertheless, they did attend liquidations ‘in more serious cases.’³⁰ St Petersburg Security Section had to acquire an ‘order’ from the City Governor in order to make an arrest in the capital. To acquire this the Security Section had to submit a written explanation why the arrest should take place.³¹ The arrests, whenever possible, were performed simultaneously to prevent the opportunity for the arrestees to destroy any compromising materials. Like the NKVD the Okhrana preferred to perform its arrests at night.³² Bail was usually set at a large amount.³³ If evidence was too flimsy for a trial the political prisoners were either released or banished from the capital.³⁴ The prisoners were separated to avoid them agreeing on a story. This also helped break down the comradely spirit, a process that was useful if the Security Section aimed to persuade a prisoner to work as a spy.

An anecdote is useful here to give an impression of the questionable legality of the Okhrana’s political arrests: A detective at Saratov Security Section related an account of an arrest he made in 1907 when he had recognised a fugitive (whom he refers to throughout as ‘the Jew’) in Saratov city centre and attempted to arrest him. However, ‘the Jew resisted, shrinking away from us; a crowd quickly gathered. The Jew screamed that he was not going to the *okhranka* and appealed

30 Globachev, ‘Pravda o Russkoi Revoliutsii,’ p.8.

31 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 8, 21 Oct. 1902, DP secret circular no.6641, *Svod pravil*, rules 25 to 28. ‘Searches attached to affairs of a political character’ were carried out on the basis of point 1035 of the Regulations on Criminal Proceedings [Ustanovleniia Ugolovnago Sudoproizvodstva]. See Spiridovich, ‘Pri tsarskom rezhime,’ pp.15–16. The Security Section needed ‘serious cause’ to gain permission for a liquidation.

32 George Kennan, ‘Russian “mouse-traps”.’ *The Century Magazine*, vol.83, no.5 (March 1912), pp.745–52. This practice induced Solzhenitsyn to give it the nickname ‘The Great Nighttime Institution’ in *The Gulag Archipelago*, p.144.

33 Cases listed in the archives show bail at 300 rubles: about a year’s wages for an unskilled worker.

34 On the authority of the City Governor: article 4, page 16 of the Security Law. For an example of this procedure see: GARF, f.111, op.5, l.126, 20 Oct. 1906.

for help from the public. Two or three students were there. We bundled him onto a sleigh, but the crowd wanted an explanation for the arrest of this “scholar”. I replied: “For the love of God leave us – he is a madman and raving. His mother and father have been searching for him for the past four days.”³⁵ Solzhenitsyn made a similar observation about the years of terror in the 1930s when people were arrested in broad daylight on the streets of Moscow without uttering the slightest whisper of protest compared with: ‘In 1927, when submissiveness had not yet softened our brains to such a degree, two Chekists tried to arrest a woman on Serpukhov Square during the day. She grabbed hold of the stanchion of a streetlamp and began to scream, refusing to submit. A crowd gathered...The quick young men immediately became flustered. They can’t work in the public eye. They got into their car and fled.’³⁶

Clearly many of the problems involved in political arrests from the 1880s to the 1920s remained the same.

However, the Okhrana’s attitude to the question of *when* to liquidate a revolutionary group changed considerably in the years 1906-1914. The system from 1902-04 under Plehve was criticised by Zubatov as: ‘essentially one of reflexes, consisting of simple ripostes to the activities of the revolutionaries...’³⁷ Various rumours circulated that the Department of Police offered fabulous bonuses for liquidations of underground printing presses.³⁸ One leading *okhrannik*, A.P.Martynov, denied that he ever received a reward for a liquidation. He also pointed out that the number of liquidations carried out by the Okhrana had been greatly exaggerated. In his whole tenure as head of Saratov OO, 1906-1909, Martynov claimed he only liquidated ten revolutionary presses and received no reward for any of these.³⁹ After the 1905 revolution the liquidations of revolutionary cells did not follow a pre-set pattern, but instead adapted according to the political climate. Thus, up to 1907 the Okhrana had nothing more subtle on its mind than survival. As the capital’s Security Section chief bluntly put it, ‘either the revolutionaries will use us to adorn

35 Qutd in Shchegolev, *Okhranniki, agenty, palachi*, pp.289–90.

36 Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, pp.15–16.

37 Kyril Tidmarsh, ‘The Zubatov Idea,’ p.345.

38 Russian, *Rabota okhrannykh otdelenii*, p.9.

39 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.100,313–14.

the Petersburg lamp-posts, or we must send them to jail and the gibbet.’⁴⁰ The Okhrana therefore applied a very simple but effective strategy of repression – as a circular advised in 1907: ‘The efforts of political investigation must be directed at shedding light on the revolutionary centres and at eliminating them the moment their activity peaks.’⁴¹

However, once the immediate threats to the survival of the regime had passed after 1907 the Okhrana came to recognise that the policy of search and destroy was undesirable because it merely unseated their secret agents. A new policy was adopted summed up in a circular of 1912 which called for: ‘No more liquidations by means of searches and arrests in the wake of insufficiently processed reports...we must make it our sole aim to spotlight the movement’s intellectual leaders and activists, so that we can try to recruit collaborators from among them without liquidation.’⁴²

An example of the scale of investigations compared to liquidations is best illustrated by St Petersburg Security Section’s sweep of the city from 15 to 24 December 1909 preceding the visit of the tsar to the capital: twelve Petersburg police stations were drafted into registering 3,599 persons along the tsar’s itinerary (*marshrut*); 1,651 of these were subject to further enquiries and had their passports checked; following this fourteen persons were searched and only six arrested.⁴³

Late in 1913 the strategy was modified yet again in line with the rising threat of mass strike action. The head of Petersburg Security Section, M.F.Von Kotten, clearly began to fear in 1913 that, ‘the spectre of 1905 would once again become a reality.’⁴⁴ He launched a

40 Qutd. in Nicolaievsky, *Aseff: The Russian Judas*, p.163.

41 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.198–99; Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.26. Article 8 of the instructions on the Internal Agency Feb. 1907.

42 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.207–09- cites Police Department circular no. 112555, 19 May/1 June 1912. See also: Hoover, Russian Collection, ‘Rabota okhrannykh otdelenii,’ MS, p.14. Lopukhin had tried without success to introduce this policy in 1902 when he wrote the first set of ‘Instructions’.

43 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.256, *Delo o registratsionnom biuro*, ll.11–33.

44 M.Korbut, ‘Uchet departamentom politsii opyta 1905 goda,’ *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.xviii/5 (1926), pp.219. Korbut published five Okhrana reports written between 4 Aug. & 8 Oct. 1913.

series of arrests of trade union activists.⁴⁵ The Special Section also responded to the strike wave by ordering the Security Sections to, ‘nip all criminal plots involving the revolutionary movement in the bud.’⁴⁶ This might be taken at first sight as a return to the policy of simple reflexive ripostes. However, the closer we look at the situation, the more complex their strategy appears to have been. Von Kotten abandoned the traditional idea that such outbreaks were the result of revolutionary agitation leading the otherwise loyal toiling masses astray. Instead he argued that this was, like 1905, an outbreak of discontent among ‘all layers of society... brought about by a whole variety of social-economic factors.’⁴⁷ The evidence for this was clear: ‘The unions are sprouting up like mushrooms after a downpour,’ he wrote. ‘What is more, they are being born completely independently, by means of spontaneous generation [*putem samozarozhdeniia*].’⁴⁸ He had been urging caution for months on the grounds that one wrongful arrest could spark a general strike. Instead, his arrests were aimed at specific individuals, in order to prevent a meeting whereby the union leaders, according to Okhrana spies, would vote in favour of a strategic *political* strike designed to paralyse the government (with strike action focussing on postal, telegraphy, railway, tram and gas workers).⁴⁹ Even as the strike broadened in the autumn of 1913 as he had feared, Von Kotten still advised against mass arrests: ‘These [measures] would be useless, because at the current time there is something of a psychotic character to the mood of the strike movement. In this instance liquidation can only do more harm [than good], as at the current time liquidations will only accelerate the massive growth [lit.: “explosion”] of the strike movement.’ He

45 4 April 1913 Von Kotten conducted the liquidation in St Petersburg of the revolutionary press including *Pravda* and *Zvezda*. The press referred to these as ‘mass arrests.’ See ‘Massovyie arresty i obyiski,’ *Birzhevyie vedomosti*, 19 April 1913, p.2; ‘K arestam sredi uchashchikhsia,’ *Birzhevyie vedomosti*, 23 April 1913, p.2.

46 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 11, DPOO Top Secret Circular, no.107030, 26 Nov. 1913, signed Beletskii and Engbrecht.

47 St PbOO to MVD, 8 Oct.1913 in Korbut, ‘Uchet departamenta politzii,’ p.224.

48 Ibid.

49 Von Kotten reports for 4 Aug. and 3 Oct. 1913, published in *ibid.*, pp.219–24. The arrests took place on 2 Aug. 1913 at *Rabochaia pravda* and further liquidations on 3 & 5 Aug.1913 of 21 union leaders. The meeting had been scheduled for 15 Aug.

continued to rely on select, smaller scale arrests for the ‘disorganisation of the SD and SR party cells.’⁵⁰

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Chart 5a is by no means a complete list, but rather a summary of what St Petersburg Security Section considered the most important liquidations of opposition groups based on the evidence of archives and memoir accounts. Three conclusions can be made from the available evidence: That the Okhrana’s most effective liquidations involved arresting small groups of ring leaders; that the chief targets of arrest were the SRs and the SDs; and that among the SRs their priority was fighting terrorism and among the SDs their priority was isolating and removing agitators in the factories and the armed forces. The raid on the editorial offices of the liberal dailies *Segodnia* and *Sovremennoe slovo* on 3 December 1907 is an instructive example firstly because the liquidation was not secret: full details, including the name of the arresting Okhrana officer (M.S.Komissarov) and of the arrestees, were printed freely in the press the next day.⁵¹ Secondly, because it shows that even in an apparent attack on a stronghold of liberalism the principal aim was to uncover revolutionaries: those arrested were identified in the files of Petersburg Security Section as members of the SD party printing revolutionary leaflets for circulation in the army.⁵² Thirdly, liquidations were the result of long periods of planning and observation. The Security Section compiled reports on the newspaper staff a long time before the liquidation actually took place and their mail was being intercepted from as early as June 1907.⁵³ Fourthly, the liquidation did not encompass all those working for the newspapers— the lists of employees were separated into two groups: those under suspicion and those considered harmless.⁵⁴ And finally the files were not closed on the case after the liquidation:

50 StPbOO to DPOO, 3 Oct. 1913, *ibid.*, p.224.

51 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.178, l.1.

52 *Ibid.*, ll.199–200. The leaflets began with the slogan: ‘Down with Nicholas the traitor...Down with the standing army! Down with prison life in the barracks and the shameful police service of the soldier!’

53 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.3, ll.386–7, 20 June 1907. These include lists of Finnish nationalist parties with the suspicious persons underlined in red pencil and the harmless in black.

54 *Ibid.*, ll.157–58, Head of Finnish Gendarme Directorate to head of Petersburg District OO, 26 Dec. 1912.

staff remained under observation.⁵⁵ From this we can again see some evidence that the technique of liquidations had grown in sophistication since Plehve's system of simple reflexive ripostes.

Chart 5a. Important liquidations in St Petersburg 1905- 1914

Key: ‘*’: some of those sent to trial were executed. ‘♣’: the arrestees were released shortly after being arrested. A name in brackets: indicates the leader of the group. Those arrested for ‘propaganda’ ranged from committed revolutionaries spreading sedition by various means, to persons merely in possession of subversive literature.

Date	No. arrested	Political tendency	Reason for arrest
16/17.3.1905	20*	SR Battle Org.(Tartarov)	Plot to kill MVD Bulygin
Summer 1905	12♣	Union of Unions (liberal)	Complicity with rev. parties
3-7.12.1905	c.350	St Petersburg Soviet 1905	Revolution/leading a strike
19.8.1906	c.10	SR Maximalist	Terrorist plot ⁵⁶
5.9.1906 ⁵⁷	13	SR Maximalist (Dudel’)	Attempt on MVD Stolypin
27.10.1906	6	SR Maximalist	Expropriation ⁵⁸
Spring 1907	2*	SR Battle Org.(Zil’berberg)	Terrorism
April 1907	18*	SR Battle Org.(Nikitenko)	Plot to kill tsar
5.5.1907	failed	SD Duma-military cell	Propaganda in the army
3.6.1907	16	SD Duma deputies	Propaganda in the army ⁵⁹
30.11.1907	c.10	SR Maximalist (Lebedev)	Propaganda. ⁶⁰
3.12.1907	50♣	Newspaper staff at <i>Segodnia</i>	Propaganda
20.2.1908	9*	SR Karl’s North.Flying Squad	Terror ⁶¹
March 1909	22	Bolshevik Central Committee	Propaganda ⁶²
1909	43	SDs/Congress on Alcoholism	Propaganda
8/9.1.1910	23	SD Trade Unionists	Propaganda in factories ⁶³
May 1910	n/a	SR Finnish military org.	Propaganda in military garrisons
26.2.1911	20	SD military cell	Propaganda in the army
26.4.1911	n/a	SD military-naval cell	Propaganda ⁶⁴

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55 This continued as late as May 1909: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.178, ll.393–394.

56 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp. 12,32,44–52,87.

57 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.120, ll.1–125.

58 R.Hingley, *The Russian Secret Police* (New York, 1970), p.99.

59 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.101, 104–07, & 109–11.

60 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.180, ll.1–93.

61 Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 287, folder ‘Trauberg, “Karl”’. Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.118–22.

62 McKean, *St Petersburg Between Revolutions*, pp.56–58.

63 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309, l.8. Peregudova, ‘Istochnik,’ p.97: There were an estimated 15 liquidations of SDs in St Petersburg from June 1907 to Nov. 1910.

64 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309, l.110; d.312, l.18; op.7, d.3, l.62, 18 June 1912.

6/7.11.1912	n/a	Lesner factory workers	Leading a strike ⁶⁵
January 1913	100*	Putilov Mensheviks & SRs	Leading strikes & propaganda ⁶⁶
August 1913	27	TU bureaux & SD press	Strike action & propaganda ⁶⁷
15.10.1913	c.10	SR 'Sazonov group'	Terrorist plot ⁶⁸
30.3.1914	n/a	SR party cell	Propaganda in the factories ⁶⁹
8/9.8.1914	33	Bolshevik paper <i>Trudovaia Pravda</i>	Propaganda
8/9.8.1914	16	Menshevik paper <i>Nasha Rabochaia Gazeta</i>	Propaganda
8/9.8.1914	15	SR paper <i>Zhivaia Mysl' Truda</i>	Propaganda. ⁷⁰

By 1908, in the words of one member of the underground, 'Revolutionary work has completely died. In Piter [St Petersburg] they [revolutionaries] are no longer heard of; only professional unions and cultural-educational societies manage to drag out an existence [*vlachat svoe sushchestvovanie*].'⁷¹ On a quantitative level we can see that the Okhrana's role in subjecting the masses had been a minor one. Nevertheless, it took a central role in demoralising the revolutionary parties at the centre through well-directed liquidations. The Social Democrats were particularly disheartened and many switched from underground activity to legal trade union work. This caused further division in the revolutionary movement: those who advocated abandoning all illegal activities were condemned by Lenin, who adopted the Okhrana's bureaucratic term and referred to these traitors to the cause as 'liquidators.' He later summed up the depressed state of the organised opposition from 1907 to 1911: 'Tsarism was victorious. All the revolutionary and opposition parties were smashed.

65 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 149, folder d, St PbOO report 9 May 1913.

66 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.440, ll.1 and 14. Only seven of these – all SRs and Mensheviks – went to trial.

67 Von Kotten report 4 Aug. 1913 to DPOO in 'Uchet departamentom politzii opyta 1905 goda,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.6/XVIII (1926), pp.221–22. The SD press was liquidated on numerous occasions. It managed to re-emerge every time due to a legal loophole which allowed the newspapers to reopen under a new name. *Pravda* was thus closed eight times before 1914.

68 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.440, l.1–24.

69 Hoover Okhrana Collection, Box 150, folder 1b.

70 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.492, ll.1–208. Preparation for all the arrests had begun in June 1914.

71 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 139, folder 1c, p.524: copy of a perillustrated letter dated 27 April 1908.

Depression, demoralisation, dispersion, discord, desertion, [and] pornography took the place of politics.’⁷²

Terrorism

The second of the object lessons of 1905 concerned the threat to the state order posed by terrorism. From this the head of St Petersburg Security Section drew the conclusion that the: ‘specific and natural concern of the head of a Security Section was the struggle with terrorism – frustrating their schemes and predicting assassination attempts.’⁷³ This assessment was clearly influenced by the fact that the Okhrana was a popular target for terrorist attacks. For example: a police report in 1909 lists 190 high government officials who were victims of political attacks from 13 May 1903 to 2 March 1909, of these 58 were senior police officials (29 killed, 18 wounded and 11 other attempts). From February 1905 to May 1906 over 700 police officials of various ranks were killed in ‘terrorist’ attacks.⁷⁴ Even over the 1907-1910 period the fight against terrorism remained the top priority in Okhrana investigations.⁷⁵

Yet, the problems facing the political security of the tsarist regime were not going to be solved by simply crushing terrorist conspiracies. Nurit Schleifman has convincingly argued that the Okhrana’s preoccupation with terrorism after 1907 was a serious flaw in its appreciation of the revolutionary threat.⁷⁶ However, in many ways this shift of attention back to fighting terrorism marked a rational retreat from the far fetched attempts to transform society during the Zubatov experiment and a return to the basics of political security

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72 Quid in R.C.Elwood, *Russian Social Democracy in the Underground: A Study of the RSDRP in the Ukraine 1907–1914* (Assen, 1974), p.25.

73 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.83.

74 GARF, f.102, op.295, d.127 *Svedeniia o dolzhnostnykh litsakh postradavshikh ot terroristichestskikh aktov* (1905–09); & Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, Box 205, folder ‘Lopukhin,’ Protokol no.37, pp.59–66; A.I.Spiridovich, ‘Tablitsa terrora P.S.R.’ in Yale University, Spiridovich Papers, box 6.

75 Hoover, Okhrana archive, DPOO to Foreign Agency, 12/25 June 1907, dispatch no.1294, xiv d, folder 1/A. Trusevich’s circular issues the order: ‘Send me without delay all information about terrorist plots and expropriations. At this moment I am not interested in anything else.’

76 Nurit Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, pp.53–57.

work. Moreover, an analysis of the events from 1904 to 1914 shows the belief in the destabilising effects of terrorism to be well founded. The assassinations of three Ministers of the Interior in nine years (Sipiagin in 1902, Plehve in 1904 and Stolypin in 1911) were all followed by a resurgence in the revolutionary movement.⁷⁷ Even after ‘pacification’, from October 1907 to May 1910 there were an estimated 23,044 ‘terrorist attacks’ in which 4,322 people were killed.⁷⁸

Schleifman has based her criticism of the Okhrana’s evaluation of the threats to the state on the fact that the secret police continued to concentrate their efforts on penetrating revolutionary centres when the revolutionary movement was clearly no longer controlled from the centre. The SR party had perpetrated only 44 terrorist acts out of a total of 591 committed in 1905.⁷⁹ Nevertheless the SR terrorist campaign was escalating: it had accomplished less than ten terrorist attacks from 1901–1904; whereas in 1906 it had accomplished 78 terrorist attacks and a further 62 in 1907.⁸⁰ These attacks were also disproportionately influential because they were targeted at high-level government officials and provided inspiration for the random attacks executed by non-party terrorists.

While highly valuable, Nurit Schleifman’s statistics are based on a narrow cross-section of secret agents (215) who were exposed by the Provisional Government. The data from the archives on the Internal Agency of St Petersburg District Security Section indicates that the Okhrana was responding to the diffusion of the revolutionary movement by expanding the sphere of its activities outside the major cities for the first time. The District Security Sections created in 1906 were intended to accomplish this task and to render the each Okhrana

77 There were also two attempts to kill Durnovo in Nov. 1905 and Feb. 1906.

78 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 214, Index no.XXIVi. Kurlov, *Gibel*, p.82. Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 185, Folder ‘Security of Agents’.

79 M.Perrie, ‘The Russian Peasant Movement of 1905–1907: Its Social Composition and Revolutionary Significance,’ *Past and Present*, vol.57 (1972), pp.123–55.

80 M.Perrie, ‘Political and Economic Terror in the Tactics of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party Before 1914,’ in Wolfgang Mommsen & Gerald Herschfeld (eds.), *Social Protest and Terror in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Europe* (London, 1982), p.67: SR Terrorist acts: 1902–04: 6; 1905:51; 1906: 78; 1907:62; 1908: 3; 1909: 2; 1910: 1; 1911: 2 (Total 205. Of these 191 occurred between 1905–07).

post more autonomous.⁸¹ The archival records show that St Petersburg District OO supervised informers in Vologda, Kronstadt, Pskov, Arkhangel'sk, Novgorod, Finland and in the military garrisons in Vyborg, Kuopio, and Sveaborg.⁸²

It is clear from the records that this development created friction between the District Security Sections and the Provincial Gendarme Directorates. The Okhrana was growing at the expense of the old fashioned Separate Corps of Gendarmes. For example, Petersburg District OO clashed with Pskov Gendarme Directorate when Gerasimov's agents in the SD party brought about the liquidation of the main Pskov wing of the party in February 1909.⁸³ St Petersburg Security Section's meddling in Pskov's revolutionary parties continued when one of their agents in the SR party helped smuggle guns into the city and then betrayed the smugglers to the police. This resulted in the liquidation of the SR underground in Pskov on 26 April 1909.⁸⁴ Charts 5a and 5b also show that St Petersburg Security Section was very active in Finland.⁸⁵

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Distribution of Secret Agents

Chart 5b shows estimates of the number of secret agents employed in the surrounding provinces based on surveys by St Petersburg District Security Section in 1911 and 1912.⁸⁶ This chart shows that a

81 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.7, l.63.

82 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.295, l.23–24, 10 July 1910: Captain Donetskii at Petersburg OO was in charge of supervising the gendarme officers on the 'secret desks' of surrounding Gendarme Directorates in their recruitment of spies.

83 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.7, l.92, 5 May 1909. Gen.Astaf'ev, head of Pskov PGD, secured the dismissal of the SD agent (codename *Pavlov*) on the grounds that he was a drunkard.

84 GARF f.111 op.7 d.7 ll.84–5, &109, April 1909. The agent's (*Bukinst*) case officer was the assistant head of StPbOO Capt.Gavrilov. The head of Pskov PGD, along with the local press denounced the liquidation as a blatant act of provocation.

85 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.3, ll.157–58, Head of Finnish Gendarme Directorate to head of St Petersburg District OO, 26 Dec. 1912. GARF, f.111, op.5, d.281, l.15: StPbOO monitored the meeting of SDs in Tampere on 24 June 1910 with the assistance of the Finnish Gendarme Directorate.

86 The survey took St. Petersburg Security Section several months to compile and the duration of service for most secret agents was so short that these are at best only an approximation of the entire size of the District Security Section's secondary reservoir of spies.

considerable increase in the size of the Internal Agency in the provinces had occurred since 1909 – when, for example, Kronstadt Gendarme Directorate employed 12 informers compared to 37 in 1912.⁸⁷ However, it is also important to note that these figures represent the size of the internal agencies of these gendarme stations at their very peak: Kronstadt Gendarme Directorate – even before Dzhunkovskii began dismissing internal agents *en masse* – is listed as having only seven spies in February 1913.⁸⁸ This shows that the Okhrana was a rather malleable organisation: when the revolutionary movement shrank, so did the Okhrana. For example, in 1909 police Director Trusevich pressured St Petersburg Security Section to dismiss superfluous agents, ‘in view of the absence at the present time of organised [revolutionary] groups.’⁸⁹ The last head of Petersburg Security Section, General Globachev, estimated that in his Section there were two to three case officers each on the Bolsheviks, on the Mensheviks, on SRs, the *narodniki*, social movements, and on anarchists respectively, and one on all movements in general. Though it is very difficult to identify any typical arrangement: each case officer managed between one and thirty informers.⁹⁰

The files on the District Security Section’s secret agents further confirm the hypothesis that the SRs and the SDs were the focus of the Okhrana’s attention because around three quarters of the top level agents (‘secret collaborators’) were informers in the SR and SD parties. It also indicates that the SDs while smaller in the more rural provincial areas were beginning to receive as much attention as the SRs.⁹¹

Key to Chart 5b. GD–Gendarme Directorate. PGD–Provincial GD. GRPD – Gendarme Railway Police Directorate. St.Pb. – St Petersburg. Nat/lib. – nationalists and liberals: It is important to note that no informers were employed among the liberals in the Russian

87 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.7, l.72, March 1909.

88 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.8, ll.26–27, Feb. 1913.

89 GARF f.111 op.7 d.7 l.77, 1–10 April 1909.

90 Globachev, ‘Pravda o Russkoi Revoliutsii,’ p.7.

91 In 1905 rewards for the arrest of SDs were rumoured to be only 3 rubles; whereas the arrest of SR was rumoured to fetch 25 rubles. M.B.Perel'man, “‘Kapital’ Karl Marks i tsarskaia okhranka,’ *Sovetskie arkhivy*, no.1 (1968), pp.102–03.

provinces. All those recorded in the surveys were Finnish socialists, liberals and nationalist members of the Finnish Party of Active resistance, the Finnish Social Democratic Party, Society for the Defence of the Law and the Finnish Union of Liberation.

Chart 5b) St Petersburg District Security Section 1911–1912
Agent affiliation and numbers⁹²

Region	Nat/libers	SD	SR	Factory	Military	General	Total
<hr/>							
Archangel							
PGD: 1911			5			10	15
1912			2	1		12	15
<hr/>							
Finland GD							
1911	24	6					30
1912	12	6	5				23
<hr/>							
Finland GRPD							
1911		3					3
1912		2					2
<hr/>							
Kronstadt GD							
1911		1	1		14		16
1912		1	2		34		37
<hr/>							
Kuopio 1912	3				1		4
<hr/>							
North-West							
GRPD: 1911		2	2			2	6
1912		2				10	12
<hr/>							
Novgorod							
PGD: 1911		2	3		5	9	19
1912		1	3		5	9	18
<hr/>							
Pb.PGD:1911		5	1			12	18
<hr/>							
Pb. GRPD –Pb. Section: 1911		2	3				5
<hr/>							
Pb. GRPD-all sections: 1912	2			31			33
<hr/>							

92 All figures for 1911 taken from: GARF, f.111, op.7, d.4, ll.1–127, Jan. 1911. All figures for 1912 taken from: GARF, f.111, op.7, d.3, ll.1–188, March–June 1912. For 1913 see: f.111, op.7, d.8.

Pskov PGD							
1911		2	3	1		4	10
1912		3	3	2		17	25
<hr/>							
Sveaborg fort							
1912					5	1	6
<hr/>							
Vologda PGD							
1911		2	6	3		3	14
1912		2	6	3	11	17	39
<hr/>							
Vyborg fort							
1911			8				8
1912	1		9				10
<hr/>							
Vyborg GD							
1911	5	1	1			6	13
1912	9	3	1		4		16
<hr/>							
Abo-Bjorneborg							
1911	4			1	1		6
1912	5			1	1		7
<hr/>							
Total (average 1911–1912)							
	31	23	33	22	40	55	204

The Okhrana received a rude awakening from its traditional strategy ‘to sow discord’ among the SRs in 1906, when this very policy gave birth to the Maximalist wing of the SR party.⁹³ This caused problems because they had no spies among the Maximalists and their first recruit among them, Solomon Ryss, proved to be nothing short of a disaster. He had convinced the Director of the Department of Police that he had the Maximalists ‘in his pocket’⁹⁴ shortly before they blew up Prime Minister Stolypin’s dacha in the summer of 1906. Gerasimov was able to quickly compensate for the Ryss debacle by recruiting a close confidant of the Maximalist leader Mikhail Medved’-Sokolov (codename ‘Ivanov’). Following this, Gerasimov supported Azef when he was elected chief of the terrorist wing of the SR party, the Battle Organisation, in the autumn of 1906. Gerasimov then promoted the centralisation of all terrorist plans into the hands of the Battle Organisation so that he could: ‘keep them

93 Hoover, Okhrana Archive, Box 214, folder 2a, FA to DP, 29 Jan. 1905.

94 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.86–92. Ryss was soon after arrested and executed.

[the terrorists] under the constant control [of the Okhrana] and systematically destroy all their schemes.’⁹⁵ This policy of caution over action appears to have been followed by Von Kotten, who advised against the liquidation of the Natanson wing of the SR party in 1912 ‘so as not to ruin the *agentura*.’⁹⁶

Contrary to the criticism by Moscow Okhrana chief, Martynov, the archives reveal that Petersburg Security Section did not fail to recognise the collapse of the SR party’s terrorist wing in 1909.⁹⁷ Petersburg OO’s reports also recognised the division between the émigré SRs and those inside the empire: ‘The chief SR organisations in the empire were founded independently and exist not only without directives, but for the most part without any sort of connection with the centre.’⁹⁸ The reason for the collapse of this group was the failure of terrorist attempts in 1909 and the arrest of the leaders of the main terrorist cell, Liberman and Stroimlov, in February 1910.⁹⁹

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However, in 1911 the Okhrana became concerned that the pro-terror group was growing inside the SR party.¹⁰⁰ In its 1912 summary Petersburg OO divided the party into two simple groups: those supporting terrorism and those against. The ‘New Course’ or ‘Pochin’¹⁰¹ group opposed terror, because ‘as a means of struggle, it has become obsolete [*ustarel*], with the existence of the State Duma it appears to be an anachronism, and finally terror has been compromised by the Azef affair.’ The *Pochin* group concluded that, ‘it is better to avoid terror than risk history repeating itself.’¹⁰² They were tentatively supported, the Okhrana reported, by Viktor Chernov – the leading party member

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95 Ibid., p.86.

96 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.73, 26 May 1912.

97 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, ll.10–18. They reported after the liquidations of 1909–10 that, ‘the Battle Organization ceased to be active.’ Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.225–26, 229. On StPbOO’s report that the Romanov celebrations in Moscow would be safe see: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.94, StPbOO to DP, 23 Aug. 1912

98 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.113, StPbOO to DP, 30 Oct. 1912.

99 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, ll.10–18: the group had been liquidated as result of the presence of two Okhrana agents in their midst: Ian Berdo and Iakov Ipatych. See also Mckean, *Petersburg Between Revolutions*, p.62.

100 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, 5 Oct. 1911, secret circular no.108022.

101 This group was headed by Avksent’ev, N.A.Ul’ianov, Il’ia Bunakov, Fundaminskii, B.Voronov, Lebedev, Nechetnyi and Sletov– with occasional support from Viktor Chernov in the party central committee.

102 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.12, 28 March 1912.

who had in the past been an ardent supporter of terror. Those in favour of terror were identified as the ‘Savinkov’ pro-terror group.¹⁰³ This group was supported by the chief party organ, *Znamia truda*, Petersburg Security Section reported, which had launched, ‘a systematic apology for terror [in 1911] with the aim of attracting fresh strength into the ranks of the terrorist movement from the young party workers.’¹⁰⁴ St Petersburg OO felt that the risk of a renewed terrorist campaign was manifest because Mark Natanson, ‘the ideological and *de facto* head of the SR party,’ was in favour of renewing the terrorist campaign and ‘his position in the party [in 1912 was] equal to that of a dictator [*polozhenie koego v partii priravnivaiut k diktatorskomy*].’¹⁰⁵ In May 1912 Petersburg Security Section seemed certain that trouble was heading its way: ‘as regards the possibility of a renewal of terrorist attempts in the near future by the SR party – it appears inevitable that they will concentrate their efforts in St Petersburg.’¹⁰⁶

The Okhrana’s different approaches to the SR and SD parties can be highlighted by an analysis of the distribution of top level secret agents. This chart¹⁰⁷ produced by Nurit Schleifman was extrapolated from a cross-section of 215 agents exposed by the Provisional Government.

Chart 5c. Internal Agents 1902–1914¹⁰⁸

	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914
SR	5	5	11	15	22	22	23	20	25	29	32	27	23
SD	7	10	11	14	18	20	15	19	29	32	37	37	42
Total	12	15	22	29	40	42	38	39	54	61	69	64	65
A. ¹⁰⁹	2	2	2	3	8	8	7	7	7	3	2	3	2
Total	14	17	24	32	48	50	45	46	61	64	71	67	67

103 Consisting of Vera Figner, Boris Bartol’d, Dem’ian Beziuk, Mikhail Chernavskii, Natalia Klimova, Evgeniia Somova, and Egor Lazarev.

104 GARF, op.cit., l.12, 28 March 1912.

105 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.113, St PbOO to DP, 30 Oct. 1912.

106 Ibid., l.72, StPbOO to Director DP, 14 May 1912.

107 Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.54.

108 Ibid., p.53. Nurit Schleifman has inferred from the distribution of agents that: ‘there was a certain incongruity between the intensity of revolutionary activity with its practical ramifications and the threat it posed to the regime, and the deployment of the police to combat that activity.’

109 Anarchists

This chart indicates that in absolute terms the SD party overtook the SR party as the chief target of Okhrana intelligence gathering in 1910, even though in relative terms the SR party had a higher proportion of agents to members (in 1907 the SRs had 45,000 members and the SDs 80,000). The high number of anarchist agents compared to the estimated number of anarchists (5000 in 1907) indicates that the number of agents was not determined purely by the size of the party.¹¹⁰ Two other factors influenced the acquisition of agents: the size of party cells and the policy towards terrorism.¹¹¹ The SRs were more decentralised than the SDs and so this inevitably took more agents to keep the Okhrana informed. They also had a stronger presence in the countryside where the Okhrana’s intelligence net was very weak. Far from flooding the SR party with spies the Okhrana’s network was weaker in the SRs than in the SDs.¹¹²

Chart 5d. Okhrana spies in the SR and SD parties

Parties	terrorist	trade unions	smuggling	Organisation	rank & file
SR	36%	12%	10%	21%	21%
SD	7%	25%	11%	52%	5% ¹¹³

Schleifman has also produced valuable statistics on the specific areas spied on in each party. This chart suggests that the Okhrana applied different strategies to the suppression of the two parties.

The Okhrana’s penetration of the SD organisational cadres helped keep them closely informed about the proceedings at the five Russian

110 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, p.235. The leading agent was Bentsion Dolin (codename ‘Lenin’!).

111 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Index no.XIc and no.XX, Box 209. For a period the Okhrana also found an alarming increase in expropriations by the Bolsheviks and so recruited Berlin based Iakov Zhitomirskii who was close to Kamo the mastermind of the infamous Tiflis robbery.

112 PTsR, Vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, pp.286–87. Beletskii was highly critical of his SR *agentura*: ‘It was more difficult to penetrate the SR party; we had fewer good collaborators. Consequently, our knowledge of them was weak, and also abroad because there the department was watched and exposed by Burtsev, who frequently defeated us with our own weapons.’

113 Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.67.

SD congresses between 1898 and 1907.¹¹⁴ SD conferences within the empire were also carefully watched and not often broken up.¹¹⁵ The Okhrana may even have permitted the free movement of certain delegates and hindered that of others to get to the congresses in the hope of influencing debate inside the SD party. Again this shows that the Okhrana had evolved a more subtle strategy since Plehve's time. In the case of Azef the policy had been to unify all SR terrorist operations. In contrast, Beletskii described his strategy *vis-à-vis* the SD party thus: 'I recognised that the tasks of my directorship included preventing the possibility of the [SD] party uniting. I acted on the principle of "*divide et impera*"'¹¹⁶ The key agent in the campaign was Roman Malinovskii, who was persuaded to shift from the Mensheviks to the Bolsheviks: 'to promote the splits in the party whenever possible.'¹¹⁷ In furtherance of the aim the Okhrana produced detailed analyses of divisive issues in the SD Party.¹¹⁸ Malinovskii's information led to the arrest of many of Lenin's opponents.¹¹⁹ The motive behind this policy was to divert the energies of the SD party from worker activism and parliamentary elections into internecine war, which would confuse the rank and file supporters and prevent the growth of a large popular SD party on German lines. This was no imaginary danger: SD membership was 3,250 in 1904, 16,800 in 1905, and 81,000 at the end of 1906.¹²⁰ This entailed developing a holistic approach to intelligence gathering on the SD party: For example, Fontanka monitored not just their movements and beliefs, but their personal lives, and those of their families (e.g. the surveillance of the wives of revolutionaries, such as Raisa Kameneva

114 Ibid., pp.68–69. The Okhrana seemed to be more energetic in its attempts to break up SR party congresses: from 1905 to 1910 the SR party was only able to organise two party congresses.

115 GARF, f.102, op.239 (DPOO, 1909), dd.179–183, *Ob Ural'skoi konferentsii Rossiiskoi cots.-dem. rab. partii*.

116 PTsR, Vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, p.286.

117 Ibid., pp.281–82.

118 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, DPOO summary, 30 Jan. 1910. 1) The party's relationship to the State Duma 2) Attitudes to the use of violence 3) The relationship to illegal/underground cells.

119 R.C.Elwood, *Malinovsky: A Life Without Cause*, p.34.

120 Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, p.59.

and Nadezhda Krupskaja produced more information than the surveillance of their husbands).¹²¹

The Okhrana strategy against both the SDs and the SRs adapted to circumstances. The security police's principal concern in both cases was to alienate the revolutionary parties from the masses. With the SRs this entailed frustrating any grand terrorist coups and blocking their propaganda among the peasants and the workers.¹²² With the SDs this entailed crushing their control over the trades unions and preventing them from forming a popular front with liberal parties (thus avoiding their deepest fear: 'a full repetition of the events of 1905'.¹²³) The most important factor for Fontanka in judging the relative dangers from rival SD factions was their success in the trade union movement (rather than their attitudes to terror). Thus, up to 1913 the Okhrana treated the more popular Mensheviks as a greater threat than the Bolsheviks, despite the fact that the latter had noted connections to acts of terror and robbery.¹²⁴ And it was only in 1914—when the Bolsheviks dominated 75% of trade union directorates—that the secret police turned their efforts towards disgracing, rather than promoting, the Bolsheviks.¹²⁵ The Okhrana's dismissal of Malinovskii in May 1914 and the arrest of the five remaining Bolshevik Duma deputies in October can be seen as part of this change in priorities.¹²⁶

The success of the Okhrana's intimidation of revolutionary party activists in the labour movement was palpable during the St Petersburg strikes of July 1914 and yet again during the February

121 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.312, ll.62 & 197, 20th September 1911. Ts.Zelikson-Bobrovskaja, 'Zagranichnyi syisk vokrug Lenina,' *Krasnaia letopis'* no.2/13 (Leningrad, 1925), pp.156–64.

122 In 1911 the DP sensed SR influence in the Peasant Union when it distributed 30,000 surveys amongst the peasants, this wrote St Petersburg OO: 'patently threatens social tranquillity.' See: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.312, l.402, 6 Nov. 1911.

123 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, Vissarionov to all Security Sections, 10 March 1911.

124 In October 1905 Lenin had even advocated: 'The killing of policemen, gendarmes [and] the blowing up of police stations...' to incite revolution. Quid in Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, p.363. On police reports of Bolshevik connections with SR terrorist cells see: A.I.Spiridovich *Istoriia bol'shevizma v Rossii: Ot vozniknoveniia do zakhvata vlasti 1883–1903–1917* (Paris, 1922), p.138.

125 Elwood, *Malinovsky: A Life Without Cause*, p.43.

126 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.517, t.1–2.

Revolution: when party activists were notably more timid than the rank-and-file protestors. Workers may have become increasingly radical from 1906 to 1914, but the Okhrana enjoyed considerable success in preventing the organised revolutionary parties from reaping the benefits. As McKean has noted: ‘The development of mass revolutionary consciousness in the form of a commitment to a specific socialist party or political philosophies was fundamentally a phenomenon of the months after the fall of Nicholas II, when the politicisation of the masses began in earnest.’¹²⁷ And, one might add, this process occurred partly as a result of the fall of the Okhrana.

Conclusion

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A great deal has been written about the profound psychological, organisational and ideological impact of the Okhrana on the political opposition. Indeed, this can be seen to have contributed to some of the harshness and secrecy of the early Soviet-Bolshevik regime (though, of course, ideological factors were paramount). The Bolsheviks, after all, contained proportionally more high-level Okhrana spies than any other political faction.¹²⁸ Victor Serge believed the Okhrana to have had a formative influence on those who chose to make their career in the Cheka: ‘The only temperaments that devote themselves willingly and tenaciously to this task of “internal defence” were those characterised by suspicion, embitterment, harshness and sadism. Long standing inferiority complexes and memories of humiliation and sufferings in the Tsar’s jails rendered them intractable, and since professional degeneration has rapid effects, the Chekas inevitably consisted of perverted men tending to see conspiracy everywhere and to live in the midst of perpetual conspiracy themselves.’¹²⁹ However, the struggle was one which traumatised

127 R.B.McKean, *Petersburg Between Revolutions*, p.494.

128 N.N.Ansimov, *Bor’ba bol’shevikov protiv тайно́й политическо́й поли́ции самодержави́и, 1903–1917* (Sverdlovsk, Urals University, 1989). From 1908 to 1909 4 out of 5 on the Bolshevik St Petersburg central committee were Okhrana agents. (see Leggett, *The Cheka*, chapter one, passim).

129 Victor Serge, qtd. in Leggett, *The Cheka*, p.189. For example, one of the leading *chekisty*, Mikhail Abramovich Trilisser, directed Bolshevik counter-Okhrana work prior to the Revolution.

and transformed both sides. Prior to 1910 the most prominent officials of the Interior Ministry lived under the shadow of potential assassination. The stress this caused is evident from one Department of Police circular recording a 'lamentable episode' in 1909 where the Okhrana warned a local Governor that terrorists were planning an attempt on his life. The anxiety prompted by this warning caused the unfortunate Governor to die of a heart attack.¹³⁰

Most of the Okhrana officers had been both literally and figuratively scarred by the terrorist movement. Jonathan Daly has provided a vivid picture of the chaos at the offices Moscow Security Section in 1905, which were subjected to a bomb attack in the early hours of 10 December 1905. In the same year the head of Moscow Criminal Investigations Section (A.I.Voiloshnikov, a former *okhrannik*), was kidnapped and executed by revolutionaries. And as the Security Section lost control of Moscow to the revolutionary opposition in December 1905, the head of Moscow Security Section, A.G.Peterson, suffered a nervous breakdown.¹³¹ The leading officers of the Petersburg secret police subjected to terrorist attacks included: the assistant head of St Petersburg Security Section from 1907–14 (M.L.Gavrilov); the head of the Okhrana from 1909–11 (P.G.Kurlov); the head of the Court Okhrana from 1905–17 (A.I.Spiridovich, whose wife allegedly died of 'shock' soon after the attempt on his life); the head of St Petersburg Security Section 1910–14 (Von Kotten, who was injured on more than one occasion); and the head of the Special Section from 1908–09 (E.K.Klimovich). Those killed by terrorists included the Chief of Security of the Tauride Palace (Col.Schultz) in 1906 and the head of Petersburg OO in 1909 (Col.Karpov).¹³² The gendarmerie in St Petersburg had been a particular target for terror since the assassination of their *komandir*, General Mezentskii, in 1878 which sparked off the People's Will terrorist campaign that

130 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, S.E.Vissarionov, DP circular 5 Jan.1910.

131 Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, pp.157, & 177–78.

132 For a vivid account of a shootout with a single suicidal anarchist who injured a large number of Moscow Security Section's leading officers, including von Kotten and his assistant Pastrulin, see Dzhunkovskii, *Vospominaniia*, vol.1, pp.404–5.

went on to claim the lives of tsar Alexander II and St Petersburg Security Section chief, G.P.Sudeikin.¹³³

The question I will discuss in the following chapters is whether the *okhranniki*, living in the midst of perpetual conspiracy themselves, also began to see conspiracy everywhere. And did the trauma of the counter-revolution embitter and brutalise them to any degree comparable to the *chekisty*? The Okhrana, in its campaign of counter-terror, would have done well to heed Nietzsche's cautionary advice – that those who battle with monsters should take care lest in doing so they too become monsters.

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133 On the effect of terrorism on the police mentality see: Spiridovich, *Revolutionsnoe dvizhenie*, Pt.2, pp.298–305; M.Laporte, *Histoire de l'Okhrana* (Paris, 1935), pp.125–27.

Chapter Six

Contagious Fog

Okhrana Connections to Right-Wing Terror

On the evening of 29 January 1907 an unexploded time-bomb was discovered in the home of constitutional Russia's first Prime Minister, Sergei Witte.¹ Superficially, this case of attempted murder was a trivial enough affair. The bomb was so poorly constructed that it could hardly be considered dangerous: the detonator malfunctioned and the clock had stopped. Sergei Witte was, in any case, no longer a government minister. He had fallen out of favour with the tsar and had by all accounts ceased to be an influential political figure. Moreover, the culprits eluded arrest and consequently the motives for the attack remained unclear at first.

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Yet, all this was to change after 27 May 1907, when, 'some children found the disfigured and unrecognisable corpse of a young man near the Irinov railway line, about seven kilometres outside St. Petersburg.'² Police found bomb-making materials around the body. Just over a fortnight later the Socialist Revolutionary party organ *Znamia truda* published an article revealing that the victim's name was Aleksandr Kazantsev and that the bomb found on his corpse had been intended for another attempt on Witte's life.³ The article went

1 I have used three versions of Witte's account: S.Iu.Witte, *Memoirs*, trans. Sidney Harcave (New York, 1990) [hereafter: Witte, *Memoirs*]. Idem, *Vospominaniia* (3 vols. Moscow, 1960) vol.III, chpt.67, pp.414–440. [Hereafter: *Vospominaniia*]; Witte's official letter to Stolypin, dated 3 May 1910:GARF f.102, op.295 (1910g.) d.125 'Zaiavlenie Grafa Vitte s materialom po povodu podgotovlenie pokusheniia na nego.' ll.3–21. Where not otherwise mentioned the narrative of the assassination attempts comes from these sources. Also useful were Pavl Aleksandrov's official judicial reports: Ibid., ll.23–26, 1 Feb.1910; & ibid., ll.27–53 ob., 25 May 1910.

2 *Le Matin*, 'Terroristes et Cents-Noires,' 29 April 1909.

3 *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907. Kazantsev's patronymic was given alternately as Ivanovich or Eremeev.

on to claim that Kazantsev had been an *agent provocateur* in the service of the Union of Russian People (URP), an extreme right-wing political group which had been formed in 1905 as a ‘patriotic’ reaction against Witte’s October Manifesto. Subsequent exposés in the press filtering from SR sources revealed that Kazantsev had been responsible for terrorist attacks on several of Russia’s leading liberal politicians, including the January attempt on Witte’s life.⁴ The principal source of this information was Kazantsev’s murderer, a left-winger, 23 year-old Vasilii Dmitriev Fedorov, who had escaped to France and sold his story to the scandal-hungry Parisian press. He claimed that the murder was an act of revenge for the fact that Kazantsev had duped him into carrying out assassinations based on the lie that it was at the behest of the SR party.⁵

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The controversy escalated when rumours surfaced in the St. Petersburg press that Kazantsev’s address book, which was found at the scene of the crime, included the phone numbers of Moscow Security Section, the head of this office from 1906 to 1907 (E.K. Klimovich), the current Governor General of Moscow (S.K. Gershel’man) and the addresses of some Okhrana ‘conspiratorial apartments’ (*konspirativnye kvartiry*, i.e. safe houses).⁶ On the basis of this, Sergei Witte was not alone in concluding that: ‘Kazantsev was one of the agents of the Okhrana who were termed ideological volunteers [*ideinymi dobrovol’tsamii*], working for the secret police in assassinating persons who were considered left-wing and in general dangerous to the reactionary cause.’⁷ This chapter will explore the validity of Witte’s contention. It will also examine the broader significance of the affair. I will begin by identifying three themes which underpin the various explanations of the causes and implications of the Okhrana’s connection with reactionary terror.

i) A war against society? Right-wing terror was concentrated on the moderate liberal parties: police connections to this have been taken as manifest proof for the nascent liberal critique of the tsarist

4 The story was first picked up by the liberal press in *Rech’*, 20 & 28 June 1907.

5 *Le Matin*, ‘Terroristes et Cents-Noires,’ 29 April 1909.

6 GARF, f.102, op.238, d.511, ll.122–23, Moscow OO to DPOO, 8 July 1907. PTsR, vol.6, *Dopros A.A.Reinbota*, p.122; Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.153.

7 Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.432. Witte uses the term ‘Okhrannoe otdelenie’ to refer to the organs of the secret political security police in general.

state as an anachronistic and unyielding monolith, focussing on the Okhrana as the central ‘pillar of Russian reaction.’⁸ The liberal critique often contained prophetic elements, voiced most clearly by A.A.Lopukhin, a former Director of the Department of Police (1902–1905), who became disillusioned with the tsarist regime and gravitated towards the liberal Kadet party. ‘The whole political outlook of the ranks of the Corps of Gendarmes boils down to the following propositions’ he wrote, ‘there is the people and there is the state... As a result [of this bipolar view], the protection of the state... turns into a war against all of society... By widening the gulf between the state and the people, the police engender a revolution.’⁹

ii) State terror? The Witte affair also suggests a convergence of police methods and terrorism in Russia prior to the Red Terror of Lenin’s Cheka. As discussed in chapter four, the Okhrana ethic—which they termed ‘conspiracy’—was conceived by ex-revolutionaries recruited by the police. They brought with them many of the organisational practices the Nechaevist and People’s Will terrorist groups from the 1860s to the 1880s. The Witte affair is one of many which suggests that the association with organisational and psychological principles of terrorism had progressed to the ultimate stage of development whereby the counter-terrorist security police finally became itself an agency of terror.¹⁰ Analysis on these lines has often drawn attention to rumours of the Okhrana terrorising the government itself. In this sense the Witte assassination attempt may be seen as a bathetic precursor to the murder of the Prime Minister, P.A.Stolypin, by an Okhrana spy, Dmitrii Bogrov, in September 1911. A.I.Guchkov, the leader of the moderate conservative Octobrist party, summed up the general impression of the Stolypin murder when he asked in the Duma: Was this an accident? ‘... or behind it was there something worse, a conscious connivance, a desire to get rid of a man whose presence had become intolerable?’¹¹ There is much in

8 Vladimir Burtsev in *Budushchee*, no.4, 12 Nov. 1911.

9 Lopukhin, *Nastoiashchee i budushchee*, pp.32–33. His argument was adopted most notably by Richard Pipes in *Russia Under the Old regime* (London, 1974), p.316. See also: V.M.Gessen, *Iskliuchitel’noe polozenie* (St Petersburg, 1908), p.171.

10 See N.A.Geredskul, *Terror i Okhrana* (St Petersburg, 1912), passim.

11 A.I.Guchkov, in the Duma 11 Nov.1911.: *Stenograficheskie otchety. Gosudarstvennaia Duma* [Hereafter SOGD] (St Petersburg, 1911), 3rd Duma, 5th Session, vol.I, col.2065.

the case to support A.Ia.Avrekh's summary that the assassination: 'appears to have been a singular accident, permitted by fools and bunglers.'¹² Yet, the incomplete interrogation followed by hasty execution of Bogrov suggests that the tsarist government was reluctant to delve too deeply into the mystery.¹³ A similar reluctance could be seen in the Witte affair. Both cases gave rise to accusations at the time and later that the secret police in Russia became (or as some would say had always been) a 'state within a state'¹⁴ prior to the Bolshevik police tyranny.

iii) Patron-client networks. Finally, a theme of this chapter also discussed in chapter four, which tends to undermine many aspects of the liberal critique: the Witte affair offers a glimpse into the murky underworld of tsarist bureaucratic politics. This glimpse reveals that, contrary to its monolithic image, the bureaucracy was a tangled web of ever-changing and interwoven factions, which have been termed patron-client networks. These were based not just on institutional affiliation, but also on a wide variety of political beliefs, blood-ties, careerism and geography.¹⁵ Staff relations inside the Okhrana provide a classic example of these competing cabals. This indicates that the government did not present a united front in opposition to the advent of 'constitutional' politics. Far from waging war on society, factions in the bureaucracy waged war on one another, seeking to harness the power inherent in burgeoning sections of civil society for their own advantage. These bureaucratic cliques and their connections to civil society in Imperial Russia were the most important factor in the Witte affair, because they explain the root causes of the attempt on his life and the ensuing scandal.

The spread of patron-client groups inside the Russian bureaucracy also suggests connections between tsarist and Soviet government with regard to state terror, because the epidemic of networks reached

12 Qutd in Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.160.

13 GARF f.271, op.1, d.24, ll. 8–9, *Vsepoddanneishii doklad Senatora Trusevicha*: Published in full in S.A.Stepanov, *Zagadki ubiistva Stolypina* (Moscow 1993). See also: B.Iu.Maiskii, 'Stolypinshchina i konets Stolypina,' *Voprosy istorii*, no.2 (1966), pp.129–35.

14 V.V.Shul'gin, *Gody- dni- 1920* (reprint: Novosti, Moscow, 1990), p.129.

15 See: Orlovsky, 'Political Clientelism in Russia.' See also: S. Schmidt, J.C.Scott, C. Lande & L. Guasti (eds.), *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley, 1978).

fever pitch during the Great Terror (pointing, at least circumstantially, to a link, which ought to be studied further.) The most significant denunciation of patron-client networks in Russian government was delivered, with characteristic hypocrisy (or *doublethink*), by the most persistent and successful practitioner of the patronage system, Joseph Stalin. In 1937 he warned party members of the insidious tendency that ‘most often, workers [party workers, i.e. government officials] are selected not by objective criteria, but by accidental, subjective, narrow and provincial criteria. Most frequently so-called acquaintances are chosen, personal friends, fellow countrymen, people personally devoted to someone, masters of eulogising their patrons, regardless of their political and business suitability. Naturally, instead of a leading group of responsible workers, a family group of intimates, a company is formed, the members of which try to live in peace, not to offend each other, not to wash their dirty linen in public...’¹⁶

The Holy Brotherhood

The case of the Holy Brotherhood (*Sviashchennaia druzhina*, 1881–83) offers an interesting precedent on the theme of reactionary terror.¹⁷ This organisation, like the URP, saw itself as a patriotic reaction against left-wing threats to the tsarist regime. It also sought to fight fire with fire by attacking the revolutionary movement with conspiratorial terrorist methods.¹⁸ Its conspiratorial cells were directly modelled on the Nechaevist and People’s Will *piaterki* (‘groups of five.’)¹⁹ The Holy Brotherhood also indulged in acts of provocation;

16 I.V.Stalin to the plenum of the Central Committee, Feb./March 1937 quid. in C.H.Fairbanks Jr., ‘Clientelism and Higher Politics in Georgia, 1949–53,’ in R.G.Suny (ed.), *Transcaucasia. Nationalism and Social Change* (Ann Arbor, 1983), p.342. See I.V.Stalin, *Sochineniia*, ed. R.H.McNeal (Stanford, 1967), pp.230–31.

17 See: *Golos minuvshago*, no.1/3 Jan/March 1918 pp.139–83 & *ibid.*, Jan–June 1916 articles by V.N.Smel’skii (diary of a member). P.A.Sadikov, ‘Obshchestvo “Sviashchennoi druzhiny,” (“Otchetnaia zapiska” 1881–1882 gg.),’ *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.XXI (1927), pp.200–17.

18 On the size and composition see: Sadikov, ‘Obshchestvo’ pp.200–03 & 206.

19 K.A.Borodzin, ‘Sviashchennaia druzhina i narodnaia volia,’ *Byloe*, no.10 (1907), pp.123–67.

that is, it recruited revolutionaries under false pretences in order to compromise them. Pavl Akselrod and M.P.Dragomanov were their most distinguished dupes.²⁰ Finally and most importantly, like the URP, later revelations about the membership of this organisation revealed that it included a large number of police officials. These included: Kozlov (the *oberpolitseimeister* of St Petersburg); Henri Bint (a French agent of the Third Section who went on to serve both the Okhrana and the Soviets); P.I.Rachkovskii (at that time a lowly clerk in the Department of Police, later to become the head of the Okhrana from 1905 to 1906); and secret agents such as Iu.M. Bogushevich, G.S.Veselitskii-Bozhidarovich and V.V.Marchenko/Savchenko.²¹ These links have led many to conclude that the Holy Brotherhood was an organ of police terror. This has a direct bearing on the Witte affair because these facts were only first brought to light around 1911 in order to serve as a key piece of evidence in the Kadet accusations that the police had been orchestrating right-wing terror for decades.²²

Yet, this conclusion ignores two key factors which would have a bearing on the Witte affair. Firstly, the real locus of governmental support for the Brotherhood resided among influential figures at Court, most notably Count I.I.Vorontsov-Dashkov, R.A.Fadeev and Count P.P.Shuvalov. Vorontsov-Dashkov in particular had his own police organisations which would benefit from the dissolution of the Okhrana.²³ Secondly, all the secret police employees listed above had, before entering the Brotherhood, been either dismissed or demoted *as a result* of the creation of the Okhrana, because the Department of Police had sought to purge the political police of former employees from the discredited Third Section.²⁴ This group

20 P.P.Shuvalov published *Vol'noe slovo*-(posing as a *zemstvo* publication) edited by Mal'shinskii. *Pravda* posed as a fiery People's Will journal (edited by a protégé of Sudeikin, Klimov).

21 B.Anan'ich and R.Sh.Ganelin, *Sergei Iulevich Vitte i ego vremia* (St Petersburg, 1999), pp.27–31. Various other publications on the Brotherhood came from M.K.Lemke (Petrograd 1920–21) & S.P.Mel'gunov (1918).

22 A.V.Rumanov, 'Sviashchennaia družhina,' *Russkoe slovo*, 20 June 1913; & idem., "'Liga spaseniia Rossii" i P.I.Rachkovskii,' *Russkoe slovo*, 21 July 1913.

23 On finance from the Court Ministry see: Sadikov, 'Obshchestvo,' pp.200–03 & 206.

24 P.Statkovskii, 'Departament politsii v 1892–1908 gg. (Iz vospominanii chinovnika),' *Byloe* nos.5–6, (Nov./Dec. 1917), p.17.

of ousted and junior police staff joined the Brotherhood with the hope of winning the patronage of this rival group at Court. The Brotherhood was therefore set up as a specific reaction *against* the new leaders of the political police.

It is no surprise to find therefore that the leading police staff saw the Holy Brotherhood as a rival, not an ally. Colonel Sudeikin, head of the Okhrana in St Petersburg noted, 'we have to fight against it as much as against the terrorists. Even more for it is harder to reach. The revolutionaries are people, they have ideals, but this crowd... it is a mob! A mob under protection. They are annoying me no end.'²⁵ The majority of senior Okhrana staff thought likewise.²⁶ It was only when the tsar himself withdrew his support for the organisation at the end of 1882 that Police Director, V.K.Plehve, was able to dissolve the Holy Brotherhood.

What is more interesting about the Holy Brotherhood, with regard to Witte affair, is that Witte himself was a member, and thus himself a forefather of the reactionary terror which nearly cost him his life. Indeed, one of the Brotherhood's chief opponents, Russia's 'press tsar,' A.S.Suvorin, wrote: 'The infamous Holy Brotherhood was Witte's idea. He came from Kiev and explained it all to Vorontsov-Dashkov. An idea worthy of a Jesuit.'²⁷ Witte by his own confession did not mince his words, summarising his line of reasoning thus: 'Every time the anarchists prepared or made an attempt on the life of the Sovereign, the society should respond by ruthlessly killing them.'²⁸

25 Quid. in S.Lukashevich, 'The Holy Brotherhood, 1881-83,' *American Slavic and East European Review* 18 (Dec.1959), p.505. See Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.150.

26 E.g. A.S.Skandrakov (head of Moscow Okhrana), the Ministers of the Interior, Ignat'ev and Count Tolstoi, and the Director of DP, V.K.Plehve. See *Russkaia molva*, 5 May 1913, 'Iz del davno minuvshikh dnei.'- written by L.P.Men'shchikov under the pseudonym Hez.

27 A.S.Suvorin, *Dnevnik* (Moscow, 1992), diary entry 28 Feb.1893, p.27.

28 Witte, *Memoirs*, ch.8, p.68. Witte's role was made public in the fat journals in 1913 (*Russkaia mysl'*, *Sovremennik*, *Vestnik Evropy* etc.) O.O.Gruzenberg, *Vchera: Vospominaniia* (Paris, 1938), p.130.

Witte's influence amidst the secret police

Next we come to the contemporary liberal interpretation of the attempt on Witte's life as evidence that the Okhrana was somehow a state within the state, a 'separate realm,' akin to Ivan the Terrible's *oprichnina*. By inference the Okhrana's alleged terrorist activities were seen to be rooted in its elevated status. The depiction of the Okhrana in Witte's memoirs compounds this view. The leading security police officer, he wrote, 'had more influence over the Emperor than I did and was virtually head of the government for which I bore responsibility.'²⁹ Even as Prime Minister, Witte claimed that he was unable to penetrate the veil of secrecy surrounding the Okhrana and that he: 'knew nothing about police operations except that there was something unclean about them.'³⁰

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Yet the closer we look at the tsarist bureaucracy the more this cliché of an impenetrable secret police appears to be misleading. We may take the manoeuvrings of Sergei Witte himself as a perfect example of the way in which the Okhrana was an integrated and subordinate branch of the bureaucratic government. He became a close ally of a fellow former-member of the Holy Brotherhood, P.I.Rachkovskii. The alliance was largely a marriage of convenience – Rachkovskii was, like Witte, an inveterate enemy of Viacheslav Plehve. Yet, in his relations with Rachkovskii, Witte was hardly innocent of association with the seamy side of the Okhrana. It was even rumoured that Witte found Rachkovskii useful in some of his more unscrupulous personal intrigues, such as arranging burglaries of the homes of his political opponents.³¹ Further unsubstantiated accusations circulated that Rachkovskii occasionally resorted to terrorist methods for political propaganda and even to physically remove his opponents. For example, when the Department of Police sent a senior gendarme, General Seliverstov, to Paris to investigate Rachkovskii for embezzlement of government funds in 1890, the general had the misfortune to be assassinated by one of Rachkovskii's

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29 Witte, *Memoirs*, p.518.

30 *Ibid.*, p.506.

31 For example, the theft of papers from the home of a political opponent Elie de Cyon (Ilia Tsion) at Territat. "Kar'era P.I.Rachkovskogo: dokumenty," *Byloe*, no.2/30 (Feb.1918), p.80.

own spies.³² Moreover, while probably not an anti-Semite himself, Rachkovskii was a pioneer in the crude politics of mass media anti-Semitism.³³ Later allegations that Rachkovskii was the author of the notorious anti-Semitic forgery ‘The Protocols of the Elders of Zion’ were probably false, but all the same were indicative of his sinister reputation.³⁴ Rachkovskii clearly represents a link between the Holy Brotherhood and the URP: Having been a member of the former and having claimed to be the founder of the latter.³⁵

Moreover, this does not prove long-standing right-wing connections to the Okhrana *as a whole*. Quite the contrary: Rachkovskii was very unpopular among the mainstream *okhranniki*. Rachkovskii’s career survived thanks to patronage at Court. When he lost this support, in 1902, the Interior Minister, Plehve, lost no time in dismissing him.³⁶ Witte’s promotion of more unscrupulous agents inside the political police did not end here. He actively sought to re-establish influence over the Okhrana by cultivating and promoting the career of I.F.Manasevich-Manuilov, a specialist in burglary and blackmail.³⁷ Manuilov was used by Witte in a secret bid for the

- 32 Lopukhin statement to the Provisional Government: Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Nicolaevskii collection, Box 205, folder ‘chrevychainaia’, p.7. L.P.Menshchikov, *Okhrana i revoliutsiia*, (Moscow, 1932) vol.3, p.75. V.S.Brachev, ‘Master poiticheskogo syska Petr Ivanovich Rachkovskii,’ *Ezhegodnik* (Sankt Peterburgskoe nauchno obshchestvo istorikov, RGIA, 1996), p.298.
- 33 Rachkovskii’s closest collaborators were Jewish: most notable his secretary Gol’shman and his leading spies, Landezen-Harting and Evno Azef. See: Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.200. Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.61–62.
- 34 See: Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (London, 1970), p.85. The main evidence came from Henri Bint, who later entered the service of the Soviets, therefore hardly a reliable witness: GARF, f.509, *Bint Genri (1853–1929)*, *Nabliudatel’nyi agent*, op.1, dd.1–30. For the most thorough analysis of the origins of the Protocols, see: C.Ruud & S.Stepanov, *Fontanka Sixteen*, chpt.10.
- 35 Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.149.
- 36 E.H.Judge, *Plehve: Repression and Reform in Imperial Russia, 1902–1904* (New York, 1983), p.136.
- 37 On Witte’s close relations with Manuilov dating back to meeting in Paris around 1903 see Witte, *Memoirs*, p.362 & p.557. Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.186–87 & 207–08: Manuilov wrote right-wing articles in the Parisian press. Oddly enough, it was rumoured that Witte had lost his job as Minister of Finance due to the theft of compromising documents by Manuilov on behalf of Plehve. Witte was supposedly related to Manuilov by marriage: Anan’ich & Ganelin, *Vitte*, p.299.

support of the disgraced police chief Sergei Zubatov in December 1905.³⁸ When he became effective Prime Minister at the end of 1905, Witte appointed the highly conservative P.N.Durnovo as Minister of the Interior – ahead of more liberal candidates. This was based on the calculation that Durnovo was so unpopular in other quarters that he would be dependent on Witte’s patronage.

Thus, the prevalence of patron-client networks in the Okhrana indicates that it was not a ‘separate realm,’ hermetically sealed off from the rest of the government. In fact, factional struggles for control of the Okhrana transcended departmental parameters. Witte was a key figure in this internal wrangling. If anything, prior to 1905 he was closer to the reactionary, rather than liberal, factions inside the political police.³⁹ The irony was that if Witte wanted to weave a thread of continuity to prove police complicity in the attempt on his life then he would have to find himself guilty also.

Komissarov’s pogrom laboratory

Next we come to the question: If Witte was not a paragon of the liberal cause, why would the supposedly reactionary Okhrana want to murder, or at least aid and abet the murder, of the former-Prime Minister? Witte put forward the idea that it was his role as architect to the liberal October Manifesto that made him so loathed. Kadet investigators would have supported this because it fitted in with their thesis of the fundamental incompatibility of political police with the new constitutional order.

However, evidence points to an alternative explanation: Witte’s connection to the political police, not his alienation from them, may have a bearing on the ‘conspiracy’ to aid the reactionary assassins. By early 1906 control of the political police had slipped out of Witte’s hands because Durnovo grew increasingly independent of the Prime

38 For Manuilov’s letter 31 Oct. 1905 to Zubatov attempting to recruit his services for Witte see: B.P.Kozmin (ed.), *Zubatov i ego korrespondenty* (Moscow, 1928), pp.106–07; P.Statkovskii, ‘Departament politsii,’ p.21.

39 A.A.Lopukhin, *Otryvki iz vospominanii po povodu “Vospominaniia” S.Iu. Witte* (Moscow, 1923), pp.81–89: Lopukhin, previously a client of the late V.K.Plehve, was sharply critical of many of Witte’s views and policies.

Minister,⁴⁰ and Rachkovskii had long since found a more influential patron in the form of Petersburg Governor and later Court *Komendant*, D.F.Trepov. Yet all was not lost. An opportunity for Witte to remove his rivals in the Okhrana presented itself in January 1906. A former Director of the Department of Police, A.A.Lopukhin, supplied Witte with information indicating that a secret section inside Fontanka 16 headed by Rachkovskii and run by a certain Captain M.S.Komissarov, specialised in printing inflammatory anti-Semitic proclamations.⁴¹ This was a serious charge: A wave of bloody pogroms causing thousands of deaths occurred from late 1905 to mid-1906 as a reaction against the October Manifesto.⁴² If Lopukhin had evidence that the police were behind these atrocities then it would prove his contention that the police were orchestrating a general war against ‘society’ and specifically against the constitutional order.

Witte later wrote that he questioned Komissarov on the matter. One version of this conversation, which was widely publicised, alleged that Komissarov presumed the meeting was to arrange further work and proudly admitted to Witte, ‘we arrange pogroms to order—for ten [pogroms] or ten thousand as you wish.’⁴³ Witte confirmed in his memoirs that the captain confessed to printing ‘patriotic’ proclamations entitled ‘To the Soldiers,’⁴⁴ but agreed to, ‘throw the press in the Neva,’ when Witte expressed his opposition to the scheme. However, Lopukhin later informed Witte that Komissarov had merely

40 V.I.Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past of the Past* (trans. Laura Matveev, London, 1939), p.455; Mark Aldanov, ‘P.N.Durnovo – Prophet of War and Revolution,’ *Russian Review*, vol.2 (1942), p.42.

41 Hoover, Nikolaevskii Collection, Box 205, folder ‘Letter to Stolypin,’ 14 June 1906, pp.1–5. Witte, *Memoirs*, pp.515–17.

42 S.A.Stepanov, *Chernaia sotnia v Rossii (1905–1914 gg.)* (Moscow, 1998), pp.56–57. An estimated 690 anti-Semitic riots (pogroms) leading to 3,000 deaths in the first two weeks after the October manifesto alone. The most violent outbreaks, involving thousands of deaths, occurred in Odessa in October 1905, Gomel in Jan.1906, Aleksandrovsk in Feb.1906, Belostok in June 1906 and Elizavetgrad in Feb.1907.

43 Quoted in review of, A.Tsitron, ‘72 dnia pervogo russkago parlamenta,’ in *Byloe*, no.11 (St. Petersburg, Nov. 1906), p.319.

44 Witte, *Memoirs*, p.517. On the wording of these proclamations see: Shlomo Lambroza, ‘The Pogroms of 1903–1906,’ in John Klier & S.Lambroza (eds.), *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (London, 1992), p.205.

moved the press from the Fontanka basement to his own apartment.⁴⁵ Records show that the Minister of the Interior, Durnovo, protected Komissarov from dismissal.⁴⁶

It is important to note that this was not simply an attempt by civil society and the nascent Duma to regulate bureaucratic malpractice. This was an internal bureaucratic struggle which branched out into the public sphere. The key players in the liberal camp, Lopukhin and his brother-in-law, Prince S.D.Urusov, were former government officials with supporters inside the bureaucracy who wished to remove their opponents – Durnovo and Rachkovskii – through creating a public scandal.⁴⁷ Witte pursued further investigations into the matter through his agent attached to the police, Manasevich-Manuilov. Like Urusov and Lopukhin, Manuilov harboured a grudge against Durnovo and Rachkovskii because they had blocked his career in the Okhrana. In addition to this, Manuilov also had reason to attack Komissarov: He had been a rival of Komissarov since 1904 when both had spied on the reactions of foreign embassies to the Russo-Japanese war. Komissarov's detailed reports had exposed Manuilov's ineptitude.⁴⁸ The question of gendarme complicity in pogroms became a forceful

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45 S.E.Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia* (Berlin, 1938), pp.100–03; Lopukhin, *Otryvki*, p.89; Statkovskii, 'Departament politsii,' pp.21–22

46 Hoover, Nicolaevskii, Box 205, folder 'Letter to Stolypin,' 14 June 1906. This letter is principally aimed at removing the influence of Rachkovskii. On Durnovo's defence of Komissarov see: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv, St.Petersburg (RGIA), f.1622, op.1, d.311, letters 2 – 22 March. Komissarov owed his appointment to the DP to Plehve, *The New York Times* [hereafter NYT], 2 Nov. 1924, no.2, section VIII, p.6, cols.3–5.

47 D.C.Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.137–39. On Lopukhin see: E.P.Mednikov to Zubatov 26 Aug.1906 in Koz'min, *Zubatov*, p.123; & C.A.Ruud, 'Police Insubordination and the Rule of Law,' *Russian History*, vol.20 (1993), pp.153–54. On Urusov see: S.D.Urusov, *Memoirs of a Russian Governor* (London, 1908).

48 M.G.Fleer, 'Revoliutsiia 1905–1906 gg. v doneseniakh inostrannykh diplomatov,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.3 [16] (1926), pp.220–24. This documentary evidence shows that Komissarov obtained the ciphers of twelve governments and produced 68 detailed reports (*doklady*) from January to June 1906 alone. PTsR, vol.III, *Dopros Komissarova*, p.141. See: Christopher Andrew and Keith Neilson, 'Tsarist Codebreakers and British Codes,' *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.1 (1986), pp.6–12. On Manuilov's rather less successful efforts in the Hague see: Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.180, 186–88 & 196. His intelligence was mostly tit-bits gleaned from the French police, other 'secret documents' included press cuttings from Japanese newspapers and photographs of pages from a Chinese dictionary!

issue when a former head of the Special Section leaked information through Lopukhin to the press in May 1906 implicating a gendarme officer in circulating anti-Semitic publications in Aleksandrovsk.⁴⁹ The issue was taken up again by Urusov, who had become a liberal (Kadet) deputy in the Russian parliament, when – referring to the infamous Fontanka 16 police headquarters as a ‘pogrom laboratory’ – he reiterated Lopukhin’s accusations against the Okhrana from the Duma tribune.⁵⁰ Consequently, the Duma, much to the government’s discomfort, established a special commission of mostly Jewish deputies to investigate the causes of the Belostok pogrom.⁵¹

Komissarov’s version of events provides further evidence that the affair was part of an ongoing *internal* bureaucratic struggle. He claimed that Lopukhin’s allies within the Department of Police – M.I.Gurovich, E.P.Mednikov and N.A.Makarov⁵² (viz. the very same people who were later to expose his activities) – had actually ordered his establishment of a secret pro-government printing press.⁵³ Thus, Komissarov suspected afterwards that the press had been a ruse from the start. This belief was based on the fact that he was invited to meet with Lopukhin and Prince Urusov only a day after he had ‘secretly’ printed the leaflets. At this meeting he alleged that, ‘Lopukhin cautiously initiated me into the struggle that was at that time going on between Count Witte and Durnovo;’ and that Lopukhin said to him: ‘Do you see, we have here a card game, and in the game sometimes a little spade is useful.’⁵⁴ The captain was obliquely offered the

49 *Rech’*, 3 May 1906: N.A.Makarov, the head of the Special Section, was dismissed by Durnovo for airing these grievances in Jan. 1906. Meanwhile the gendarme in question, Captain Budogovskii, escaped with a minor reprimand.

50 Duma speech, 8 May 1906, quoted in Tsitron review in *Byloe*, no.11, pp.317–18. See also: ‘Pervaia gosudarstvennaia дума,’ *Byloe* no.2 (Feb.1907) pp.17–19; & GDSO, First Duma, vol.2, zas[edanie] {sitting} 23, 8 June 1906,col[umn] 1129. Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp.100–01.

51 GDSO, First Duma, vol.2, zas.20, 2 June 1906, cols.952–60. The Kadet deputy Rodichev made similar accusations that the pogroms had been ‘organised by the Department of Police.’

52 NYT, 2 Nov. 1924, VIII, p.6, cols.vii–viii.

53 Komissarov didn’t even name Rachkovskii as one of the culprits: PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Komissarova*, pp158–60. On Rachkovskii’s enemies holding him to blame see: Koz’min, *Zubatov*, p.118; & *Rech’* 3 May 1906. O.O.Gruzenberg in *Rech’* 13 Oct. 1906 (no.189) claimed Vuich, the Director DP, had approved Komissarov’s pogrom proclamations.

54 NYT, 2 Nov. 1924, VIII, 6, viii.

opportunity to escape punishment for the pogrom-press if he placed the blame for the publications on P.I.Rachkovskii and through him on Durnovo. Komissarov, apparently offended at being referred to as a 'little spade,' refused to commit himself to Witte's side in the feud. As a result he was summoned to Witte's office two days later and was reprimanded about the 'secret' printing press and told to cease activities immediately.⁵⁵

The Komissarov affair is important in the specific context of the Witte case because the idea of police complicity in the atrocities of the extreme-right had been firmly planted in Witte's mind a year before the attempt on his life.⁵⁶ Secondly, this establishes a motive for at least one member of the Okhrana nourishing an enmity towards Sergei Witte: Komissarov felt that Witte had cynically sullied his reputation in an attempt to oust Durnovo. Manasevich-Manuilov testified to Komissarov's resentment of the affair. Manuilov claimed that Komissarov suspected him of betraying the information about the printing press to Lopukhin and Witte and consequently, 'from this moment onwards, the Security Section [in Petersburg], which was wholly under the power of Komissarov, began against me a most vile campaign, employing various dirty tricks.'⁵⁷ This culminated in Manuilov's arrest by St Petersburg Security Section in 1910.⁵⁸

Thus, Witte was probably correct in claiming that members of the political police with connections to the extreme-right considered him their enemy. However, the Komissarov affair seems to suggest that Witte made enemies in the Okhrana not because he was the author of the October Manifesto, but because he was himself embroiled in internal wrangles for control of the secret police.

55 Hoover, Nikolaevskii Collection, Box 205, folder 'Letter to Stolypin.'

56 Witte also used this tactic prior to the Komissarov affair. For example, he encouraged rumours in the foreign press in 1905 that Gorky was an anti-Semite: O.Figes, *A People's Tragedy* (London, 1996), p.202.

57 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.198.

58 *Ibid.*, pp.202-06 & 209. In fact Komissarov had left StPetersburg Security Section at this time and the arrest appeared to be justified: Kurlov's search of Manuilov's house revealed that the latter was negotiating the sale of numerous compromising Okhrana documents to Burtsev in Paris and to A.V.Rumanov of *Russkoe slovo*.

Terror rooted in Russian society

And this brings us again to the origins of police terror: Far from being rooted in a confrontation between state and society, the exact opposite appears to be the case. In other words, 'police terror' was the direct result of attempts by the political police to work *with*, not against, society. A profusion right-wing societies and unions emerged after the October Manifesto. In many ways these organisations appeared to be tailor-made for an alliance with the conservative wing of the government. The largest and most important of these groups was the Union of the Russian People under Dr.A.I.Dubrovin, N.E.Markov and V.M.Purishkevich. The URP was particularly attractive to the government because it offered the opportunity of mass-based organised support for tsarism, last glimpsed in the form of Zubatov's police trade unions, which might redirect the pent-up energies of the discontented lower-classes into a counter-revolutionary movement. Any prospective alliance with the extreme-right was in part an attempt by the tsarist regime to connect itself to a broad section of society: to forge a union, as it were, with the Russian people (*narod*). So the government's promotion of the extreme-right, particularly through considerable financial grants to as many as 30 of their newspapers, which continued in various forms up to 1917, was in one sense an interaction with civil society.⁵⁹

However, for many this alliance was something more sinister: a government attempt to control society, rather than work with it. The right-wing organisations were used as publishers, distributors, filters and fronts for anti-oppositionist pamphlets written by Okhrana employees, with print runs of up to 100,000.⁶⁰ Gerasimov, the head of Petersburg Security Section, 1905–1909, claimed that these organisations, 'only existed thanks to the support of the government.'⁶¹ Rumours circulated that the URP was an artificial creation of the Okhrana.⁶² Indeed, the government did not stop at mere

59 Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp.100–03; V.N.Kokovtsov, *Iz moego proshlogo: Vospominaniia*, vol.II (Paris, 1933), pp.9–10. Chernovskii, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, pp.75.

60 Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, p.145.

61 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.48 & 156.

62 See: 'Iz dnevnika A.V.Romanova za 1916–1918gg.' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.26, pp.198–99; on the apocryphal account of Rachkovskii establishing the URP; & N.D.Noskov, *Okhranitel'nye i reaktsionnye partii v Rosii* (St Petersburg, 1906).

financial support: In December 1905 Major-General V.A.Dediulin, the St. Petersburg City Governor, issued hundreds of revolvers to members of right-wing parties, including the URP, who then organised themselves into volunteer policing units known as ‘brotherhoods’ (*druzhiny*). The Okhrana, with its conspiratorial methods and obscure funding impenetrable to Duma budgetary committees, proved to be an ideal organisation to manipulate the political climate. Consequently, ties with the extreme-right became so tight that, as Witte put it, ‘the Okhrana and the Union of the Russian People were so closely linked that it was difficult to mark the boundary between the two bodies.’⁶³ Dr. Dubrovin was a regular guest at Rachkovskii’s lavish soirées. Police spies rose to active and senior positions in the URP: for example S.Ia.Iakovlev made no secret of the fact that he continued to work for St. Petersburg Security Section while holding a fairly senior position in the URP.⁶⁴ K.K.Poltoratskii rose to head the Moscow branch of the URP while working as a spy for Moscow Security Section.⁶⁵

Does this mean that the extreme-right was merely a puppet of the Department of Police? The extreme-right categorically denied, and indeed resented, the accusation that their organisations were established or controlled by the government.⁶⁶ The head of the St. Petersburg Security Section noted that they had no idea that these groups existed at this time, so they could hardly be considered to have created the URP. Indeed, the Minister of the Interior, P.N.Durnovo, naïvely believed at the time that a free democratic system envisaged in the October Manifesto would remove the need for any political parties.⁶⁷ Moreover, by the end of 1906 the URP boasted to have one thousand branches and over 300,000 members

63 Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.432.

64 GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1915g., d.244, t.1, l.20. According to this he served from 1899 to 1906. See also Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.150; & PTsR, vol.III, *Dopros Komissarova*, p.143. After the flight of Polovnev Iakovlev became head of the Society of Active Struggle with Revolution. On Iakovlev still working for StPbOO in 1912 see: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, ll.65–66, 14 May 1912.

65 B.Nikol’skii, ‘Dnevnik, 1905–07,’ *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.36 (1934), p.86.

66 See, for example: PTsR, vol.VI, *Dopros N.E.Markova*, p.179. On roots of the URP, see: *Katorga i ssylka*, no.5 (34) 1927, pp.83–86.

67 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.53. See also Hans Rogger, ‘Was there a Russian Fascism? The Union of the Russian People,’ *Journal of Modern History*, vol.36 (Dec. 1964), p.401.

(one of its leaders would later claim that URP built up as many as three and a half thousand branches).⁶⁸ Such a vast organisation could hardly be considered a marionette of the secret police, which, even if we apply a broad definition of its staff, had only a few thousand employees. Only a few Department of Police print runs exceeded 50,000. These pale in comparison to the overall publication activities of the main right-wing organisations: Purishkevich claimed that the URP published thirteen million brochures from May to November 1906.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, even those who accepted the unpleasant reality of genuine popular backing for the URP argued that the intentions of the police in supporting them were anti-Semitic and part of a determined campaign to sabotage the constitutional experiment. However, to view this as a sinister portent of police sponsored proto-fascism fails to take into account the specific historical context when these ties were made. In 1905 it had become clear that the police organs of state security were not sufficient to subdue mass urban demonstrations and uprisings. Police behaviour at the end of 1905 and early 1906 was determined by the fact that opposition to the tsarist regime was more violent *after* the signing of the October Manifesto. The Special Section (Okhrana HQ) believed that the first anniversary of Bloody Sunday would be the spark for yet another, more radical, mass uprising, and issued instructions to all branches of the Okhrana that they, 'invite peaceful inhabitants to work with the administration in maintaining order.'⁷⁰

Yet, 'peaceful inhabitants' who could be relied upon to defend the regime were thin on the ground. Whereas the paramilitary *druzhiny* of the extreme-right had some success in matching revolutionary violence with their own brutal methods. It was clear even to most conservative officials that these groups, drawn from the dregs of society, were little more than gangs of thugs. But beggars could not be choosers. The Assistant Minister of the Interior, Vladimir Gurko, acknowledged as much when he wrote that '[the regime] was in a precarious position... In normal times no government should use

68 PTsR, vol.VI, *Dopros N.E.Markova*, pp.176-77.

69 Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, p.60.

70 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.13, l.441, DPOO circular, 24 Dec.1905.

methods employed by revolutionists, for in its hands such methods become double-edged weapons. But during times of revolutionary unrest, when people are in the grip of mass-psychosis, the government must support such individual organisations that spring up to support it. In 1905 the Union of the Russian People was just such an organisation.⁷¹

Consequently, the political police only formed truly close connections with the extreme-right as a short-term measure after the signing of the October Manifesto. The purpose of this alliance was to restore order and to uphold the tsarist regime. As the tsarist regime had already made promises of establishing the constitutional order, the early alliance with the extreme-right may have also upheld the embryonic constitutional experiment. This was not part of a calculated anti-Semitic or anti-democratic campaign, but a desperate temporary alliance with the most useful organisations in society at the time.⁷²

It was far from clear how long good relations would last. Stolypin's closest collaborator in the Okhrana, Gerasimov, cautiously monitored the activities of the URP as if it were yet another revolutionary party.⁷³ It was for this reason that spies entered the URP. From Okhrana reports in St. Petersburg we can see that as early as 1906 Gerasimov had lost faith in the reliability and moral qualities of the extreme-right organisations.⁷⁴ For example, when he met with representatives of the URP visiting St. Petersburg for an audience with the tsar he was horrified. Gerasimov later wrote that the monk Ilidor, 'struck me as a fanatic... and his comrades were even more vile... uncultured, illiterate people... [Iuskevich-Kraskovskii in particular, who was clearly] an extremely unintelligent man... with a weakness for money.'⁷⁵ When Dubrovin asked him to provide them with accommodation, the head of Petersburg Security Section wryly offered them some of his prison cells.

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71 Gurko, *Features and Figures*, p.437.

72 E.g. on I.Ia.Gurliand see: Abraham Ascher, 'Prime Minister Stolypin and his Jewish Advisor,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.30 (1995), pp.515–32.

73 GARF, f.102, DPOO 1906g., d.828, ch.1, 'Nariad po sekretnoi perepiske,' l.22; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1914g., d.244 ch. 'Soiuz russkago naroda i drugie patrioticheskie partii.'

74 See for example, GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905g., d.999, ch.39, ll.31–34.

75 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.151, 154 & 155.

Most senior police chiefs recognised a basic incompatibility between the police and right-wing *druzhiny*.⁷⁶ The Okhrana's prime directive was 'the preservation of the state order and public tranquillity.'⁷⁷ The police-*druzhina* honeymoon soon ended when it became clear that riots and rowdy public demonstrations – exactly the same things which could ruin the career of a security chief – were part and parcel of the URP's political appeal. The *druzhiny* became an even greater source of irritation when they refused to return the revolvers that had been issued to them temporarily for volunteer security work on the first anniversary of Bloody Sunday.⁷⁸ Above all else, this divergence of interests was driven by one fundamental aspect of security policing: counter-terror. Gerasimov wrote, 'naturally, as head of a Security Section my specific concern was the struggle with terrorism, frustrating their schemes and predicting assassination attempts.'⁷⁹ Thus, he could hardly have welcomed the news in August 1906 that the URP had compiled a list of forty-three public figures whom they considered to be enemies of the people and who ought to be 'brought to justice,' i.e. assassinated.⁸⁰ Sergei Witte was at the top of this list. He was hated for his role – according to the crude rhetoric of URP ideologues – at the forefront of a worldwide Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. Certainly the Okhrana appeared to take these death threats seriously: teams of bodyguards were sent to protect Witte and various liberal politicians such as P.N.Miliukov.⁸¹ Evidence of URP terrorist connections played a part in Stolypin's decision to shift government financial support to a new faction of the extreme-right, the Union of the Archangel Michael under Purishkevich. This loss of favour for URP exacerbated the split in the organisation in May 1907. So, while

76 See: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 11, Top Secret circular, 24 Feb.1912; & Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.260– for Trusevich's severe criticism of volunteer security detachments.

77 On counter-terror priority see: Hoover, Okhrana archive, DPOO to Foreign Agency, dispatch no.1294, xivd, folder 1a. See also: Hoover, Nicolaevsky collection, Box 205, folder 'Lopukhin,' Protokol no.37, pp.59–66.

78 GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905g., d.999, ch.39, ll.5–6, & 71–2; GARF f.102, op.236, d.8, ch.66, t.2, ll.132–33; Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, pp.130 & 147.

79 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.83.

80 GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, l.3, Chernigov Gendarme chief to DPOO, 19 Oct.1906.

81 P.N.Miliukov, *Vospominaniia, 1859–1917*, vol.II (New York, 1955), p.433. Witte, *Memoirs*, vol.III, chpt.2, p.636.

the Interior Ministry at first helped to build the URP, it later helped to weaken it. The condemnation of reactionary terror was genuine but discrete, as indicated by Stolypin's circular to all sections of the Okhrana: 'One must recognise the service rendered by patriotic and monarchist societies throughout the empire. Nevertheless, in this sphere, government officials should be very discriminating when coming into contact with leaders of these organisations, should impress upon them that the government expects absolutely loyal support and rejects any pursuit that involve internecine conflict, terrorist undertakings or the like.'⁸² Stolypin sent a circular to all security police organs implicitly directed against URP terror in April 1907, in which he criticised: 'the increase in terrorist attacks on members of some legal political organisations on account of party hostilities. These cases can lead to mass uprisings...[the security organs] should therefore monitor terrorists carefully...' and 'pursue the most energetic investigations' in uncovering and prosecuting the guilty.⁸³

In light of this, it is ironic that the main condemnations of government inconsistency in tackling terrorism came from the leaders of the Kadet party, whose refusal to condemn left-wing terror hardly helped dismantle the culture of political violence.⁸⁴ True, anti-Semitic police officials greatly exacerbated the situation. But this was merely a symptom of a far deeper social malaise. The pogrom was a mass social phenomenon. The real causes of anti-Semitic violence were industrialisation, urbanisation, migration and concomitant social

82 Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, p.144. *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.32 (1929), p.180. MVD called for surveillance of and restrictions on rightist activities: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905 g., d.999, ch.39, t.1, ll.63, 401 & t.2, l.173. Gerasimov (*Na lezvii*, pp.148, 151 & 159) claimed Stolypin forbade any co-operation with the URP and directed condemnation of terror at the right as much as at the left.

83 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, *Tsirkuliary* DP, l.10a 16 April 1907.

84 For example, Petrunkevich's famous advice to Miliukov not to agree to Stolypin's request that he write an article in *Rech'* condemning left-wing terror as it was 'better to sacrifice the party than disgrace it.' Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, vol.I, pp.430–31. See also: I.V.Gessen, 'V dvukh vekakh: zhiznennyi otchet' *Arkhirv russkoi revoliutsii*, vol.22 (1937), p.144; Melissa Kirschke Stockdale, 'Politics, Morality and Violence: Kadet Liberals and the Question of Terror,' *Russian History*, vol.22 (Winter 1996), p.455–80; & chapter 7 of Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1993).

change.⁸⁵ The unpleasant truth was that the URP was in a very important sense a 'party of the people,' with more supporters than the moderate centre parties (three times bigger than, for example, the Kadet party, which had at most 100,000 members at this time).⁸⁶ The liberal movement was reluctant to face these issues perhaps because it challenged central articles of their faith concerning the civilising effects of economic modernisation and the moderating influence of political democracy. Violence escalated as a result of delegating power, in one sense, *to the 'people.'*

The Herzenstein murder

All the same, even though the honeymoon was over and the marriage turned sour, the Interior Ministry and the Okhrana in particular were to compromise themselves by failing to bring about a complete divorce from the extreme-right. On the 18 July 1906 M.Ia. Herzenstein, a Jewish, liberal, former-Duma deputy and signatory of the Vyborg Manifesto, was assassinated near Terioki in Finland, by E.S.Larichkin, an agent connected to various right-wing extremist groups including the URP. Kadet funded investigations into the murder over the next few years uncovered evidence that Dubrovin's aide, Iuskevich-Kraskovskii, had organised the attack. Their crucial witness was a gendarme on duty at Terioki railway station, Captain T.A.Zapol'skii.⁸⁷ He claimed that a group of armed *druzhinniki* (i.e. members of a right-wing *druzhina*) stayed at his home in Terioki over the night before the murder of Herzenstein. There was some confusion as to the names of these persons, but most accounts identified them as: E.S.Larichkin, A.V.Polovnev (the head of the Putilov *druzhina* in St. Petersburg), Sergei Aleksandrov, Ivan Rudzik, Stepan Ia.Iakovlev (the *bona fide* Okhrana agent) and none other

85 See: E.H.Judge, 'Urban Growth and Anti-Semitism in Russian Moldavia,' in Judge & J.Y.Simms Jr. (eds.) *Modernisation and Revolution: Dilemmas of Progress in Late Imperial Russia* (New York, 1992), pp.43–57.

86 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, pp.193–96.

87 GARF, f.124, op.65, d.26, l.57, *Kopiiia pokazaniia T.A.Zapol'skogo v Kiveneppskom sude 8 avgusta.*

than Aleksandr Kazantsev.⁸⁸ The gendarme claimed that when he challenged the *druzhinniki* to hand over their guns, Larichkin replied that his had been issued by Schlüsselberg police. Moreover, two of the men even produced ‘agent identification cards signed by Colonel Gerasimov.’⁸⁹

However, these agent identity cards were most likely forgeries. The Department of Police were not in the habit of issuing such documentation⁹⁰ and there is also evidence of forged police identification papers circulating at the time which exactly matched the description provided by Zapol’skii.⁹¹ All the same, despite Okhrana denials,⁹² there is no doubt that there was some connection with the police. The *druzhinniki* also showed Zapol’skii a letter of recommendation from the Russian head of the gendarmerie in Finland, which he confirmed as genuine.⁹³ And there is also evidence that the police provided these individuals with some protection: Zapol’skii met Polovnev by accident in St. Petersburg in February 1907 and placed him under arrest, but Polovnev was released on the orders of St. Petersburg Security Section.⁹⁴ This may have been connected to the fact that another far more senior *okhrannik* in Petersburg was connected with this group: One witness from the URP claimed that the assistant head of Petersburg Security Section, none other than Captain Komissarov, was a member of the Union and that he was known in URP circles under the nickname ‘Gamzei Gamzeich.’ This detail is important because one member of the Terioki *druzhina*, whose real identity was never uncovered, also travelled

88 *Pravo*, 20 Sept. 1909, no.38, V.Vodovozov article, col.2013. See also: SOGD, 3rd Duma, 2nd session, zas.111, 12 May 1909, cols.1125–37 for Duma interpellation on police connections to the Herzenstein murder. For police reports on this see: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.137–39: 17 May 1909.

89 *Ibid.*, l.142, DPOO *spravka*. A.S.Izgoev, ‘Pravye terroristy,’ *Russkaia mysl’*, vol.X, part 2, 1909, pp.172–81: names the entire *druzhina* as members of the Okhrana.

90 See for example: E.E.Smith interview with Nikolai Veselago, 30 Jan. 1962. Hoover, E.E.Smith Collection, Box 1, p.3.

91 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, l.342, DPOO circular 10 Dec.1907.

92 GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, l.139, St Petersburg OO to DPOO, Jan. 1912.

93 *Pravo*, 26 Aug. 1907, no.34, ‘Finliandskii sud,’ cols.2270–72: On agent ID cards and confirmation by the head of the Finnish Gendarme Directorate, Col.Legat.

94 *Pravo*, 20 Sept. 1909, no.38, ‘Finliandskii sud,’ col.2011.

under this pseudonym.⁹⁵ Vladimir Burtsev also investigated the matter and claimed that Komissarov had aided the escape of the two principal culprits, Polovnev and Larichkin, who were hidden in Pochaev Monastery.⁹⁶ Certainly most of the culprits seemed to escape and disappear very easily, which meant that the very thorough trial in Finland (Kivennapa court) took over three years and ensured that the affair was never satisfactorily explained.⁹⁷ All the same, the diligent investigations of liberal lawyers⁹⁸ at the Finnish trial exposed the possibility of sinister connections between police and reactionary terrorists. These connections were to have a bearing on the Witte affair.⁹⁹

Kazantsev's attempt to blow up the White House

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These investigations also helped Witte piece together the events leading up to the attempt on his life. One URP defector revealed that members of the Union first began in St. Petersburg in November 1906 to make serious plans for his assassination. Komissarov was

95 *Pravo*, 1 July 1907, no.26, cols. 1857–63. URP defector, Zorin, stated only two people to his knowledge used this pseudonym— Lev Topolev and Komissarov. Zapol'skii claimed that he did not recognise Topolev.

96 PTsR, vol.1, *Pokazanie V.L.Burtseva*, p.320. Pochaev was Iliodor's monastery.

97 *Pravo*, 1 July 1907, no.26, col.s 1854–67. S.Aleksandrov and Topolev were tried in 1907. Topolev was cleared but spent some time in prison all the same after being arrested for drunk and disorderly following post-trial celebrations. Polovnev arrested June 1908, tried and sentenced to six years in Oct. 1909. Kraskovskii was arrested in Tver in June 1909 and extradited to Finland. (*Pravo*, no.36, 6 Sept.1909, cols.1907–08). Larichkin was extradited to Finland on 12 Aug. 1909. In 1911 he stood trial in Russia for the Mukhin murder. Polovnev and Kraskovskii were pardoned by the tsar on 30 Dec. 1909. GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.862, l.14, Polovnev's statement to the Provisional government Investigatory Committee.

98 Lensman was the state's prosecutor. Baron Langenshel'd represented Herzenstein's widow. Weber and Gruzenberg pursued most of the investigations on their behalf. Prince Volkonskii was defence.

99 The 28 June 1907 *Rech'* version of Witte assassination attempt only implicated the URP. It was in Herzenstein-murder trial in summer 1907 that police contacts with the URP began to be uncovered. See *Rech'* Aug. to Oct. 1909. Gruzenberg, *Vchera*, pp.135–41. *Pravo*, no.36, 6 Sept. 1909, cols.1906–07; & *ibid.*, no.38, 20 Sept. 1909, col. 2014.

said to have been among those present at the discussions.¹⁰⁰ Dubrovin allegedly commissioned his assistant, Prussakov, to acquire architectural plans of Witte's Petersburg home: no.5 Kamenno-ostrovskii prospekt, the 'White House.' The responsibility for carrying out this assassination evidently passed to one member of the Terioki *druzhina*, Aleksandr Kazantsev: he returned from Petersburg to Moscow with a large amount of money in November 1906 and began recruiting accomplices.¹⁰¹

The choice of Kazantsev to carry out the murder was probably based on three factors: firstly, as a participant in the Herzenstein murder, he was an experienced terrorist. Secondly, he was well connected with officials in Moscow: according to his mistress he worked for the Moscow Governor General, S.K.Gershel'man, as 'Chief Controller over the Investigative Police' (*Glavnyi kontroler nad sysknoi politsei*) subordinated to Gershel'man's assistant, Count A.A.Buxhoeveden.¹⁰² The generous salary that he gave Kazantsev strongly indicates that Buxhoeveden was the ringleader in the plot.¹⁰³ The attack was probably organised in Moscow in order to distract attention away from the Petersburg members of the extreme-right who were already under investigation for connections to the Herzenstein murder. Finally, an accident perhaps had the decisive influence on the unfolding conspiracy: While in Petersburg in November 1906 Kazantsev happened to bump into an old friend, Semen Dem'ianovich Petrov.

Why was this significant? They had worked together for three years in the Tilmans factory in St Petersburg. Petrov had no idea about Kazantsev's sudden political conversion to the extreme-right. Kazantsev had good reason not to enlighten him on this matter: Petrov was well connected to the revolutionary underground. He was a member of the Marxist Social Democratic party and had served as a

100 GARF, f.102, op.295 (1910g.), d.125, ll.27–30: Ex-URP member Aleksandr Tkhor testified to P.Aleksandrov to conversation overheard at the end of 1906 between three other members, Vlasov, Fedotov and Komissarov, in which they discussed murdering Witte. Komissarov denied this.

101 GARF, f.102 op.295, d.125, ll.8–10. Most of the information on Kazantsev's movements came from his mistress (Evdokiia Illirionova), her sister, and Fedorov's mother (Natalia Fedorova).

102 Information collected by Weber and P.Aleksandrov: *Ibid.*, ll.40–42.

103 *Ibid.*, ll.10–13.

deputy in the short-lived Petersburg Soviet of 1905. As such, he had reason to hate Witte: he had been arrested and exiled in December 1905 at the Prime Minister's behest. This chance meeting therefore provided Kazantsev with the opportunity for a far more subtle terrorist plot. Through Petrov Kazantsev could recruit left-wingers to carry out the right-wing scheme and thereby further camouflage the real organisers. All he needed to do was bend the truth a little. Thus, Kazantsev boasted to Petrov that he had joined the Maximalist wing of the SR party and that they were planning the murder of former-Prime Minister Sergei Witte. Petrov took the bait and offered his services. He also introduced Kazantsev to a left-winger by the name of V.D.Fedorov – a man in his early twenties willing to go to extreme lengths to impress the legendary Maximalists.¹⁰⁴ Fedorov was gullible and disturbingly eager to kill people for a good cause: in other words, ideal for the task in hand. Ironically, these very same attributes were to prove Kazantsev's undoing.

Meanwhile, undaunted by anonymous death threats, Witte returned to Russia in autumn 1906. St. Petersburg Security Section assigned him round the clock security. This appears to have been ineffective as on the evening of 29 January 1907 a servant in the White House discovered a heavy rectangular package in the stove of Witte's daughter's old bedroom. Witte immediately contacted St. Petersburg Security Section. The section's resident explosives expert, a former artillery officer, none other than M.S.Komissarov, was the first to arrive at the scene of the crime. He took the parcel into the garden and identified it as a time-bomb, which had been set to explode at nine o'clock. Seeing as it was past ten o'clock in the evening it was clear that the timer had failed to detonate the bomb and it was simple enough to disarm the device. 'A swarm of other police and judicial personnel,'¹⁰⁵ soon arrived at Witte's house that same evening including the two most senior Okhrana officers, M.I.Trusevich and A.V.Gerasimov. To Witte's great annoyance this intrusive and inquisitive gathering of *okhranniki* did not appear to take the attack seriously. 'This was not a bomb,' Gerasimov derisively recollected, 'it was a child's toy.'¹⁰⁶ Nonplussed as to who would want to kill

104 GARE, f.102, op. 238 (DPOO 1908g.), d.511, ll.125–29.

105 Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.417–18; & pp.414–25 for Witte's entire account.

106 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.152–53.

Witte, certain officials mockingly suggested that the former-Prime Minister had placed the bomb there himself in a feeble attempt to enhance his popularity.¹⁰⁷

To add potential injury to insult, Witte discovered that the police had not properly searched the house. A second bomb lodged half-way down the kitchen chimney pipe was only discovered the next day when he had the tsar's palace chimney sweeps check again. Press reports six months later were to reveal that these parcels had been dropped down the chimneys at six a.m. on 29 January by Fedorov and a certain A.S.Stepanov. Petrov, the original left-wing dupe, had in the end not been able to take part in the attack because he was arrested when the group reached St. Petersburg. Stepanov, an acquaintance of Fedorov, took Petrov's place at the last minute, believing that he was working for anarchists.¹⁰⁸ The time-bombs had been supplied by Kazantsev, who had also generously treated Fedorov and Stepanov to an all-night drinking session, ensuring that the two men were well and truly inebriated when they carried out the attack. Kazantsev then watched the house into the afternoon waiting for the bombs to explode. When it became clear that the timers had failed Kazantsev sent the two men back to the house the next day to throw heavy objects down the chimney in order to instantly trigger the devices! However, they were not able to complete their suicidal mission because the house was already surrounded by police.

It soon became clear to Witte that this was no ordinary terrorist attack. The bombs contained a rare, very powerful explosive material not usually used by revolutionaries. A former-URP member, Valerian Kazarinov, later confessed to assembling the devices for Kazantsev.¹⁰⁹ Numerous and somewhat contradictory accusations circulated that

107 Witte letter to Stolypin, GARF, f.102, op.295, d.125, ll.7 & 21. A caricature of Witte placing the bomb in the chimney himself appeared in a Helsinki newspaper (reported by Prussakov in *Russkoe znanie* in March 1907). Kelepovskii repeated this accusation in the Duma on 10 Nov. 1908, claiming it was a form of 'self-advertisement.'

108 For Stepanov's testimony given in 1917, see: GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.862, l.87 'Protokol doprosa A.S.Stepanova.' See also: A.Chernovskii (ed.), *Soiuz russkogo naroda* (Moscow, 1929), pp.58–62; & pp.54–55 for Polovnev's version of events.

109 Kazarinov confessed to making the bombs in *Birzheviia vedomosti*, 16 May 1912. His initials have been given as V.N. and V.V. See Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.414–25.

Kazarinov had obtained the explosives from agents of either Petersburg or Moscow Security Section.¹¹⁰ In the week following the attempt on his life Witte received two threatening letters, both demanding 5000 rubles or the attack would be repeated. He passed both letters to the Okhrana in Petersburg. Both letters disappeared. There is little doubt that they were written by Kazantsev, who appeared to be concerned that he was not going to be paid for the botched terrorist attack and sought payment by other means. His venality was further corroborated by Dr. Dubrovin's secretary, A.I.Prussakov, who later testified that two young men, posing as revolutionaries, appeared in Dubrovin's office a few days after the attack, demanding 5000 rubles or they would tell Count Witte that the URP had instigated the plot.¹¹¹ One of the men was almost certainly Kazantsev – judging by his increased wealth in early 1907. The fact that the two men claimed to be revolutionaries indicates that the other was probably Fedorov or Stepanov (Kazantsev had to maintain the charade but knew that Dubrovin would not want the truth to come out). Early in 1909 the official judicial investigator, P.Aleksandrov, supplied Witte with a photographic copy of a letter he had found in the staff files of the City Governor: it was one of the two missing notes. Aleksandrov claimed he had found it in the City Governor's files on members of staff at St. Petersburg Security Section under the letter 'K' and labelled 'Kazantsev.'¹¹²

Kazantsev's later movements provided further evidence of close connections to police staff. The sister of his mistress said Kazantsev often boasted that he worked for Moscow Security Section. Various witnesses noted that he was now a man to whom ordinary police 'tipped their hats.' Kazantsev rented a flat in February 1907 under an assumed name: 'Kazimir Oleiko.' The only form of identification later to be found on Kazantsev's corpse at the end of May was a

110 GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.142–43. DPOO report on the Duma accusations of May 1909. The chief supplier of arms to the URP in the capital was Iakovlev

111 GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.862, *Dopros A.I.Prussakov*, 9 June 1917, l.63. The amount is sometimes given as 6000. Prussakov also claimed that he saw them leave with pockets bulging with money. See *Pravo*, 20 Sept. 1909, col.2014.

112 Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.436–37. GARF, f.102, op.295, d.125, l.47ob., Aleksandrov report May 1910.

passport bearing the same name. The real Kazimir Oleiko had lost this passport in April 1906 and was issued with a new one. The old one was found and filed away in the archives of Moscow Security Section in June 1906. The head of the section investigated the matter and concluded that the passport had been stolen by two volunteer clerks.¹¹³ Yet these two men may not have been the real culprits, only convenient scapegoats, because they had already been dismissed on a different matter. Kazantsev made a visit to Petersburg in March 1907. While there he passed on information to the Okhrana which resulted in the seizure of an underground revolutionary cell and a cache of bombs in the capital. Nevertheless, the Okhrana denied any direct dealings with Kazantsev in this matter. The tip-off had apparently passed through a complex route: from Kazantsev to Buxhoeveden, then to Klimovich and from him to Petersburg Security Section. This was a very typical example of how police conspiratorial measures were used to distance their connections with criminals through a disorientating maze of delegation, middlemen, buffers and secrecy. Obfuscation prevailed.

Kazantsev used his new-found wealth to start up his own business in April 1907 as a blacksmith with the ‘anarchist’ Stepanov as his apprentice. He gave free lodgings and new coats to Fedorov and Stepanov.¹¹⁴ But his generosity came at a price: plans were being made for another attempt on the life of Sergei Witte. First of all he told Fedorov that he could redeem himself in the eyes of the Maximalists if he were to carry out the execution of a banker who had embezzled SR party funds of 80,000 rubles. The target was in reality G.B.Iollos, a former Kadet deputy, signatory of the Vyborg Manifesto and a leading Moscow journalist exposing on the URP’s connections with the Herzenstein murder. Armed with a browning supplied by Kazantsev, Fedorov followed Iollos on the evening of 14 March and shot him four times in the head. I.V.Toropov, the head of the volunteer *okhrana* in Moscow, provided a hideout for Kazantsev and Fedorov after the murder.¹¹⁵ Fedorov only discovered

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113 GARF, f.102, op.DPOO1908 g., d.511, l.131, 3 Oct.1907. The culprits were named as Volkovich and Kholin. The passport was originally filed away by Capt. Kolokolov and his assistant K.V.Varanov. They were questioned on the matter but not charged or punished.

114 GARF, f.102 op.295, d.125 ll.5–13.

115 Ibid., ll.41–47: P.Aleksandrov report.

whom it was he had actually killed when he read the news in the Moscow press.¹¹⁶

Yet still he didn't guess that he was not working for the SRs and agreed to go ahead with the second attempt on Witte's life. Kazantsev had devised a new plan: Fedorov and one other person were to throw bombs into Witte's automobile when he made his way to the State Council on 26 May 1907. Fedorov's partner in crime was to be S.D.Petrov. Kazantsev had written to Petrov, who had been exiled to Archangel after his arrest, and invited him to Moscow. His escape was easy enough (he was suffering from syphilis and being held with minimum supervision in a hospital). Kazantsev provided Petrov with a place to stay in Moscow and a blank passport. However, Petrov was a rather more experienced conspirator than Fedorov and he soon grew suspicious of Kazantsev, particularly after he found collection of URP leaflets lying in an open desk drawer in Kazantsev's apartment. Upon arriving in St Petersburg on 25 May 1907 Petrov presented all he knew to some leftist Duma deputies of his acquaintance.¹¹⁷ They confirmed that Kazantsev was not an SR Maximalist, but that Petrov should play along with Kazantsev in order to capture his store of explosives. As a further precaution, these socialist Duma deputies made sure members of the State Council were warned about the imminent attack. Consequently, the State Council meeting of 26 May was cancelled.¹¹⁸ But they had not completely defused the situation because Petrov had also informed the accomplished murderer Fedorov about his suspicions. Kazantsev and Fedorov met in a forest on the outskirts of Petersburg on 27 May in order to assemble the bombs for the second attack on Witte (which was to take place when Witte was en route to the rescheduled session of the State Council on 30 May).¹¹⁹ At this forest meeting, while Kazantsev knelt on the ground preparing the bomb, Fedorov pounced and stabbed his unsuspecting victim in the neck. Thinking Kazantsev

116 *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905g., d.999, ch.39, ll.128 & 160; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908 g., d.511, ll.114–15 & 129–30.

117 *Ibid.*, 1.76. StPb OO investigators named them as Zhigilev, Aleksinskii and Romanov.

118 *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, 1.76.

119 It is possible that Petrov and two of the Duma deputies were also present at the time of the murder.

dead, he then began to search his body. However, the ‘corpse’ began to stir and, as one newspaper paraphrased Fedorov’s own confession, ‘Fedorov completely lost control and began to stab Kazantsev in the face— forgetting to take the knife from its sheath... he stabbed him so forcefully in the neck that the head nearly separated from the body.’¹²⁰

The victim of this gruesome murder was found a few hours later. The only means of identification on the corpse was the stolen passport and a notebook. Kazantsev’s anonymity in death gave Fedorov ample time to flee the country. But Fedorov had acquired a taste for violence and the concomitant publicity. Thus, Kazantsev’s identity was soon uncovered because Fedorov sold his story to the ‘Sherlock Holmes of the revolutionary movement’, Vladimir Burtsev in June 1907.¹²¹ In August 1907 the Okhrana reported that Fedorov was involved in an attempt on the life of the Finnish Governor-General, F.A.Zein. In October 1910 Fedorov met Burtsev in Paris to demand money owed for his revelations. Okhrana spies reported that at the final meeting Fedorov was drunk, lost his temper and tried to strangle Burtsev.¹²² Fedorov was sent to a French prison in 1912 for assault.¹²³ The outrageous actions of Fedorov served the opposition well: the Okhrana had yet another scandal on its hands. In May 1909 a Duma interpellation alleged police and URP connections to the Herzenstein, Iollos and Witte attacks.¹²⁴

120 *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907; GARF, op.cit., 1.130.

121 *Ibid.*, ll.20–21. Petrov contributed to the original SR publication on the affair in *Znamia truda* 19 June 1907 under the pseudonym ‘Ivanov’ and published a letter in *Rus’* 14 July 1907. Fedorov gave an interview to the famous terrorist Gershuni. StPbOO intercepted a piece of correspondence from Fedorov in 1909 to a Duma representative, Polozhaev, offering to sell him photographs of Kazantsev ‘dead and alive.’

122 *Ibid.*, ll.160–61, 12 June 1911.

123 *Ibid.*, Paris Agentura reports 12 June 1911 & 8 June 1912.

124 *Ibid.*, ll.140–41; SOGD, 3rd Duma, 2nd session, zas.111, 12 May 1909, cols.1125–37.

Further on and higher up: Conspiracy, conflict and confusion

In much the same manner as the Komissarov affair, liberal factions used revelations of police terror as a means of bringing all opposition groups together united against an apparently omnipotent secret police. Yet these revelations were dependent on leaks from inside the Department of Police.¹²⁵ Thus, once again it was internecine war among government officials, not a state-society confrontation, which truly fuelled the scandal. Okhrana reports noted that the principal source alleging long-standing police directed terror was Witte himself.¹²⁶ Ex-Okhrana agent Manuilov carried out investigations on Witte's behalf, infecting the former-Prime Minister with his own delusions of police persecution.¹²⁷ Most leading *okhranniki* were all too eager to delve into the sordid affair if it meant they could uncover compromising evidence against their opponents *inside the police*.¹²⁸ Petersburg Okhrana interrogated the Social Democrat Petrov after his arrest in Tashkent on 23 August 1907 and were disappointed to note he could shed no new light on the affair, giving an, 'evasive and muddled testimony.'¹²⁹ The French government, not internal conspiracy, blocked Stolypin's attempts to have Fedorov extradited from Paris.¹³⁰ Gerasimov was the first to suggest to Witte that the

125 Police suspected Miliukov of moving closer to Burtsev from 1911 to 1913 and compiling: 'documentary evidence that the police, using their unlimited power, arranged terrorist acts.' GARF, f.102, op. 243 (DPOO 1913 g.), d.260, ll.14–17. In 1912 Miliukov co-operated with SDs and SRs on this. See also : L.L'vov, "Sem' let nazad," *Russkaia mysl'*, Feb. 1914, pp.48–51 & 60–61; & Burtsev's *Budushchee*, 25 May 1912.

126 GARF, f.102, op. DPOO1908 g., d.511, l.163. DP report May 1912 linked Witte to A.V.Rumanov and A.L.Stembo aiming to publish a daily paper on Okhrana malpractice under the sponsorship of Sytin. Rumanov also used Witte as the main source on articles exposing police links to the Holy Brotherhood. See: *Russkoe slovo*, 1 March 1915.

127 PTsR, vol.6, *Dopros Reinbota*, p.126. PTsR, vol.2, *Dopros Manuilova*, p.44. For an example of Witte's paranoia see: Witte, *Memoirs*, p.635.

128 For Moscow investigations see: GARF, f.102, op.235 (DPOO 1905g.), d.999, ch.39, ll.129–65; for St Petersburg enquiries see: *Vestnik narodnoi svobody*, 30 Aug. 1907, col.1570. And on police interrogating local chimney sweeps: GARF, f.102 op.295, d.125, l.47.

129 GARF, f.102, DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.74–75: St. Petersburg OO *spravka*, 6 Feb.1908.

130 Hoover, Okhrana archive, Box 34, folder 5a, p.4, memo no.124130. GARF, op.cit., ll.83 & 88. He was located living in Paris under the pseudonym: 'Monsieur Alko.'

attack had come from the extreme-right. He did so, partly in order to discredit the pre-eminent *druzhinnik*, Iuskevich-Kraskovskii, who had been forwarded as a potential replacement for Gerasimov as head of Petersburg Security Section.¹³¹ Gerasimov was also motivated by a desire to blacken the reputations of his rivals inside the Okhrana.¹³² He claimed: ‘there was no doubt in my mind, that the dynamite was received from Moscow Security Section and that the whole attempt [on Witte’s life] was organised with the knowledge of the head of the Section, Colonel Klimovich. I wrote all this in a report to the Department of Police- where it was buried.’¹³³

Gerasimov had good reason to make these accusations: Kazantsev’s notebook contained references to a certain “Bel’skii”, who was referred to several times by the nickname *Ostorozhnyi* (‘Cautious’). This tallied with Fedorov and Petrov’s statement that their next target was to be a certain Dr. Bel’skii.¹³⁴ The use of the term *Ostorozhnyi* compromised Moscow Security Section because it was a secret codename used by Okhrana surveillance agents in Moscow.¹³⁵ Moreover, the Moscow City Governor Reinbot later claimed Klimovich confessed to him that he had personally provided Kazantsev with the stolen passports.¹³⁶ Klimovich put Kazantsev on the secret agent blacklist in February 1909 (thus implying that Kazantsev *had* been at one time a secret agent).¹³⁷ Klimovich’s report made no mention of the fact that Kazantsev, having been dead for two years, was not likely to be offering his services in the near future!

Curiously, Gerasimov’s memoirs contain not one word about his own assistant at Petersburg Security Section, Captain Komissarov. This was perhaps due to the awkward fact that Komissarov had married Gerasimov’s ex-wife.¹³⁸ The threads of evidence are thin

131 Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.420; Gerasimov, *Na lezvi*, pp.150–51.

132 *Ibid.*, pp.154 & 196: On the Iollos and Karaev murders and Gerasimov’s suggestion that Moscow OO officials had allowed terrorist attacks (on one occasion with dummy bombs) to occur in the past.

133 *Ibid.*, p.153.

134 *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907.

135 GARF, f.102, DPOO 1908 g., d.511, ll.122–23.

136 PTsR, vol.6, *Dopros Reinbota*, p.122.

137 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.23, DPOO circular, 20 Feb. 1909, l.72b. Hoover, Okhrana archive, Box 158, folder 10, 26 Nov.1910.

138 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros M.S.Komissarova*, p.150.

and insubstantial, but they keep leading us back to Komissarov. He was a close friend of the chief suspect, Klimovich. They were part of a tight circle of gendarmes who had attended Polotsk cadet school together and co-operated on numerous occasions.¹³⁹ As Rachkovskii's protégé Komissarov had been the Okhrana's chief intermediary with the URP,¹⁴⁰ he bore a grudge against Witte, and numerous witnesses connected him to the Herzenstein and Witte attacks. Komissarov's later career also serves as a damning character witness. He was reputed to have organised pogroms in 1909 and 1911.¹⁴¹ He was later implicated in an early attempt to rid the Court of another 'meddlesome priest,' Grigorii Rasputin, in 1916. According to gossip he tried to poison Rasputin with a compound obtained from his wife's apothecary business, but only succeeded in killing his cat, earning him the ironic nickname 'Maliuta Skuratov.'¹⁴² Komissarov embodied all that was worst about the Okhrana – for his anti-Semitism, unscrupulous Court intrigues, sinister connections with terrorism and gangster-style policing methods.¹⁴³ He even represents one of the few tangible connections between the Okhrana and the Soviet secret police, as it was rumoured that he went on to work for the Cheka¹⁴⁴ and the OGPU.¹⁴⁵

139 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.118 & 262–63; Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.225–on I.P.Vasil'ev's claim that they formed a 'parallel' Department of Police in conjunction with Kurlov. See also: Gerasimov, *Na lezvi*, p.21.

140 See: Chernovskii, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, pp.75 & Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia*, p.100–01.

141 Hoover, Nikolaevskii collection, Box 203, Folder 'Komissarov,' *Obshchee delo*, 28 July 1921.

142 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.312. Komissarov said he invented the story himself to hide the fact that he backed out because rumours of the imminent assassination had spread too far: NYT, 19 Oct. 1924. Beletskii, 'Vospominaniia,' p.64. As a candidate for 'Dictator of Petrograd' in early 1917 he was one of the many shadowy figures rumoured to have ordered the placing of machine guns on the Petrograd rooftops in February 1917. For Komissarov's denials see PTsR, vol.3, p.166

143 Hoover, Wrangel Military Archive, file 136, *Azbuka* report from Rostov, 14 May 1919: on reports of Komissarov operating a protection racket for Rostov's casinos.

144 See: *Russkoe delo*, 9 Nov. 1921; *Novoe russkoe slovo*, 16 Nov.1933; *Novoe vremia* 4 & 26 Nov.1924; Hoover, Nicolaevskii, Box 204, Folder 'Kitchener,' & Box 203, folder 'Komissarov.' On his work in Kislovodsk during Civil War with Chechen explosives experts cutting off the White retreat.

145 *Za svobodu*, 12 Dec. 1922. See also Globachev letter to NYT, 14 Dec. 1924, II, p.5, col.3. He allegedly betrayed retreating White armies to the Stambulinsky government of Bulgaria in 1922 (having settled there in 1921 after being exiled

But, even after the compilation of strong evidence against Okhrana staff and members of the URP, no arrests took place in connection with the Witte attack. When Witte asked why not, the St Petersburg district prosecutor, Kamyshanskii replied: 'If we only arrested these persons, and carried out investigations into them we don't know what we might find, it would probably lead us further on and higher up.'¹⁴⁶

Witte interpreted Kamyshanskii's lament as the dark suggestion of a widespread police conspiracy to murder him. After three years of investigations Witte delivered a careful 37 page-long anatomy of his case to Stolypin, in an effort to provoke a senatorial enquiry into the affair.¹⁴⁷ In this letter he picked up on one detail which he believed to be central to the second murderous conspiracy of May 1907: Why did Kazantsev invite Petrov from exile back to Moscow? 'Why did Kazantsev need Semen Petrov? Why not take Aleksei Stepanov with him to St Petersburg?' In answer to his own question Witte wrote: '[Because] the conspiracy was directed not against Count Witte personally but against the left-wing political parties in general... Stepanov had no sort of revolutionary views, he was in it for the money... Semen Petrov on the other hand was a member of the Soviet of Workers Deputies and, as such, was arrested on my orders. The murder, therefore, would be a party political matter... Public opinion has grown all too accustomed to the murder of not just gendarmes and policemen, but also senior government officials.' Whereas the murder of the symbolic founder of the constitutional experiment, he claimed, would cause a 'sensation', particularly among the liberal parties who had refused to condemn revolutionary terror in the past. Presumably, Kazantsev's plan was to betray the left-wing terrorists to the police after the accomplishment of this crime and then disappear. The ensuing trial would 'arouse the indignation of society against the left-wing political parties. This would perhaps lead to calls for the government to take more energetic measures in the

from Yugoslavia and Hungary and conned money from various European industrialists based on bogus claims to being Wrangel's chief of intelligence). He even died in unusual circumstances: hit by a tram in Chicago on 20 Oct. 1933: *Novoe russkoe slovo*, 16 Nov. 1933.

146 Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.430.

147 For a full version of the letter dated 3 May 1910, see: GARF, f.102, op.295, d.125, ll.3–21.

struggle with them... on the eve of the dissolution of the Second Duma and the publication of the June third laws.’¹⁴⁸

So who would benefit most from this conspiracy? Witte pointed to the fact that there would be inevitable suspicion of right-wing involvement, and discrediting the ‘cult of murder’ would affect the right-wing *druzhiny* also. Yet he avoided following his line of argument to its logical conclusion. If the attack was part of a deliberate and subtle conspiracy, who would have benefited most from a reaction against the left at the time of the dissolution of the Second Duma? And who would benefit from a general government and social reaction against left *and* right-wing political terror? None other than the man who had used police provocation to bring about of the June third coup, the leading counter-terrorist security police official, Minister of the Interior and Chairman of the Council of Ministers: P.A.Stolypin. Stolypin grasped these implications, even if Witte did not. In response he accosted Witte after a meeting of the State Council: ‘From your letter Count I can only draw one conclusion: either you consider me an idiot or you think that I too was involved in the attempt on your life.’¹⁴⁹ Rather than placating the Prime Minister, Witte impishly demurred from offering any suggestion as to which conclusion Stolypin should choose.

Witte’s conspiracy theory might be seen as a case of ‘interpretative paranoia,’ viz.: the rejection of all elements of inconsistency, coincidence, and accident in order to confirm preconceived beliefs. This tendency had infected, to varying degrees, each and every ideological cell of the body politic in late Imperial Russia. Interpretative paranoia was also an occupational hazard for the secret police— lurking amidst the contagious fog of their own deceitful machinations: After all, their job was to make sense of and find patterns in the deluge of secret information.¹⁵⁰ Thus, the police were often the firmest believers in the myth of the Okhrana’s terrorist

148 Ibid., ll.19–20.

149 Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.438. Stolypin sent a written reply on 12 Dec. 1910.

150 On police watching police: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, ll.109 & 113, St PbOO to DPOO, 12 & 30 October 1912. Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, folder ‘Chrezvychainaya,’ *Dopros Beletskogo*, pp.27–28. Gerasimov’s contacts in the Petersburg Okhrana, Peshkov and Dobroskok, were placed under surveillance. PTsR, vol.1, *Dopros E.K.Klimovicha*, pp.108–09; Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, pp.175–76.

conspiracies.¹⁵¹ Gerasimov was perhaps Imperial Russia's most successful counter-terrorist officer; yet his prolonged submersion in the terrorist milieu also led to rumours, based on the flimsiest of evidence, that he resorted to terrorism to remove his political opponents.¹⁵² Far from covering this up, a cabal of his personal enemies in the Okhrana (Kurlov, Klimovich, and possibly Komissarov) exaggerated the rumours so as to secure his removal.¹⁵³ Some police officials even came to suspect Witte of plotting to use the Okhrana as an assassination bureau.¹⁵⁴

The Okhrana succumbed to interpretative paranoia for the same reason that it was suspected of orchestrating reactionary terror: Political life was a seamless and tangled web. Naturally, the political police were also tangled in the web. Of course the Okhrana had connections to right-wing terror; but it also had connections to the trade union movement, the Duma, the free press, revolutionary terror, freemasonry etc.etc.¹⁵⁵ If every rival conspiracy theory was to be taken into account then we could draw the conclusion that almost every political faction was responsible in some way for the attempt on Witte's life. While in a literal sense this was nonsense, from a moral point of view perhaps this was not so far from the truth. All political groups were to varying degrees complicit in acts of terror.

The real meaning Kamyshanskii's phrase 'further on and higher up,' therefore, was far more prosaic, and yet also indicative of a far

151 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Boxes 42, 92–99, 210–21 & 143 (folder 1c p.453, March 1911).

152 E.g. He was suspected of involvement in the Witte attack purely because he lost of one of the threatening letters: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.35 & 55 (DPOO reports 16 Jan.1909 & Feb.1909). On later suspicion of Gerasimov see: Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.223–24.

153 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.170–76.

154 Lopukhin claimed that Witte had once obliquely suggested that the political police, through deliberate security mishaps, could be useful as an organisation for the assassination of political opponents, and perhaps for replacing the tsar himself: Lopukhin, *Otryvki*, p.73.

155 For example, Kazantsev's next target, Bel'skii, was later to be recruited as a spy for Moscow OO after his arrest on 9 Jan. 1909. See: Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, box 1, file 'Arkhiv Sledstvennoi komissii,' *Pokazanie Doktora Bel'skago*. One of the Duma deputies who foiled the second attack on Witte was Andrei Romanov, later to be one of the Okhrana's leading agents (codename 'Pelageia') close to Lenin: PTsR, vol.5, pp.61 & 237; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.49–50.

deeper malaise. Klimovich's connection to Kazantsev's terrorist plot was an unfortunate coincidence due the fact that Kazantsev worked for Count Buxhoeveden and the volunteer *okhrana*.¹⁵⁶ Buxhoeveden in turn belonged to a *piaterka* of volunteer security police under Ministry of Imperial Courts.¹⁵⁷ Klimovich claimed that he was not able to 'push away' the right-wing *druzhiny* because they were 'under the protection' of the Moscow Governors Reinbot and Gershel'man.¹⁵⁸ The same applied in Petersburg¹⁵⁹ and in sections of the Orthodox Church.¹⁶⁰ Worst of all, the tsar and tsarina's sympathy towards the URP, their hostility to Witte and lack of enthusiasm for investigations into the assassination attempt were all common knowledge.¹⁶¹ Komissarov's disreputable career flourished because his behaviour changed with the prevailing political climate. At that time, he noted, 'Russia was an absolute monarchy. What the Czar willed not, was not: what he wished, subordinates outdid themselves to fulfil.'¹⁶² If Komissarov took part in terrorist attacks from 1906 to 1907 then he probably took his cues, though probably not any direct orders, from imperial Court circles. The guilty parties in the Witte affair disappeared amidst the scheming crowd. Even now, they are concealed by the plethora, not the paucity, of incriminating evidence.

156 GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.122–23, MOO to DPOO, 8 July 1907.

157 GARF f.102 op.295 d.125 l.52, P.Aleksandrov report. The *piaterka* was headed by Imperial Court *kontroller*, D.F.Gofshtetter

158 PTsR, vol.1, *Dopros Klimovicha*, p.106.

159 E.g. St Petersburg City Governors– Dediulin and Launits. See: GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.853, ll.29–30. Gerasimov (*Na lezvii*, p.151) noted: 'Launits's actions had powerful supporters in the upper echelons of the imperial Court.' See also: GARF, 102, op.295, d.125, l.8 ob.

160 E.g. Abbot Arsenii of Iaroslavl', Bishop Germogen of Saratov, the monk Agafador of Kursk and Chernigov, the monk Iliodor of the Pochaev monastery in Volynia and father Ioann of Kronstadt.

161 See: Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.415–16 & 423. Gurko, *Features*, pp.457–58. Nikol'skii, 'Dnevnik,' p.88. PTsR, vol.6, *Dopros A.A.Reinbota*, p.126. On the tsar's relief at Witte's death see: Nicholas to Alexandra, 28 Feb.1915 in *The Complete Wartime Correspondence of Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra*, ed. J.T. Fuhrman (Westport, Connecticut, 1999), p.83. Tsarina to Nicholas 14 Dec. 1916 to leading extreme-rightists as 'healthy, right-thinking, devoted subjects,' Alexandra to Nicholas, in *ibid.*, letter 1642c, p.675.

162 NYT, 2 Nov. 1924, no.2, sectn.8, p.6, col.1.

Chapter Seven

Unwanted Guests

Secret Police in Civil Society

The collision between the secret police and the forces of liberal reform was not so natural as one might expect. One historian, Jonathan Daly, cites one fairly typical report of a gendarme phlegmatically accepting the new constitutional order as a *fait accompli*, in a revealing aside to a gloating revolutionary: ‘Sir we are serving people. There was one government; we served it. If there will be another, we will serve it.’¹ The Okhrana’s point of difference from their liberal opponents was in the *pace* not the *principle* of reform. As a security police they were obsessively cautious and subscribed to the view of their boss from 1905 to 1906, P.N.Durnovo, that, ‘one cannot in the course of a few weeks introduce North American or English systems into Russia.’² In reference to this comment, Orlando Figes has written: ‘This was to be one of the lessons of 1917.’³ The Okhrana had in large part already learned this lesson during the upheavals of 1905–07.

A slower pace of reform, therefore, need not be interpreted as ‘reactionary,’ and might be considered to have had a better chance of long term success. Thus, one might argue that the secret police were sometimes oppressive *because* they were also reformist. Take for example the speech given by a leading security police officer to Minsk workers at the turn of the twentieth century: ‘You must join together... and then your employers will take your demands into account. I am ready to help you. I am a representative of tsarist authority and

1 Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, p.173.

2 Quidt. in Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, p.41. See: Gilbert S.Doctorow, ‘The Introduction of Parliamentary Institutions in Russia During the Revolution of 1905–1907,’ (PhD diss. Columbia University, 1975).

3 Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, p.41.

therefore nothing is as dear to me as the happiness of the working class. But you will be sorry if you take it into your heads to oppose the state order. Then you can expect no help. I will be implacable.’⁴

The hostility between the Okhrana and civil society could be interpreted, therefore, as a collision between the rather unsophisticated conservative reformism of the former and radical reformism of the latter. This conservative reformism was not a new set of clothes, donned by the *okhranniki* for the sake of convenience. In fact it was central to traditional identity dating back to the Third Section. One of the founders of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes, Von Vock, promoted limiting the political police’s suppression of dissent. Instead, he advocated using them as a conduit for popular opinion: ‘I know someone cleverer than Napoleon, Voltaire, and his like,’ he wrote (paraphrasing Talleyrand), ‘cleverer than all present and future ministers, and that someone is public opinion.’⁵ In one of his earliest instructions to the gendarmerie Benckendorff wrote: ‘Every man will see in you an official who through my agency can bring the voice of suffering mankind to the throne of the tsars, who can instantly place the defenceless and voiceless citizen under the protection of the sovereign emperor.’⁶

These ideas caused resentment in civil society because they represented a form of despotic altruism. Benckendorff paraphrased tsar Nicholas I when he wrote that workers, ‘need energetic and paternal supervision of their morals; otherwise the mass of people will be gradually corrupted and turn into a *soslovie* [estate or class] as miserable as they are dangerous for their masters.’⁷ A thin line separates despotic altruism from pure despotism. The result was that the activities of the secret police spilled over into, and even saturated the broad mass of society. This encouraged the belief that the secret police snooped into and interfered with every corner of ordinary life, including the most innocent of social events – earning them the moniker ‘unwanted guests.’ (*nezhelatel’nye gosti*).⁸

4 Col.N.V.Vasil’ev in 1901 qutd. in F.S.Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police*, p.109.

5 Qutd in Squire, *The Third Department*, p.72.

6 Ibid., p.78.

7 Qutd. in Sablinsky, *The Road to Bloody Sunday*, p.18. Benckendorff, ‘Iz zapisok grafa A. Kh. Benckendorffa,’ p.38

8 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.7.

Thus, police despotism and reform may well have proceeded hand in hand. For example, the Third Section claimed credit for calls for greater religious toleration in 1836, for being one of the first government organs to recommend urgent need to emancipate of the serfs in 1839, for being the first to warn about the hazards of industrialisation in 1841 and for presciently warning about impending disaster if the armed forces were not reformed in 1843.⁹ Contrary to Soviet depictions of the Okhrana as the supreme enemy of the working classes, it had in fact been a long time advocate of factory reform and improving workers' conditions. The gendarmerie were among the first people in Russia society to point out the suffering and danger inherent in the hardships of factory life, as one gendarme pointed out in 1885: 'Having had the opportunity to examine closely the life of factory workers I can find very little difference between their position and that of the earlier serfs; the same want, the same need, the same rights; the same contempt for their spiritual needs... [As yet the workers do not seem to be interested in politics, but] that evil day is coming closer and closer.'¹⁰ The pressure from such reports had led to progressive Bismarckian Factory Acts in 1882, 1885 and 1897 and the Factory Regulations of 1886 and Sickness and Accident Insurance Bill of 1912. The reasoning behind Okhrana support was summed up by Zubatov thus, 'economics are for the working man infinitely more important than any political principles [*osnovy*]. Satisfy the people's requirements in this respect, and they will not only not go into politics but will turn over to you all the radicals; revolutionaries without the mass are generals without an army.'¹¹

9 See the Jubilee report of 1876 published in V.Bogucharskii, 'Tret'e otdelenie, sobstvennoi E.I.V.Kantseliarii o sebe samom (Neizdannyi dokument.)' *Vestnik evropy* (March 1917), pp.85–125, particularly pp.89–92.

10 Quid. in Norman M. Naimark, *Terrorists and Social Democrats: The Russian Revolutionary Movement under Alexander III* (Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1983), pp.33–34. On the Third Section on industrial workers: Madhavan K.Palat, 'Police Socialism in Tsarist Russia, 1900–1905.' *Studies in History*, 2 (January–June 1986), pp.71–136; Lieven 'Security Police,' p.250. For Okhrana reports sympathising with poor working conditions see: 'Iz istorii Ural'skikh zavodov (po zhandarmskim obzorom). S predisloveniem Evg. Gol'dich,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.1/74 (1936), pp.66–91.

11 M.Balabanov, *Ocherki po istorii rabochevo klassa v Rossii*, vol.II (Moscow, 1930), p.170. I.V.Alekseev, *Provokator Anna Serebriakova* (Moscow, 1932), p.13. Tidmarsh, 'The Zubatov Idea,' pp.342–43.

To take a specific example from the constitutional experiment: this selection of sympathetic, though somewhat patronising, opinions indicates that the security police need not be seen as hostile in principle to the legalisation of trade unions (*professional'nye soiuzy*) in the Temporary Rules of 4 March 1906. Yet, the Okhrana came to repress trades unions all the same.¹² Police repression from 1907 to 1910 reduced the trade union movement in St Petersburg from 63,000 members (22% of the labour force) to 12,000 members (5% of the labour force).¹³

The liquidations were not specifically aimed at destroying the trades unions; rather at removing specific propagandists from the factories.¹⁴ But the net result was usually one and the same thing. The ordinary criminal code (articles 102, 125 and 126) took a rather aggressive line on trades unions stating that they could operate, 'only if available evidence indicates that there is absolutely no connection with revolutionary groups.'¹⁵ In this regard the SDs were seen to be 'extremely dangerous for the state order' as a police circular noted in 1907: 'The Russian social democratic workers' party has aimed to exploit the Professional Unions in the interests of the revolutionary movement since their emergence in 1905.'¹⁶ The Assistant MVD justified the liquidations to the Duma in October 1909 on the grounds that of the 35 unions in the capital eighteen were dominated by the SDs and seven by the SRs.¹⁷ This policy was fairly effective in the

12 M.Szefel, *The Russian Constitution of April 23, 1906: Political Institutions of the Duma Monarchy* (Brussels, 1976), pp.88–89, 148–50.

13 B.I.Grekov, K.F.Shatsillo and V.K.Shelokhaev, 'Evolutsiia politicheskoi struktury Rossii v kontse XIX-nachale XX veka (1895–1913),' *Istoriia SSSR*, no.5 (1988), pp.44–45: The number of trade unions across the empire went into serious decline after 1907. In 1905 there were 465; in 1906 836; in 1907–1096; in 1908– 419; in 1909– 304; in 1910– 242; in 1911– 216; in 1912– 208; in 1913– 234.

14 GARF, f.111, op.7, d.14, *Tetrad' s alfavitom lits, vedushchikh revoliutsionnuiu propagandu na fabrikakh i zavodakh S.Peterburga*.

15 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, *Tsirkuliary 1907 g.*, l.69 27 July 1907.

16 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.277, *Tsirkuliary o professional'nykh soiuzakh (1907–1908)*– DP 4 Del. Circular 10 May 1907, l.2.

17 G.R.Swain, 'Freedom of Association and the Trade Unions, 1906–1914,' in Olga Crisp (ed.) *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*, p.185. See also R.B.McKean, 'The Bureaucracy and the Labour Problem June 1907–February 1917,' in idem (ed.) *New Perspectives in Modern Russian History*, (London 1992), p.222. See reports 27 July 1907 & 2 Aug.1907 in: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.277, ll.3–6. This shows concerns about these connections where it appeared that the leaders of the unions were SDs or SRs but their members were not.

capital: for example, Petersburg workers accounted for 38% of strikers in 1907 and only 3% in 1910.¹⁸ In 1911 the Deputy Director of the Department of Police, S.E.Vissarionov, anticipated the resurgence of the labour movement when he directed a massive escalation in the number of spies in the worker organisations and factories.¹⁹ In 1912 the worker unrest following the Lena goldfields shootings served to accelerate this process.²⁰ The new Director of the Department of Police, S.P.Beletskii, tackled this problem with customary vigour and ordered that secret agents should be recruited in every workers' union.²¹ As the strike movement grew the police response became more severe. The Department of Police were ordering the Security Sections by 1913 to carry out immediate arrests of revolutionary cells in professional unions, 'that would paralyse them, preventing these groups from carrying out their criminal activities.'²²

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Public Meetings and the Press

Effective though they were, the liquidations of trades unions also provides clear evidence of the way in which law abiding citizens were tangled up in the struggle between the secret police and the revolutionary opposition. Another example of this was the Okhrana's surveillance of public assemblies. The rights to freedom of assembly and speech granted by the Fundamental Laws induced a *furor loquendi* and mania for meetings (termed *mitingovanie*) in Russia from 1906 to 1914. These meetings came to constitute, in the words of one historian, 'a surrogate national parliament because the normal channels for the free exchange of ideas in representative institutions

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- 18 R.B.McKean, *St. Petersburg Between the Revolutions: Workers and Revolutionaries June 1907-February 1917* (London, 1990), pp.67–76. The suppression of unions focused on the SD dominated Tailors', Bookkeepers' and Printers' Unions.
 - 19 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, Visarionov to all Security Sections, 10 March 1911.
 - 20 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, pp.207–09- cites Police Department circular no. 112555, 19 May/1 June 1912.
 - 21 GARF, f.5802, op.2, d.239, l.14, S.P.Beletskii circular to all gendarme directorates, 16 June 1912.
 - 22 Hoover, Okhrana archive, Box 158, folder 11, DP ninth secreariat, 14 June 1913, circular no.172874.

were still circumscribed.²³ The legal position of meetings after the October Manifesto was highly ambiguous – according to the ‘Temporary Rules on Public Gatherings’²⁴ of 4 March 1906 the Governor or the chief of police could send representatives to any meeting. A police officer was required to be present at the meetings at all times to ensure that the delegates did not veer from the authorised programme. This was not just a token presence– Zinaida Mirovich described the presence in the meeting hall of a ‘long column of city police headed by the district chief.’²⁵ According to article 102 of the criminal code police were allowed to close a meeting or congress (*soveshchanie* or *s’ezd*) only if it showed ‘a clearly revolutionary character’, i.e. if it was ‘directed towards overthrow the existing political system.’ Article 107 also gave police the right to arrest delegates if they ‘insulted the tsar.’²⁶ Yet, as a historian has pointed out, the interpretation of these rules was highly inconsistent, ‘despite the promise of freedom of assembly, the public could not tell in advance what was permissible and what was not.’²⁷

The Okhrana was interested in these congresses for two reasons. Firstly due to the risk that they would be used as a sort of front organisation and platform for subversives. The All-Russian Congress of Teachers was thought to be entirely dominated by the SRs for spreading revolution in the countryside.²⁸ The Bolsheviks in particular used this tactic in the trades union and the MVD refused them

23 Joseph Bradley ‘Russia’s parliament of public opinion: association, assembly, and the autocracy, 1906–1914,’ in Theodore Taranovski (ed.), *Reform in modern Russian history. Progress or cycle?* (Cambridge, 1995), p.232.

24 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* [PSZ], 3rd ser., vol.26, ‘Vremennye pravila o publichnykh sobraniakh,’ no.27480.

25 Mirovich, ‘Pervyi Vserossiiskii zhenskii s’ezd’, p.413. Bradley, ‘Russia’s parliament,’ p.219.

26 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.310. ‘Mobilizatsiia reaktsii v 1906 g.,’ *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.32, p.169. Stolypin instructed all security police on 15 Sept. 1906 that that their interference with the intelligentsia in general should be ‘extremely limited, they must conduct surveillance, and take action only when their behaviour shows a clearly revolutionary character.’

27 Bradley, ‘Russia’s Parliament,’ pp.214–15.

28 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.278, *Tsirkuliary o vsrossiiskom soiuzhe uchitelei*, 1.1 (Signed Trusevich and Vasil’ev). The All-Russian Union of teachers’ thought be dominated by SRs who saw the State Duma as a ‘stage in the establishment of a democratic republic.’ The Union ‘has had success in propagating the theories of the SRs among the peasants and in the cities amongst workers.’

permission to organise congresses.²⁹ At the Congress on Alcoholism in Petersburg in 1909 43 union delegates were arrested on the charge of anti-governmental activity at the congress on behalf of the SD party, including the future Soviet trades union boss, Tomskii.³⁰ The Congress of Factory Physicians and Representatives of Factory Industry in 1909 was closed down because SD union representatives attended. At the Second All-Russian Congress of Writers in 1910 the Petersburg Okhrana agents were convinced that almost all the delegates were either SD or SR sympathisers.³¹ At the First All-Russian Congress on the Struggle with Prostitution in April 1910 the spies reported that: 'At the start of their work the Congress fell completely under the influence of a small group of workers.'³²

The second reason for the Okhrana's interest in these meetings was the concern that ordinary delegates would use the conferences to discuss broader issues outside the stated content of the meeting.³³ At the Writers' Congresses of 1908 the merest mention of Tolstoy's opinions on capital punishment got them into trouble.³⁴ The Congress on Prostitution in 1910 was closed down temporarily after a resolution was passed that the eradication of prostitution 'could only be realised with complete freedom of assembly, speech and association'.³⁵ At the First Congress on the Struggle with Drunkenness the spies sent from Petersburg Security Section watched the seven orators and reported that: 'All the speeches carried a clearly revolutionary

29 N.I.Letuovskii, *Leninskaia taktika ispol'zovaniia legal'nykh vserossiiskikh s'ezdov v bor'be za massy v 1908–1911gg.* (Moscow, 1971), pp.55–56.

30 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, box 142, folder 1h, StPbOO, 9 Sept. 1910. Mckean, *St Petersburg Between Revolutions*, pp.56–58. John Hutchinson, 'Science, Politics and the Alcohol Problem in Post-1905 Russia,' *SEER* 2 (1980), pp.247–54. M.Lukomskii, 'Trezvyi s'ezd (protivoalkogolnyi s'ezd)' *Sovremennyi mir*, 2 (1910), 59, 65, 68–69.

31 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309, ll.74–76. However, the only newspapers present—*Russkoe Slovo* and *Birzhevye vedomosti*—were of a less revolutionary persuasion.

32 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309, l.110, StPbOO report 26 April 1910.

33 Bradley, 'Russia's Parliament,' p.227.

34 'Obshchestvennaia khronika,' *Vestnik Evropy* (Aug. 1908), p.824. Bradley, 'Russia's Parliament,' p.220.

35 *Ibid.*, p.213–21. See also Joseph Bradley, 'Voluntary Associations and the Emergence of Civil Society,' in Edith Clowes, Samuel Kassow, and James West (eds.), *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton, 1991). I.Zhilkin, 'Vserossiiskii s'ezd narodnykh uchitelei,' *Vestnik Evropy*, Feb. 1914, p.383.

character, ending with calls to struggle with militarism and even for a violent change of government.’³⁶ The Congress on Fire Insurance (1913) called for the power of the police to be curtailed.³⁷

Revolutionary ‘infiltration’ of popular assemblies aside, the Okhrana also tended to take a keen interest when the congresses directly concerned police issues. For example, particularly close attention was paid to a lecture by K.I. Arabzhin in Petersburg in February 1910 on Gorky’s banned book: ‘The Life of a Useless Man,’ (or ‘The Spy’) because this novel was a satire of the Okhrana.³⁸

Events following the death of Tolstoy in November 1910 provide a typical picture of the Okhrana’s changing attitudes to freedom of assembly. Prior to 1905 this situation would, more than likely, have been treated as a serious revolutionary threat. Whereas in 1910 the attitude of the Okhrana was cautious and conciliatory. This can be seen from the Assistant Minister of the Interior Kurlov’s instructions to all Security Sections that, ‘if the case of the death of Count Tolstoy leads to requests for funeral services, do not show opposition, grant full permission in this matter to the religious authorities [to hold memorial services].’³⁹ This was to be balanced with: ‘thorough surveillance of the organisers and those present’⁴⁰ This gives an inkling of the new attitude of the Okhrana: instead of crushing opposition whenever it reared its head the secret police preferred to watch and gather information.⁴¹ The Okhrana did nothing to halt the meetings despite the fact that at the first gathering of mourners at St Petersburg University on 8 November 1910, ‘the enthusiasm which seized the assembly of students [was] reminiscent of 1905–06.’⁴² After a week the Okhrana was able to conclude that ‘the general mood is subdued and depressed...If in some places there have

36 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309 (1910g.), l.1, 7 Jan. 1910.

37 Bradley, ‘Russia’s Parliament,’ p.234.

38 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309, ll.176–77, 11 Feb. 1910.

39 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.310, l.39, Assistant MVD circular, 4 Nov. 1910. A similar circular was even sent to the heads of schools (Ibid., l.41, 6 Nov. 1910).

40 Ibid, l.39.

41 St Petersburg Security Section did just this and was able to gather lengthy lists of politically unreliable students who took a prominent part in the memorial services and demonstrations, see: *ibid.*, l.63.

42 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.310, l.44, 8 Nov. 1910.

appeared attempts “to use” [*ispol'zovat'*] the death of Tolstoy for political-revolutionary ends, then these attempts have failed.⁴³

The death of Tolstoy is also interesting in that it marked the first assignment of the secret collaborator, Ivan Drillikh (codenamed ‘*Blondinka*’),⁴⁴ who was to become the Okhrana’s leading agent in the liberal movement for the next seven years.⁴⁵ Drillikh had excellent cover to operate as a snoop because he was a journalist working for *Kievskaiia mysl'* and the Moscow paper *Russkoe slovo*. His reports from the site of Tolstoy’s funeral on the writer’s estate outside Moscow did much to calm the Okhrana’s nerves, as he reported that the size of the crowds visiting Tolstoy’s grave were only one tenth of the figure reported in *Russkoe slovo*.⁴⁶

The Okhrana’s relations with the free press after 1905 was limited because censorship was not within its jurisdiction.⁴⁷ This was handled by the Main Directorate of Press Affairs.⁴⁸ The Fundamental Laws guaranteed significant scope for freedom of speech. Before 1905 there were two types of censorship: ‘preliminary’ and ‘punitive.’ In April 1906 ‘preliminary’ (*predvaritel'naia* or *podtsenzura*) censorship was abolished.⁴⁹ Under the Temporary Rules the state retained the right to inflict punitive measures (*karatel'naia* or *beztsenzura*). This resulted in 341 editors being sentenced to prison, and 519 newspapers being suspended from 1907–09.⁵⁰ In 1910 St Petersburg OO had established surveillance of, *inter alios*, Russia’s ‘Press Tsar’ Aleksei Suvorin (*Novoe vremia*), Prince E.E.Ukhtomskii (the Editor of *Sankt Peterburgskie vedomosti*), I.V.Gessen (the editor of *Rech'*), V.M.Doroshevich (editor of *Russkoe slovo*), S.N. Syromiatnikov

43 Ibid., ll.57 & 84, 8 and 14 Nov. 1910.

44 He took his codename so seriously that he wrote in the feminine.

45 GARF, f.111, op.5, dd.309–10.

46 Blondinka’s reports have been published in Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.102–115.

47 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.120. The first press rules creating a free press on 24 Nov. 1905, were rather more liberal than the Temporary Rules.

48 Benjamin Rigberg, ‘The Efficacy of Tsarist censorship Operations, 1894–1917,’ *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Vol.14, no.3 (September, 1966), p.327.

49 Rigberg, ‘The Efficacy of Tsarist censorship,’ pp.331–345

50 Caspar Ferenczi, ‘Freedom of the Press Under the Old Regime, 1905–1914,’ in Olga Crisp & Linda Edmondson (eds.), *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989), pp.195–197. 80% of the suspensions were carried out by administrative measures. See also Rigberg, ‘The Efficacy of Tsarist Censorship,’ pp.331–45.

(correspondent for *Rossia*), L.L.Linevich (correspondent for *Rech'*), Karl V.Eichorn [Eikhorn] of the (*Journal de St Petersburg*), N.V.Prilezhaev of (*St Petersburger Zeitung*.)⁵¹ However, the press in St Petersburg enjoyed more freedom than any other area of the Russian Empire – particularly its foreign language newspapers.⁵² The leading papers reached an extremely wide audience – *Novoe vremia* had a circulation of 200,000 copies a day, *Birzheviya vedomosti* 170,000, *Gazeta-kopeika* 250,000 and *Vechnee vremia* founded in 1911 had a circulation of 140,000 a day.⁵³

Petersburg OO noted that the revolutionaries had concentrated their propaganda campaign on the legal press in the capital because ‘publication abroad of similar organs appeared too expensive... apart from that the difficulties in bringing them from abroad involved the risk of arrest.’⁵⁴ Even the radical left wing papers – *Luch'* (Menshevik), *Pravda* (Bolshevik) and *Mysl'* (SR) – managed to survive the censors axe through 1912–14 by repeatedly reopening under a different title after every occasion that they were closed down. Thus, *Pravda* appeared regularly on the streets of St Petersburg from 1912–14 with nine different titles and a regular circulation of 30,000. While, preventing their circulation inside St Petersburg proved to be almost impossible, the Interior Ministry used repressive measures to prevent these papers establishing a strong circulation in the countryside.⁵⁵

Chart 7a. The Growth of the Russian Free Press

Year	No. closed	No. opened	Net change
1905	156	166	+10
1906	435	706	+271
1907	313	337	+24
1908	259	278	+19

51 GARF, f.111, op.3, d.29, ll.42–44, Dec. 1910.

52 *St Peterburger Zeitung* and *St Petersburger Herold* in particular.

53 Ferenczi, ‘Freedom of the Press,’ p.205.

54 GARF.f.111, op.5, d.492,l.184, Aug. 1914 StPbOO to DP.

55 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, ll.3–5, Feb. 1907 On coping with the problem of St Petersburg newspapers ‘serving as organs of illegal parties’ sending free copies into the countryside. Local post-offices were ordered to intercept these deliveries (usually sent to peasant institutions).

1909	189	299	+110
1910	193	282	+89
1911	239	247	+8
1912	256	308	+48
1913	243	367	+124 ⁵⁶

This chart illustrates a point central to this book: repression and the growth in civil liberties were not mutually exclusive. On the basis of these figures we can see, *mutatis mutandis*, that society was becoming freer. If more publications were being released then not surprisingly more censorship and suppression took place. However, the crucial point is that the net effect was always an increase in publications.

The Kadets and the Progressists

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The Okhrana, compiled regular reports on the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets).⁵⁷ However, the extent of these operations has often been greatly exaggerated. Ruud and Stepanov have argued that: 'After 1907 the police activities against the opposition movement were mainly directed at the liberals,... [who] in the opinions of the police represented the most serious threat to the state.'⁵⁸ The records of Petersburg Security Section and the Special Section indicate that the Okhrana's attitude to the liberal parties was consistent with its attitudes towards trades unions, popular assemblies and the press: it was primarily interested in the liberal parties in regard to their relationship with the revolutionary movement. So, in the first few years of the constitutional experiment Okhrana relations with the liberal Kadet party were soured not due to their 'liberalism', but for the simple fact that the Kadets refused to condemn terror.⁵⁹ In other words Okhrana relations with the Kadets were soured partly because

56 B.I.Grekov, K.F.Shatsillo and V.V.Shelohaev, 'Evolutsiia politicheskoi strukturi rossii v kontse XIX- nachale XX veka', *Istoriia SSSR*, No.5 (Sept/Oct. 1988), pp.43–44.

57 GARF, f.102, op.239 (DPOO, 1909g.), dd.192–193, *O konstitutsionnoi demokraticeskoi partii*.

58 Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.381.

59 Melissa Kirschke Stockdale, 'Politics, Morality and Violence: Kadet Liberals and the Question of Terror,' *Russian History*, vol.22 (Winter 1996), pp.455–80.

the Kadets themselves failed to adhere to a central tenet of liberalism: support for the rule of law. Certainly the security police were hardly in a position to call the kettle black; but they were not the only hypocrites.

Once again, it was the spectre of the 1905 revolution which carried the decisive influence in security police attitudes. The police were slow to forgive the liberal movement for making what they saw as an alliance with the revolutionary parties from 1904 to 1905: particularly the coalition of opposition groups in the Union of Liberation and Union of Unions; and the fact that liberals – such as P.N.Miliukov and P.B.Struve – attended the September 1904 Paris meeting of revolutionaries.⁶⁰ The Director of the Department of Police, Zuev, wrote in 1911 that the Kadets were to be considered politically dangerous for two reasons: firstly due to the risk that they would revive the professional unions of 1904–05 and secondly that they would unite with the SD party and the left liberals in creating a dominant left bloc as seen in France and Germany.⁶¹ The Kadets were seen not as a threat in their own right, but rather as a kind of Trojan horse of the revolutionary movement. The Director of the Department of Police, Brune de St. Hyppolite, warned in September 1914 that if the Kadets were allowed too much influence in government they would open the doors for the revolutionary parties who would exploit civil liberties.⁶² Liberal attacks on the state without the revolutionary parties were considered trivial: for example, Gerasimov dismissed the mostly Kadet gesture of defiance at Vyborg in July 1906 as ‘child’s play’ because it lacked the broader support of the revolutionary parties.⁶³ Gerasimov also opposed Rachkovskii’s plans to create a Duma party in 1906, which would draw in and spy on liberal elements, because he said there was no point spying on the liberals as all their activities were out in the open.⁶⁴

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60 GARF, f.102, DPOO 1905 g. d.999, t.1, l.114, 19 June 1905: Gerasimov’s report at a gathering of 160 representatives of the supposedly liberal Union of Unions, 32 of whom were SDs.

61 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10: N.P.Zuev to all Provincial and Uezd Gendarme Directorates, 24 June 1911.

62 Cited in A.Kerensky, *The Crucifixion of Liberty*, p.247. (He dates the report as 6 Sept 1914).

63 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.81. The police estimated that 150 of the 190 signatories were Kadets. GARF, f.111, op.5, d.151, l.129, StPbOO to MVD, 13 Dec. 1907.

64 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.76.

We do not merely have to rely on the rhetoric of police chiefs to conclude that the Okhrana considered the revolutionary movement to be a far, far greater threat than the liberal movement. The *activities* of the Okhrana bear testament to this attitude. In January 1912 Kokovtsov asked the Okhrana to supply information on the staff of the Kadet and Progressist daily newspapers (*Rech'* and *Birzhevyia vedomosti*). The Department of Police reported back: 'We do not have any internal agents operating among the staffs of these newspapers.'⁶⁵ In 1913 Beletskii reported that they still had no agents in the liberal press. From archival evidence it appears that the Okhrana was often dependent on information supplied by the extreme-right parties for enlightenment on the internal affairs of the Kadet party, hardly the most reliable source in such a sensitive matter, nor much of a sign that they considered the liberals to be a priority target.⁶⁶

It was not until the war that the Okhrana acquired an Internal Agency inside the Kadets and Progressists that came anywhere near the quality of that employed inside the revolutionary parties. Even during the war the only high level spy inside the liberal parties who has so far been uncovered was P.N.Krupenskii, the deputy head of the centre party in the Fourth Duma.⁶⁷

Further evidence of the Okhrana's overriding interest in the revolutionary movement comes from the fact that the major files in St Petersburg Security Section's records on the liberals concern their meetings with members of the revolutionary parties.⁶⁸ In June and October 1910 the reason that St Petersburg Security Section closely followed the gatherings of the Kadet Party (at the flat of the Duma representative Kharmalov) was concern at the discussed possibility of cross-party co-operation with the moderate socialist elements in

65 Maklakov quid. in Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.52. Kokovtsov wanted the information in order to plug leaks of documents from the Naval Ministry.

66 GARF, f.102, op.240, d.27, ch.57, ll.10–12: the Okhrana's information on the Kadets' annual budgets from 1906–10 was supplied by the Black Hundred group the 'Union of the Archangel Michael.'

67 A.Ia.Avrek, 'Dokumenty Departamenta politsii kak istochnik po izucheniiu liberal'no-oppozitsionnogo dvizheniia v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny,' *Istoriia SSSR*, no.6 (1987), pp.37–40, 47–48; B.B.Grave (ed.), *Burzhuziia nakanune Fevral'skoi Revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1927), p.vi. Pearson, *Russian Moderates*, p.115.

68 GARF f.102 op. 240, d.27, ch.57, ll.1–9.

the Duma.⁶⁹ The same applied to the reports compiled on them in 1913 and 1914.⁷⁰ In 1914 *Blondinka* reported that on 3 March a secret meeting took place in Moscow between members of the Kadet, left-Octoberist, Progressist, Social Democrat and Socialist Revolutionary parties chaired by the vice-president of the State Duma, the Progressist A.I.Kononov. Kononov allegedly stated that the regime was ripe for a fall and all that was needed was ‘some sort of stupidity [*glupost*] like the Lena [Goldfields] shootings.’⁷¹ In May 1914 further reports stated that Kononov was negotiating, ‘the foundation of a united majority in the State Duma from the Constitutional Democrats [Kadets], the Progressists and the left-Octoberists.’ However, the Special Section commented that their greatest concern was Kononov’s, ‘plan of uniting the opposition elements *outside* the Duma.’⁷² [My italics]. They were concerned that this united front would be able to exploit ‘1)the worker disorders. 2)the fermentation (*brozheniia*) amongst the peasantry. 3)dissatisfaction among the bourgeois classes and 4)the united protests of the press.’ A.I.Kononov’s visits to factories in June and July 1914 were seen as part of this insidious ‘plan’.⁷³ The Progressists were also seen to be associating rather too closely with the Bolsheviks – whose representative, G.I. Petrovskii, had been involved with Kononov in negotiating a suggested donation from the Progressist party of 20,000 rubles in return for an introduction to some of the Bolsheviks’ workers’ circles.⁷⁴

69 GARF f.102 op. 240, d.27, ch.57, ll.1–9. The meeting out to be more harmless in content: a discussion on the proposed interpellation of the Minister of Education over University autonomy. GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309, l.191, 15 June 1910.

70 Von Kotten noted that the atmosphere in autumn 1913 was ‘extremely similar to 1905’: liberals were turning towards conspiracy: such as the secret meeting of the Kadet representatives on 5/6 Oct.1913 in Moscow with regard to possible co-operation with the strike movement. Korbut, ‘Uchet departamentom politsii,’ pp.220–25. GARF, f.102, op.244 (1914), d.73 lit.b, ll.20–24: watching the assistant chairman of the Duma Kononov.

71 GARF, f.102, op.244, d.73, lit.b, Moscow OO to DPOO, 30 March 1914, vkhod.no.9714.

72 GARF, f.102, op.244, d.73, lit.b, DP First Secretariat Secret Circular nos.171496–97

73 GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.73 lit.b., *Obezpartiiinykh progressistakh*, ll.1–22.

74 GARF, f.102, op.244, d.73, l.b, Vkhod., no.14957, Head of Moscow OO to DPOO. This wasn’t the first subsidy Kononov had paid to the Bolsheviks as he’d passed 2,000 rubles through Roman Malinovskii in 1913 and 3,000 rubles to Lenin through Elena Rozmirovich.

The liberal politician who attracted the most police attention was P.N.Miliukov.⁷⁵ Reports on Miliukov from ten spies survive in the archives. This creates the impression of a man surrounded by Okhrana agents. However, the majority of these spies were principally involved with spying on the revolutionary movement and reference to Miliukov was merely incidental.⁷⁶ The Okhrana's antipathy towards Miliukov, therefore, followed the same pattern as its relations with the liberal parties in general: it was rooted in his suspected connections or sympathy towards the revolutionary movement. For example, police agents reported that Miliukov was receiving copies of Burtsev's *Budushchee* from abroad in 1912 and co-operating with SDs and SRs, 'to make all efforts to discredit the Russian government; with this aim in mind they decided to publish a book claiming arbitrary rule reigns in Russia, supported by documentary evidence that the police, using their unlimited power [*neogranichnoi vlast'iu*], arranged terrorist acts.'⁷⁷

Freemasonry

Certain officers in the Okhrana harboured the belief that revolutionaries and liberals were united in secret Masonic lodges. Russian Freemasonry had revived in 1906 led by the liberal Maksim M.Kovalevskii, linked to the French Masonic Grand Orient Lodge.⁷⁸ Yet, this fear should not be over-exaggerated. The principal reason why *okhranniki* gathered information on Freemasonry was because the imperial family were suspicious of this movement.⁷⁹ Any incriminating evidence

75 M.K.Stockdale, *Paul Miliukov and the Quest for a Liberal Russia, 1880–1918* (London, 1996).

76 Anenkov, Blondinka (Ivan Drillikh), Vasil'ev, Monter, Pavlov (Aleksandr Mikhailovich Koshkarev), Filippov, Pelageia (Andrei Romanov— a confidant of Lenin), Semenov (Dr.Solomon L'vovich Sheindel'man), Voskresenskii (Valentin Mikhailovich Buksin), and Fotograf (Nikolai Andreevich Barashnikov).

77 GARF, f.102, DPOO, 1913 g., d.260, ll.14–17, DPOO *spravka*, April 1913.

78 Hoover, Nicolaevsky, Collection, Boxes 719–20. The man lodges in St Petersburg were the 'Polar Star' lodge set up by Maksim M.Kovalevskii and M.S.Marguiles and the 'Great Bear' (*Bol'shaia medveditsa*) under the Kadet Lev A.Krol'.

79 See for example, Alexandra to Nicholas, 4 March 1917, '...Revolution in Germany! W[ilhelm] killed, [his] own son wounded. One sees all over the Freemasons in everything.' In Fuhmann, *The Wartime Correspondence*, p.702.

would therefore be very useful for currying favour in Court. For example, Kurlov's research into the Freemasons was largely designed to prove that Witte was a member and also to investigate, or encourage, rumours that his boss Stolypin was a Mason also.⁸⁰ Lt.Col.G.G.Mets was assigned the task of researching the Masons by General Kurlov soon afterwards.⁸¹ His main report on his findings only appeared in 1914. Mets concluded that the Masons were committed to, 'the struggle against the official state church and against monarchical power...The Masons intend to destroy the existing political and social order of all European states...' ⁸² The standard departmental crib on the subject was a fairly lively history of the Masons written by a *chinovnik* called Alekseev.

These summaries on the Masons written by Mets, Kurlov and Alekseev were not the result of particularly thorough police work. Their principal sources of information were the anti-Masonic circles in Paris.⁸³ The head of the 'Anti-Masonic Association' there, Abbot Tourmantin, supplied the Okhrana with names and plans of the Russian Masons.⁸⁴ The result was that the Okhrana's knowledge of the Masons was considerably weaker than their knowledge of the revolutionary movement. Moreover what they did know was based on sensationalist pulp fiction which was purchased in Paris: for example the *Abbé Lecann's Histoire de Satan*,⁸⁵ Emile de St Auban's *Le silence et le secret* and the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁸⁶

80 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.98.Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.163–64.

81 Beletskii said his own, very brief, research into the masons had also been prompted by a member of the royal family.

82 Hoover, Okhrana Archive, Box 158, Folder 11, 9th section, Secret Circular No.171902. It is evident from this report that the DP still hadn't managed to recruit secret agents within the Masonic movement. See also: GARF f.102, op.260, d.315, *Tsirkuliary IX del. DP o pred. voz. v Rossii tain. obshch. masonov* (24 May 1914).

83 A. Ia. Avrekh, *Masonry i revoliutsiia* (Moscow 1990). Particularly part II 'Masonry i Departament politsii'.

84 P.E.Shchegolev, *Okhranniki i adventuristy* (Moscow, 1930), pp.42, 56–57.

85 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 146, folder 1d, p.713, 17 April 1912. Other books included: *Bulletin du Grand Orient de France*, *Revue Maconique*, and *Le Club des Jacobins sous Troisieme Republique*. See, Hoover, Box 141, folder 1e, P.G.Kurlov to Foreign Agency, 30 April 1910.

86 On the question of Rachkovskii's authorship of this forgery see Chapter 6.

The sensationalist contemporary literature on the Masons has also influenced some historians who have written some misguided accounts of the Okhrana's relationship with Freemasonry. The Soviet historian N. Iakovlev even went as far to say that, 'the word "Mason" was even more terrible [*dazhe bolee strashnym*] for the Department of Police than that of "revolutionary."'”⁸⁷ Iakovlev claims that the Okhrana established a neo-Zubatov 'police-mason movement' (*politseiskoe masonstvo*) after 1905 under St Petersburg lawyer M.S. Marguiles and Prince D.O. Bebutov.⁸⁸ Iakovlev wrote that Bebutov's previous involvement with the police had been as a police informer in the Kadet party. However, there is considerable evidence to show that Bebutov was not an Okhrana agent and none to prove that he was. In October and November 1911 he even made donations to Burtsev's anti-Okhrana cause.⁸⁹ Moreover, the Okhrana had tried to have Bebutov prosecuted for his connections with the revolutionary movement but failed due to the obstruction of the Ministry of Justice, which claimed that there was insufficient evidence for a trial.⁹⁰

In actual fact most sensible police officials did not share the imperial Court's paranoia about apron wearing revolutionaries and made little effort to uncover the Masonic lodges. Beletskii considered Kurlov's fears about the Masons to be misplaced. The Masons were the main subject of discussion between Petersburg Security Section chief Gerasimov and Nicholas II in the former's first and only ever audience with the tsar. Gerasimov tried to convince the tsar that there were no connections between the Masonic and revolutionary movements in Russia.⁹¹ The former head of the Special Section, Rataev, had interested himself with prying into Masonic affairs ever since his retirement from the position as head of the Foreign Agency. Over the years he had written several 'exposés' of the Masons in

87 Qutd. in Avrekh, *Masonry*, pp.198–9

88 Bebutov refers to his involvement with the masons in a section of his memoirs from 1911–1914: Hoover, Nicolaevskii Collection, box 65, folder 1, *Kniaz' D.I. Bebutov, "Zapiski"*.

89 Avrekh, *Masonry i revoliutsiia*, p.206.

90 GARF f.102 1913 d.9, t.3, l. 280. They noted his close links not only with Kadets such as Miliukov and Gessen, but also his contacts with SR émigrés and German SDs. Bebutov was subsequently followed by St Petersburg Security Section in June 1913.

91 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.98

Novoe vremia (for which he received some payments from the Department of Police). He was still sending occasional reports to the Department of Police in 1916. Yet his reports do not seem to have impressed Fontanka. Klimovich – the director at the time – later said that Rataev was paid a ‘little money for which he had to compose some sort of summary [of the Masons], but he sent us such nonsense that I didn’t even read it.’⁹²

Ironically, after chasing so many false trails concerning cross-party alliances and indulging in fantastical conspiracy theories about Freemasonry, the secret police eventually dismissed their fears as unfounded just at the time when a genuine Masonic conspiracy began operating under their very noses.⁹³ This conspiracy began in 1910 when the Trudovik, Aleksandr Kerenskii, set up his own Masonic movement known as ‘The Grand Orient of Peoples of Russia.’ This organisation jettisoned many of the archaic traditions, admitted women and began to operate as an underground network working for the destruction of autocracy. It involved cross-party co-operation from Mensheviks (e.g. A.Ia.Gal’pern the secretary of the Supreme Council) to Kadets (e.g. Maklakov), Progressists (e.g. Efremov- the head of the Duma lodge) and Octobrists. By 1915 they had organised forty secret lodges mostly in St Petersburg and Moscow.⁹⁴ With hindsight the imperial Court’s wariness towards the Masons does not appear so far-fetched. As Raymond Pearson has pointed out: ‘In Autumn 1916 Guchkov sounded out some Masonic colleagues, probably including Nekrasov and Konovalov [to join in a tsarist ministry], but found their firmly republican tenets made them unreceptive to plans to save the monarchy’.⁹⁵ It seems incredible that the Okhrana failed to spot the existence of Kerenskii’s organisation, which encompassed all of their *betes noires*: revolutionaries, liberals and Masons. The full activities of Kerenskii’s lodge have never been revealed due to the odd taciturnity of its members who hinted to the

92 PTsR, vol.1, *Dopros E.K.Klimovicha*, pp.90–91.

93 B.Norton, ‘Russian Political Masonry and the February Revolution of 1917,’ *International Review of Social History*, vol.28 (1983).

94 Nathan Smith, ‘Political Freemasonry in Russia, 1906–1918: A Discussion of Sources,’ *The Russian Review*, vol.44 (1985), p.165. Other Masons included: Dan, P.E.Shechegolev, Prince V.A.Obolenskii, N.V.Vol’skii, N.S.Chkheidze, and L.A.Velikhov.

95 Pearson, *Russian Moderates*, pp.128–9. PTsR, vol.6, pp. 278–9.

existence of a broad conspiracy around Kerenskii but said little else.⁹⁶ One of the leading members, Kuskova, claimed, ‘really and truly we [the Masons] made the whole revolution.’⁹⁷ While this is a gross exaggeration, it seems hard to deny that Masonic influence was instrumental in the selection of Ministers for the original Provisional government, which included the Freemasons Lvov, Konovalov, Guchkov, Kerenskii, Nekrasov, and Tereshchenko.⁹⁸

The State Duma

The most visible stage for the duel between the tsarist regime and the liberal opposition was the Tauride Palace, home of the State Duma. The hostilities proceeded almost unabated: from the first snub to the tsar in April 1906; to the horrified reactions to the death of Stolypin in September 1911; and finally to 1 November 1916 when Miliukov asked the critical question on the failure of tsarist regime: ‘Is this stupidity or treason?’⁹⁹

The Okhrana and the Duma met face to face on a daily basis because St Petersburg Security Section had been given the responsibility for organising security in the Tauride Palace. These duties predated the establishment of the State Duma: St Petersburg Security Section were entrusted with the dangerous task of policing an international toy festival held in the Tauride Palace November 1903.¹⁰⁰ The head of Security at the Duma was a guards colonel and his deputy was a former employee of St Petersburg Security

96 In particular see A.F.Kerensky, *Russia and History's Turning Point* (New York, 1965), pp.87–91.

97 N.Smith, ‘Political Freemasonry,’ p.169.

98 Barbara Norton, ‘Russian Political Masonry and the February Revolution of 1917,’ *International Review of Social History*, vol.28, part 2 (1983), pp.240–58. Nathan Smith, ‘The Role of Russian Freemasonry in the February Revolution,’ *Slavic Review*, vol.27 (1968), pp.606–08.

99 Guchkov’s outspoken criticism of police see: ‘Iz vospominaniia A.I.Guchkova,’ pp.185–86; & GDSO, 3 sozyv, sessiia 5, ch.1, cols.32–3 (St Petersburg, 1911). ‘V kontse 1916 g.’ *Byloe*, no.2/30 (Feb.1918), pp.148–56. Miliukov’s speech in the Duma managed to stay within the bounds of legality because he was quoting passages from *Neue Freie Presse* in German describing the baleful influence of the tsaritsa on Russian politics.

100 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.82, ll.1–17.

Section.¹⁰¹ Their subordinate role to the Okhrana can be inferred from the fact that St Petersburg OO drafted the ‘Instructions to the Head of Security of the Tauride Palace’, in March 1907.¹⁰² This subordinate position was made official in 1908.¹⁰³ Captain Bergol’dt, had little sympathy for the new democratically elected parliament and kept his old Okhrana confederates from the Polotsk cadet corps well informed about the clandestine meetings that went on in and around the Duma building.¹⁰⁴

It was not just this day to day contact that brought the Okhrana into collision with the Duma. On the practical side, one of the main concerns of the Okhrana touching the Duma was the maintenance of general state security and public tranquillity at the time of the dissolutions of the Duma.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, there were concerns that Duma debates would serve as the clarion call for revolution.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, St Petersburg Security Section orchestrated the expulsion of the 55 SD deputies from the second Duma in June 1907.¹⁰⁷ Thus once again the Okhrana’s relentless pursuit of revolutionaries spilled over into the legal organs representing civil society. This and the accusations of police interference with the electoral process

101 For correspondence between the two security services see: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.248, *S Perepiskoi po zaprosam zavedyvaiushchago Okhranoi Tavricheskago Dvortsa.*

102 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.151, l.17. *Instruktsiia zavedyvaiushchemu okhranoi Imperatorskogo Tavricheskago Dvortsa.*

103 GARF, f.102, op.238 (DPOO, 1908g.), d.470, *O podchinenii zavedyvaiushchego okhranoi Tavricheskago dvortsa nachal’niku S.Peterburgskogo okhrannogo otdeleniia.* This also shows the overlapping structure of the tsarist bureaucracy, as Bergol’dt’s wages were paid by the Ministry of Imperial Courts.

104 Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.221.

105 Eg: April 1914 GARF f.111 op.5 d.319 l.16.

106 Korbut, ‘Uchet departamentom politzii,’ p.221. Petersburg factory workers saw their strike action as part of an effort to spark an empire-wide strike, aimed to coincide with the Duma debate on the press laws and the reform of the police. The Special Section concluded from agent reports that the Congress of SD party in 1907 ‘resolved to boycott the elections for the Third Duma but at the same time to exploit the selection meetings [*izbiratel’nyia sobraniia*] for promulgation of revolutionary slogans’: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, Tsirk.1907 g., l.148 ob., 25 Sept.1907.

107 ‘K istorii arest i suda nad sotsial demokraticheskoi fraktsiei II Gosudarstvennoi dumi,’ *Krasnyi arkhiv*, 16 (1926), pp.76–117. 16 of them were to be given up for trial.

inevitably caused most Duma representatives, both of the left and right, to look on the Okhrana as their enemy.¹⁰⁸

In many ways this was a well-founded conviction. The mail of Duma representatives was regularly perused and read by the secret police. This was based on the presumption that the parliamentarians would think that they were immune from mail perusal and would therefore conduct illegal party business through the ordinary postal system. The mail of the SD deputies received the closest attention.¹⁰⁹ The mail of Kadet Duma representatives came under close scrutiny when certain deputies became involved in cross-party talks or were particularly critical of the secret police.¹¹⁰

However, much of this conflict was merely hot air. Fontanka paid little attention to the legislative activities of the Duma.¹¹¹ For example, at the height of the police reform debate in 1914 the Okhrana appeared to be more concerned with the reaction of the press.¹¹² It was the Duma's power of publicity that the Okhrana feared most.¹¹³ P.G.Kurlov—the Assistant Minister of the Interior from 1909–1911—considered that the Duma had no right to legislate on 'political investigations.'¹¹⁴ Yet the Duma had the constitutional right to summon ministers to answer their questions in the Duma (though the Minister did not have to go). And this gave them the opportunity, Kurlov wrote, 'to broach some groundless questions about political investigations.'¹¹⁵ Thus, on 8 June 1906 Stolypin had the uncomfortable task of replying to a well-founded Duma interpellation regarding

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108 *SOGD*, 4th Duma, 2nd Session, vol.1, 22 Nov. 1913 cols.1317–40 and 27 Nov. 1913, cols.1463–83.

109 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.281 (1910), ll.40–48: SD representatives monitored included Chkheidze, T.O.Belousov, G.S.Kuznetsov, Gegechkori. See also f.111, op.5, d.281, ll.1–29. See also f.102, op.244, d.30, pr.2–4 for the Special Section archives on the SDs in the Duma for 1914 alone which comprises seven full microfilms.

110 N.A.Zakharov was the most closely watched Kadet deputy in 1910. Maklakov (brother of the future Minister of the Interior) also came under surveillance. I.V.Titov was watched in his talks to create the Progressist party.

111 GARF f.111 op.5 d.309 l.34, 5 March 1910. Petersburg Security Section concentrated on public reactions to the Duma.

112 GARF f.102 op.244 (DPOO 1914g.) d.307, *passim*.

113 F.S.Zuckerman, 'Vladimir Butsev and the Tsarist Political Police in Conflict, 1907–1914,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.12, (Jan.1977) pp.193–219.

114 Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.96.

115 *Ibid*.

rumours that certain security police officers had encouraged the recent wave of pogroms. This would then create pressure for legislation which would undoubtedly threaten the security police. The Duma tribune was the perfect platform to give the revelations of the Paris-based spy-hunter Vladimir Burtsev a broader Russian audience. Burtsev proved the power of non-legislative parliamentary pressure when the Foreign Agency became the subject of debate in the French Chamber of Deputies. This had forced them to cease official operations, dismiss all of their external agents in Paris and then reopen under the cover firm of the 'Bint and Sambain detective agency.'¹¹⁶ The noise of Duma outrage regarding the Okhrana's use of spies attracted the attention of the assistant Minister of the Interior, A.A.Makarov. He went to the Tauride Palace to defend his Ministry in November 1908. He denied that 'provocation' ever took place because it 'diverts the members of the Okhrana from the serious problem of the struggle with the revolution.'¹¹⁷ He went on to state on behalf of Stolypin that, 'the Minister of the Interior categorically and firmly believes that so-called provocation is impermissible. All provocative actions are criminal, they must sicken the moral feelings of any ordinary person and can only distract ranks of security [*okhrany*] from the serious task of the struggle with revolution.'¹¹⁸ It was, therefore, rather embarrassing for Stolypin to have to go to the Duma less than three months later to explain why the most accomplished revolutionary terrorist, Evno Azef, was also an agent of the Okhrana. There was little Stolypin could do to contain the scandal: Burtsev had obtained evidence regarding Azef's Okhrana service from a former Director of the Department of Police, A.A.Lopukhin. This brought a volley

116 GARF, f.509, *Bint Genry (Henry Bint), nabliudatl'nyi agent zagranichnoi agentury departamenta politzii v Parizhe, uchreditel' chastnogo rozysknogo biuro "Bint i Samben", v sovetskoe vremia sotrudnik chrezhvychnoi komisii pri polnomochnom predstavitele SSSR v Parizhe (1925g.) 1853–1929*, op.1, d.1–130 (1874–1929).

117 Assistant MVD Makarov in reply to Duma accusations of provocation by the Vil'na Gendarme Directorate: 20 Nov.1908, qutd. in M.E.Bakai, 'Iz zapisok M.E.Bakaia,' *Byloe*, 9/10 (Paris, 1909), p.191. This apparently convinced the Duma which approved a vote of confidence, just (175 votes to 165), in the government to take future energetic measures against provocatorial actions by security police.

118 Ibid. See also: Chernov, 'Iz mira,' p.120: On provocation debate in Duma and contrast in 'provocateurs' with 'indicateurs.'

of attacks on the Okhrana from the Duma tribune¹¹⁹ and attracting the attention of the press throughout Europe and America.¹²⁰

However, in many ways this scandal was beneficial for both the Okhrana and the Duma. Burtsev had done the secret police a great service. He had achieved in one revelation what the Okhrana had failed to do in nearly thirty years: he had destroyed the romantic aura that surrounded the terrorist movement.¹²¹ St Petersburg Security Section noted that this disillusionment was still all-pervading in 1912—when their annual review of the SR party reported that, ‘the most topical [zlobodnevny] issue amongst SR party workers abroad is the question of their relationship towards terror. Revolutionary circles have been dispirited for the past two years over this question and have avoided speaking of it due to the exposures of Azef, Zhuchenko and others.’¹²² In 1909, yet another highly accomplished terrorist, Boris Savinkov, upset the SR party with the contents of his memoirs entitled ‘The Pale Horse’ which, reported Petersburg Security Section, depicted terrorists as ‘ordinary mortals with a significant portion of adventurism, striving for powerful sensations and with ordinary personal faults, in particular in relation to women. The appearance of Savinkov’s memoirs will in a similar way [to Sazonov’s memoirs] debunk many former “heroes”, which is of course is not in the interests of the party.’¹²³

Meanwhile, the embarrassment to the secret police proved a boon to supporters of police reform. This was the final straw which broke the reticence of the centre parties on the issue of police reform.¹²⁴ In

119 SOGD: 3rd Duma 2nd Session Part II, 11–13 Feb. 1909, *zasedaniia* 50 i 51, pp.1366–1404, and 1449–1607. Stolypin replied to SD and Kadet interpellations on 11 Feb. 1909.

120 The Special Section monitored the reactions and voracious interest of the British, French and German press in the affair: Hoover Archive, Okhrana Collection Box 140 (1909) Folder 1c Index No. XIIIc(1) DPOO summary 14 April 1909, p.444. GARF, f.102, op.239, d.155, ch.6, ll.A–B, tt.1–6, *Gazetnye vyzrezki inostrannoï pressy po delu Azefa i Lopukhina*.

121 N.R., ‘Bankrotstvo terrora i delo Azeva,’ *Burevestnik*, no.15 (March 1909), pp.12–14.

122 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.10, StPbOO *obzor* to the Director of the Department of Police, 28 March 1912.

123 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.11.

124 Ben Cion Pinchuk, *The Octobrists and the Third Duma 1907–1912* (Seattle, 1974), pp.84–87; SOGD, 3rd Duma, 2nd Session, vol.2, col.2399. The pressure for police reform from the centre parties grew still further after the assassination

the reading of the 1910 budget the Octobrist Prince Golitsyn argued that, ‘the activities of the secret police are not only illegal but simply unbearable.’ He continued his attack on the Okhrana with the words that it, ‘ruins the peaceful flow of the life of the ordinary citizen.’¹²⁵ The debates continued in the same vein for the 1911 budget. As Burtsev noted, ‘until a very short time ago it was impossible to speak about it [police espionage]. Whereas now it is being talked about incessantly, albeit within the framework of the censorship. As to the current place of provocation in Russian political life, that is indicated by the fact that the session of the Duma has been reopened with two entire meetings devoted to that subject– and the entire Russian reading public is following with baited breath its discussions on provocation. No we cannot be accused of talking too much about the Truseviches, the Gerasimovs, the Eremins and the Azef– but of talking too little about them.’¹²⁶

Towards Reform

Police reforms which had been fermenting in the background long before 1909 were brought to fore as a result of the Azef scandal. The model for police reforms had come from Lopukhin’s suggestions inside the Department of Police.¹²⁷ In the Manifesto of 12 December 1904 the tsar promised to establish a commission to review and reform the 1881 emergency measures.¹²⁸ The commission was highly conservative with Count A.P. Ignat’ev at the head. Nevertheless his report was a significant attack on the tsarist police and arbitrary

of Stolypin in 1911, see: 15 & 16 Oct. 1911– published in *Ubiistvo Stolypina: Svidetel'stva i dokumenty*, Ed. A. Serebrennikov, pp.245–266. The Duma resolutions called for re-organization of the political police down to its roots and their subordination to provincial governors and the local prosecutor.

125 SOGD, Third Duma, session 3, vol.2, col.2376. The attacks were renewed over the 1911 budget– 26 Jan. 1911, SOGD, third duma, session 4, vol.II, cols. 2800, 2942–63

126 *Budushchee*, no.4 (12 Nov. 1911 [N.S.])– quid in Schleifman, *Undercover Agents*, pp.191–92. V.Burtsev, ‘Police Provocation in Russia: Azev the Tsarist Spy’ *SEER*, Vol.6 (Dec.1927).

127 Lopukhin, *Nastoiashchee i budushchee*, pp.67–69.

128 Gessen, *Iskliuchitel'noe polozhenie*, pp.268–300. By 1906 only the tsar could declare a state of emergency: SU, 23 April 1906, no.603, art.8.

measures.¹²⁹ The report concluded that the police system was trapped in a vicious circle: an impoverished administration resorted to arbitrary measures to combat lawlessness, but this extra-legal behaviour further eroded the faith of the populace in the rule of law, thus increasing lawlessness and leading the organs of government into further recourse to arbitrary measures and so on *ad infinitum*. The Ignat'ev commission sent a delegate, V.E.Frish, abroad to study foreign police institutions. However, he did not visit Britain - the home of the paradigm for Lopukhin's vision of a modern democratic police force. Frish suggested that a force of judicial police be created or 'police commissars' - they were to be given punitive powers to impose on the spot fines. Frish also called for river and port police, detective departments and even the Okhrana sections and gendarme directorates to be placed under the supervision of the local Governor in each city.¹³⁰ The only tangible result of this commission was that in January 1906 police salaries were increased by 25%.

The next commission on police reform to be set up was headed by the Assistant Minister of the Interior, A.A.Makarov, in 1906. Makarov ignored Lopukhin's suggestion to subordinate ordinary police to the *zemstva*. Instead, the commission looked back to Plehve's ideas of administrative decentralisation for inspiration. They also picked up on the Frish suggestions. Literacy tests were to be introduced for the recruitment of patrolmen. They set a target ideal ratio of one patrolman for every 400 inhabitants for every city.¹³¹ Frish recommended the social welfare functions of the police be passed on to the *zemstva* and the municipal dumas: 'Now the authorities were adopting a new, essentially modern definition of police as primarily crime fighters.'¹³² The bolder aspects of Trusevich's reform plans were gradually eroded not so much through compromise as by a stalling between two fools. General von Taube, chief of staff of the

129 *Zhurnal mezhdovedomstvennoi komissii po preobrazovaniiu politicii v imperii*, 'Vysochaishe uchrezhdennoe osoboe soveshchanie po peresmotru ustanovlenykh dlia okhrany gosudarstvennago poriadka iskliuchitel'nykh zakonopolozhenii', pp.13-22, (St Petersburg, 1911). See Weissman below.

130 N.B.Weissman, *Reform in tsarist Russia* (New Brunswick, 1981), p.209.

131 GARF, f.102 op.262 dd.31-33, *Proekt osnovnykh polozhenii razrabotannykh podkomissiei Trusevicha*.

132 Weissman, *Reform in tsarist Russia*, p.212.

Separate Corps of Gendarmes, on the one side managed to excoriate the plans to subordinate the gendarmes in each province to a specially appointed assistant governor (a plan proposed by Trusevich).¹³³ And the Minister of Finance on the other side managed to slow the reforms down still further by attacking von Taube's defence of the Separate Corps.¹³⁴ However, the heart of the conflict over police reforms was not an ideological struggle between advocates of *Polizeistaat* and *Rechtsstaat*. The conflict was over details not principles. The principal stumbling block was the issue of monetary expense. Kokovtsov was the most obdurate opponent of the reform plans on the grounds that he estimated that the police budget would have to be raised to 113 million rubles and not the projected 58 million.¹³⁵ The amended plan finally made it through the Council of Ministers on 12 July 1911,¹³⁶ but as a concession to Kokovtsov a special commission was then established to investigate the financial details which were not concluded until Spring 1912. The new Minister of the Interior Maklakov—in a manner far removed from his reactionary reputation—embraced this reform project and managed to iron out the niggling points of dispute.¹³⁷ The plan finally went to the Duma in May 1913. The Duma impeded the plans still further because they considered the reforms to be too conservative and deputies from the Kadets leftwards merely used the debates as a pretext for polemics against arbitrary rule.¹³⁸ The issue had become so acrimonious by October 1913 that the secret police were worried that the reopening of the Duma might provoke a general strike in Petersburg.¹³⁹ The plan eventually was passed through to the Duma Commission stage but never became law because the Great War intervened.

133 GARF f.102 op.262 d.28 l.28.

134 *Osobyi zhurnal soвета ministrov*, Vol.1, no.6 (1912), pp.10, 21–22

135 Weissman, *Reform in tsarist Russia*, pp.213–15. The total budget prior to 1911 was less than 40 million rubles.

136 See GARF f.102 op.262 d.60, *Obzor otzyvov periodicheskoi pechati na zakonproekt reforma politicheskikh uchrezhdenii*, and f.102 op.2 d.14 ch.4g, *Po komissii o reforme politsii*, ll.257–71

137 PTsR, vol.5, *Dopros Dzhunkovskogo*, p.69; Weissman, *Reform in tsarist Russia*, p.220.

138 T.G.Stavrou (ed.), *Russia Under the Last Tsar*, p.108.

139 Weissman, *Reform in tsarist Russia*, p.218.

On a quieter level the exposures by Burtsev forced *internal* reforms of the Okhrana. The political police had once been accustomed to the comforts of obscurity and secrecy. It was painful indeed for them to face the spectacle of their dirty linen being aired in the Duma and the press. The most notable example of the scandals provoking reform was Dzhunkovskii's instruction that it was the Okhrana's job 'to sniff rather than to stink[*niukhat', chem pakhnet'*].'¹⁴⁰ However, the reforms had begun, despite Dzhunkovskii's claims to the contrary, as early as under the Directorship of Trusevich. Trusevich introduced a series of reforms professionalising the police service and placing Russia at the forefront of political and criminal intelligence. In 1907 he introduced a weekly police journal the *Vestnik politsii* (Police Herald) in an attempt to invest a little *esprit de corps* amongst the police. In early 1908 he toured England, Germany and France meeting with senior police officers in all these countries and examining their investigative systems. In April 1908 he held a congress of all the heads of District Security Sections.¹⁴¹ The Okhrana was part and parcel of Trusevich's unified process of reforms of all branches of the police through specialisation and professionalisation.¹⁴² The Okhrana was in fact taken as an organisational and methodological model for the rest of the police in certain reforms. Trusevich expanded the *Sysknye otdeleniia* ([criminal] Investigation sections) to all major cities¹⁴³ in a clear imitation of the *Okhrannye otdeleniia*. More controversially, these sections began to employ the same investigative methods as the Okhrana, particularly in the recruitment of collaborators from among the criminal community.¹⁴⁴ Trusevich also established an Inspectorate Section in January 1908, under deputy Director of

140 Qutd in Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.312–13.

141 N.P.Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Moscow, 1968), pp.288–89. L.I.Tiutiunik, 'Departament politsii v bor'be s revoliutsionnym dvizheniem v Rossii na rubezhe XIX–XXvv. 1880–1904,' (kand.diss., Moscow, 1986) p.76.

142 Neil Weissman, 'Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900–1914,' *The Russian Review*, Vol.44, no.1 (Jan.1985), p.56.

143 *Vestnik politsii*, 20 Jan.1908 (no.7), pp.6–9; and 27 Jan. 1908 (no.8), pp.8–10.

144 For the internal disputes in the police force over the use of these methods see—*Vestnik politsii*, 1909 (no.30), pp.638–39; 25 Aug. 1909 (no.34), pp.720–21; 31 Aug. 1909 (no.35), pp.742–44; 9 Sept. 1909 (no.36), pp.767–79; 7 Oct. 1909 (no.40), pp.855–57; 20 Oct. 1909 (no.42), pp.903–06.

Fontanka, Vissarionov.¹⁴⁵ Vissarionov carried out tours of the empire visiting regional branches of the Okhrana.¹⁴⁶ The major endeavour for the Okhrana to sniff rather than stink was the creation of the Highly Secret Agent's Section in the Special Section in 1909–10.¹⁴⁷ From 1911–1913 Beletskii set about revolutionising the scale of the Okhrana's methodology – sending agents all over Europe to study their security police organisations and methods. This resulted in the borrowing of many policing innovations from abroad including the purchase of French bullet-proof vests and research into adopting a French innovation in crowd control by using 'gas bombs' – a prototype of tear-gas.¹⁴⁸ On a similar line they were also looking into arming their detectives with 'tranquillising guns'.¹⁴⁹ Beletskii also convened a conference of the heads of Okhrana stations from all over the empire in February 1913.¹⁵⁰

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Upon becoming Assistant MVD Dzhunkovskii in 1913 called another conference of police chiefs. Here he pressed the salient points of his own reform programme: to curb the arbitrary searches and harassment exacted by gendarmes on the railways, to ameliorate the present system of exile, and to permit perustration only against people breaking the law (in keeping with the criminal code). He followed this up with the decision to close all but the three principal Security Sections in July 1913. In the autumn of 1914 he went on a tour, like Vissarionov before him, of all the Okhrana sections (now reduced to the status of either *rozysknye punkty* or offices in Gendarme Directorates). This was part of a package of stringent cuts of over 500,000 rubles from the Okhrana budget.¹⁵¹ Dzhunkovskii ordered the dismissal of all spies amongst army officers¹⁵² and high school

145 GARF, *Putevoditel'*, p.46. GARF, f.102, op.289–294 (200 files [dela] survive on this office for the period of its existence: 1908–1912.)

146 PTsR, Vol. 3, *Dopros Vissarionova*, p. 448.

147 Eroshkin, *Istoriia gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii*, p.283.

148 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 185, folder 2, 'Note: sur l'emploi du produit suffocant du laboratoire Municipal de Paris,' 4 May 1913.

149 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Index no.XIIIc (1), 'Information on the use of tranquillizing guns against criminals.'

150 Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.334–37.

151 GARF, f.826, *Vospominaniia V.F.Dzhunkovskogo za 1913g.*, op.1, d.53, l.184

152 PTsR, Vol.5, *Dopros Dzhunkovskogo*, pp.70–71. GARF, f.826, op.1, d.53, *Vospominaniia V.F.Dzhunkovskogo za 1912g.*, ll.93–96.

students.¹⁵³ In 1913 he also placed the Foreign Agency on a more official footing by giving A.A.Krasil'nikov the title of 'Civil servant with Special Commission on behalf of the Minister of the Interior'—allowing the head of the Foreign Agency to enjoy the status of an official representative of the Russian government for the first time since its establishment in 1883.¹⁵⁴ Thus, while outwardly police reform progressed at a snail's pace, the collision between police and civil society from 1906–1914 prompted significant internal change.

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153 Hoover Archive, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, Folder 11, 1 May 1913, Top Secret Circular No. 111603.

154 Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, pp.342–43.

Chapter Eight

The Predictable Death of Imperial Russia

Military Intelligence

Neither side managed to achieve outright victory in the subterranean struggle between political police and revolutionary parties from 1906 to 1914. In the final analysis it was to be a problem which was peripheral to this contest that would eventually prove the undoing of the Okhrana (and not just the Okhrana, but also the majority of the revolutionary parties). The Imperial Russian state was based on military prestige; yet it could no longer rely on the army to wage a prolonged military campaign. The Okhrana, drawing on the invaluable experience of the 1905 revolution, concluded – like Lenin – that the loyalty of the army to the regime had been the crucial element in both the near collapse and the eventual survival of tsarism. The army crushed revolt in Moscow and the countryside when the police system had ground to a halt in late-1905. Yet it was not the reliable pillar of old: there had been around 400 mutinies from 1905 to 1906.¹ Not surprisingly, the Okhrana therefore began spying on the army – the central pillar of state power – in the interests of state security. This was to be the final *reductio ad absurdum* of the security police system.

A special gendarme detachment had been sent to Manchuria in January 1904 under Lieutenant Colonel Shershov to monitor the political reliability of the army.² However, it was too small to be of

1 J. Bushnell, *Mutiny Amid Repression*, (Bloomington, 1985), pp.15–21; W.C. Fuller Jr., *Civil-Military Conflict in Imperial Russia 1881–1914* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1985), pp.49, 144–55. See also: Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism: the interaction of domestic and foreign policy, 1860–1914* (Lemington Spa, 1987).

2 GARF, f.1182, *Zaveduiushchii politseiskim nadzorom pri Man'chzhurskoi armii otdel' nogo korpusa zhandarmov podpolkovnik Shershov 1904–1906*, op.1, dd.1–79.

much use and only provoked the resentment of army officers who felt it was a slur on their honour. General Samsonov, Commander of the Turkestan District, went as far as to express the preference, ‘that the troops riot rather than permit a gendarme secret service in the army.’³ Anton Denikin, later the Commander in Chief of the Russian Armed forces during the Great War, believed that political surveillance of the army was unnecessary and counter-productive: ‘Our officers,’ he wrote, ‘like those everywhere in Russia, were loyal to the regime and took no active part in politics...There were no officers with leftist tendencies. After the Japanese war and the first revolution, in spite of its proven loyalty, the officer corps was nonetheless placed under the surveillance of the police. Periodically regimental commanders were sent top secret blacklists of “unreliable” officers for whom the road to promotion was closed. The tragedy of these lists lay in the near hopelessness of refuting any of the accusations.’⁴ The highest echelons of imperial power, inhabiting the Romanov Court circles, shared the same *Weltanschauung* as the military set: a worldview firmly rooted in ‘honour’, ‘duty’, ‘faith’ and ‘fatherland’ – values perceived to be as antithetical to the Okhrana as they were to the revolutionary movement. The placement of spies in the army was, therefore, unpopular even among ultra-conservatives such as Prince Meshcherskii and the Court camarilla.⁵ Many *okhranniki* – eager to cultivate Court support – also expressed the view that such measures were ‘a groundless and unprovoked intrusion into the internal life of the military... [and] inimical to the very foundations of military discipline.’⁶

Resentment of Interior Ministry intrusion into the military domain prompted the War Ministry to establish its own self-regulatory system for monitoring the political reliability of its officers from 1909–1912 with a ‘special military police’ under Colonel S.N.Miasoedov.

3 W.C.Fuller Jr., *Civil-Military Conflict*, p.215.

4 Anton I.Denikin, *The Career of a Tsarist Officer. Memoirs, 1872–1917* (Minneapolis, 1975), pp.199–200. The officers preferred autonomy to police themselves. Denikin’s regiment, the Arkhangelogorodsk based in Zhitmoir in the Kiev military district, had an officers court of honour headed by Col.Dzenev.

5 P.G.Kurlov, *Gibel’ imperatorskoi Rossii* (Berlin, 1923), p.117.

6 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.50, l.346 ob.: Dzhunkovskii in a circular of 13 March 1913.

However, Miasoedov was highly unpopular among the armed forces even before he began to spy on them. He had been cast out of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes in 1907 apparently due to his own 'political unreliability'.⁷ His unscrupulous practices did little to change this evaluation in the eyes of the General Staff. His patron, General V.A.Sukhomlinov, was attacked in the Duma by the leading Octobrist, A.I.Guchkov, in April 1912 with regard to the presence of spies in the armed forces. This brought about the dismissal of Miasoedov.⁸

The Okhrana's spies immediately began to fill the vacuum left by the departure of Miasoedov's *agentura*. Consequently, Fontanka soon became concerned that its own military espionage would also be subjected to Guchkov's investigations. As a prophylactic the Department of Police placed Guchkov under internal and external surveillance and began intercepting his post. On the basis of some intercepted letters St Petersburg Security Section established in 1914 that Guchkov's most important contact in the armed forces was N.A. Morozov of Tiflis, a Lt.Colonel in the General Staff and part-time correspondent for the *Razvedchik* newspaper, with whom Guchkov was discussing starting a journal on military matters.⁹

General Denikin later claimed that the impetus behind the creation of a 'gendarme secret service in the army' was the emergence of 'harmless secret societies' of army officers during the 1905 revolution.¹⁰ This was undoubtedly an incentive – the Okhrana was always apt to dwell on history, and parallels with the Decembrist uprising of 1825 or the Young Turks' revolution of 1908 did not escape them. An 'All-Russian Officers Union,' rumoured to be emerging in the pre-Great War years, was seen by Fontanka as an 'extremely dangerous revolutionary organisation', particularly because literature circulated

7 Denikin, *Career*, p.298. Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past*, pp.682–683. Miasoedov had supposedly been passing on information– leaked accidentally by Sukhomlinov– to Altschiller, the head of Habsburg espionage in Russia, see: 'Iz Vospominanii A.I.Guchkova,' *Poslednaia novosti*, 23 Aug. 1936, p.2 and 26 Aug. 1936, p.2. Much of his unpopularity in government circles, however, was supposedly due to his marriage to a Jewish woman.

8 *The Times*, 4 May 1912.

9 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.474, ll.21–22, 16 Jan. 1914.

10 Denikin, *Career*, p.173.

by this nascent group proclaimed that their purpose was to free the people from ‘the yoke of the despotic state.’¹¹

However, this was not the central motive for spying on the army. The evidence from the archives seems to point to a heavy concentration of secret agents only amongst the lower ranks.¹² The most likely explanations for this are: firstly because soldiers in the lower ranks were easier and cheaper to recruit as spies; and secondly because the secret police believed, not without some foundation, that the lower ranks were more susceptible to the persuasions of revolutionary propaganda.¹³ St Petersburg Security Section’s spying on the army’s lower ranks continued to intensify until 1914. Yet this went contrary to the cherished sense of military honour underpinning tsarist polity. Thus, in an attempt to strengthen the moral foundations of the Romanov state, Dzhunkovskii sacked the head of Petersburg OO, M.F. von Kotten, in 1914 for failing to follow his orders to dismiss all spies serving in the armed forces.¹⁴ This was intended as a warning signal to all over-zealous *okhranniki*. Dzhunkovskii’s ban on spies in the army was reversed by a less scrupulous director of the Okhrana, General E.K.Klimovich, in May 1916.¹⁵ Yet this was not sufficient (would any police measure have been sufficient?) to arrest the growing disillusionment of the imperial army.¹⁶

With the proliferation of mass demonstrations from 1905 to 1907 the revolutionary movement increasingly focussed its attention on bringing large numbers of guns and explosives into Russia. The most

-
- 11 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, ll.16–16ob., 19 April 1907. On the impact of the Young Turks on the Russian armed forces see B.W.Menning, *Bayonets Before Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army, 1861–1914* (Indianapolis, 1992), chpt.6. The officers’ uprisings in Portugal and Persia were also cause for concern.
 - 12 Heavy concentrations of Petersburg OO informers were placed also in the foreign munitions factories at Schlisselburg, amongst the troops at Vyborg fortress and on all the surrounding railway lines: GARF f.111 op.5 d.298 ll.18–24 (Feb. to July 1910).
 - 13 GARF, f.102, op.240 (DPOO, 1910g.) d.126, *O propagande v voiskakh*.
 - 14 On the ban see: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.440, ll.2–6, Jan. 1913; GARF, f.102, op.260, d.50, *Tsirkuliary* 1913 g., 1.346, 13 March 1913; & Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka*, p.215. Dzhunkovsky also forbade spies in high schools for similar reasons: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.50, ll.347–48, 1 May 1913.
 - 15 On Klimovich’s reversal of Dzhunkovskii’s orders on 20 May 1916 see PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros Beletskogo*, pp.329–30.
 - 16 A.L.Sidorov (ed.), *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v armii i na flote v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow, 1966), pp.170–72, 290–92.

notable attempt of this kind was the John Grafton affair of 1905, where Finnish separatists had collaborated with the Japanese secret service in an attempt to smuggle 15,000 rifles into St Petersburg on board an English trawler, the 'John Grafton.'¹⁷ Consequently, the Okhrana began to police arms smuggling. The Foreign Agency coordinated counter-smuggling operations up to 1907 through a chain of personal contacts in the leading European police agencies.¹⁸ Petersburg Security Section also became an extremely important centre in the fight against contraband used for anti-state, particularly terrorist,¹⁹ activities – because the capital was both a commercial and military port and close to the Finnish border.²⁰ They also monitored arms being smuggled *out* of St Petersburg and sold illegally either by imperial soldiers or the Petersburg arms manufacturers. The vital checkpoints were the ports of Petersburg and Odessa and the Caucasian and Galician borderlands.²¹ For example, in February 1910 St Petersburg OO was assigned the task of discovering who was responsible for the theft of bullets made in state arms factories for specific Russian infantry battalions in the capital alone, which had been intercepted being smuggled across the Russian border with Persia.²²

It is testament to the importance that the Department of Police placed on collecting military intelligence that the Special Section was absorbed by the military intelligence section of the Department

17 Michael Futrell, *The Northern Underground*, (London, 1963), passim.

18 R.J.Johnson, 'The Okhrana Abroad, 1885–1917: A Study in International Police Co-operation' (PhD diss. Columbia University), pp.133–55. For example, Marcel Bittard-Monin was the Foreign Agency's chief liaison officer with his former colleagues in the French *Surete Generale*. In the same fashion Francis Powell, a former Scotland Yard officer, was Krassil'nikov's chief contact with the head of Scotland Yard, Quinn. Wilhelm Henninger, the head of the *Prussian Sicherheit Dienst*, enjoyed good relations with the Foreign Agency. The Foreign Agency was ever eager to keep foreign governments well informed about the latter's own troublemakers – for example it passed on valuable information to the Italian *Sicurezza* about the young Benito Mussolini.

19 The two leading smugglers of arms and explosives into the capital in 1910 were Robert Libert from Switzerland and Petr Liula from Poland: GARF, f.102, op.240, d.32, ch.57, l.A, l.9.

20 GARF f.102, op.240, (1910) d.32, ch. 57 lit. A, ll.1–9.

21 For the monitoring of smuggling into Odessa see GARF, f.102, op.240, d.94, l.27, April 1910; and GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, l.91, 8 Aug. 1912

22 GARF, f.102, op.240, d.32, ch.57, l.A, *O tainoi vodvorenii oruzhiia v imperiiu konfiskantom oruzhii voobshche...*, ll.3–8.

of Police (the Ninth Secretariat) even before the Great War, in April 1914. The Okhrana's involvement in external security had grown to the stage that Austro-Hungarian counter-intelligence identified it as one of the three principal branches of military intelligence.²³ This was a mirror image of the tsarist regime's reliance on the army for internal peacekeeping/police duties and as a supplement to the ordinary judicial system.²⁴

However, two important factors restricted the Okhrana's expansion into military espionage. Firstly, the Foreign Agency had always been ordered not to collect information on foreign governments, due to the fact that their prime directive was to watch the Russian émigré communities – and they could hardly do this without the good will of the host nation.²⁵ Secondly, the Ministry of War resented the Okhrana's intrusion into what it considered to be primarily military business. This was a reasonably valid grievance: the intelligence to be collected in this sphere mostly concerned technical analysis of the military potential of rival states, particularly the eleven states contiguous to the Russian Empire. Ostensibly, since the 1860s this was supposed to be handled by the General Staff and their network of military attachés abroad.²⁶

Nevertheless, the Okhrana continued to expand into the realm of international espionage. One historian saw this development as distinct from the West, 'in which the co-operation of the police [in

23 J.F.N. Bradley, 'The Russian Secret Service in the First World War,' *Soviet Studies* vol.20 (1968–69), no.2, pp.242–248. The other two were listed (not entirely accurately) as the War Ministry's Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence sections.

24 From 1884–1903 the military was called on to curb internal disorders on almost 1,500 occasions. From 1906–7 the military Field Courts Martial handled most political trials. In the war Petrograd civilian apparatus came increasingly under the jurisdiction of military authorities (Petrograd Military District was under S.S. Khabalov) because it was close to the front. See: W.C.Fuller, *Civil-Military Conflict*, passim; Donald Rawson, 'The Death Penalty in Imperial Russia,' passim; and T. Hasegawa, *The February Revolution, Petrograd 1917* (London, 1981), p.160.

25 Andrew Kobal, *Introduction to the Okhrana Collection* (Hoover Institution, Stanford University, 1964), p.5.

26 See: E.Sergeev & A.Ulianin, *Ne podlezhit oglasheniiu. Voennye agenty Rossiiskoi Imperii v Evrope i na Balkanakh 1900–1914 gg.* (Moscow, 1999). The military took over from diplomats in this realm in the 1860s largely because of Prussia's innovations – building national armies of conscripts rather than international armies of professionals – which meant competing states became increasingly ignorant of each other's military affairs.

military espionage] plays only a subordinate part.²⁷ This distinctly Russian phenomenon was driven by five interconnected factors: i)the increasing scale of international espionage; ii)the need for domestic intelligence/counter-intelligence organs; iii)the repeated failures of the War Ministry's intelligence gathering operations; iv)the need to pool resources with the War Ministry in professionalising all intelligence organs; and v) the seamless interconnection between Imperial Russia's internal and external situation.

1) Escalation

The years 1906 to 1914 witnessed increasing tension between Russia and the so-called Central Powers (Austria-Hungary and Germany). As tensions grew so too did the competition between Austro-Hungarian and Russian military espionage agencies in particular, focusing on the borderland area of Galicia. This had been the scene of intermittent espionage activities for the previous twenty years.²⁸ Yet, as the Polish paper 'New Reform' noted, the situation had intensified considerably, 'since the "annexation crisis" [of 1908–09] which brought Austria [sic] and Russia to the brink of war... Galicia has literally [sic] been flooded with Russian spies.'²⁹ Statistics seem to support this assertion: One leading Austrian intelligence officer estimated that there were only 250 cases of espionage (and only 52 arrests) in Austria-Hungary between 1884 and 1903, compared to 300 in 1905 and 8000 in 1913 alone (with 560 arrests). And cases involving Russian espionage accounted for the overwhelming majority of convictions. It had reached such a fever pitch that the Habsburg government was compelled to issue 50,000 copies of a cautionary leaflet entitled 'Beware of spies' to all military garrisons

27 Winfried Ludecke, *Behind the Scenes of Espionage: Tales of the Secret Service* (London, 1929), pp.119–20.

28 One of the leading Austrian intelligence officers stated that the first conviction of a Russian spy in Galicia occurred in 1889; see: Maksimilian Ronge, *Voina i industriia shpionazha* (Moscow, 2000), p.10. Ronge lists some of the heads of the Habsburg Intelligence Bureau as: 1876–79 Adolf Leddin; 1879–82 Karl von Ripp; 1882–86 Hugo von Billimek; 1886–92 Edmund Maier von Wagner; 1903–09 Col.Evgenii Gordlichka; Oct 1909– 1913 Col.August Urbanskii

29 *New Reform*, 12 April 1910: DPOO translation, GARF, f.102, op.240,d.38, l.56. Prior to this Italy and Serbia had been Austria-Hungary's principal targets of intelligence collation; see: Ronge, op.cit., p.16.

in 1913.³⁰ A similar pattern of escalation emerged in Imperial Germany; and more Russians were convicted of espionage in Germany than any other foreign nationality.³¹

Not surprisingly, Austria-Hungary also responded by flooding Russia with its own spies. Habsburg intelligence, according to the bold claims of one director, employed up to 1000 informants by 1914 inside the Russian Empire compared to only 100 in the 1880s.³² The rapid escalation of espionage meant that all Russian state organs were called upon to be vigilant. And the ever-vigilant Okhrana was not just the most enthusiastic but also – with its established network of spies and surveillance operations – the best suited to respond to this call to arms. In 1910 Col.Eremin, head of the Special Section, wrote, ‘there has been a notable widening of military espionage activities [of foreign powers] in Russia. It is vital that all officers of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes devote their most serious attention to the active struggle with this evil by strengthening their surveillance of foreign military intelligence officers and utilising the secret *agentura* in this endeavour... They should expose the conditions and methods of military espionage carried out by foreign states.’³³

2) Counter-intelligence

Thus as foreign powers spied more and more on Russia, the Okhrana expanded to combat them *inside* Imperial Russia. In contrast to this, the War Ministry concentrated its resources on espionage abroad rather than chasing foreign spies inside Russia: spending five times

30 Ibid., p.51.

31 Val'ter [Walter] Nikolai, *Tainye sily. Internatsional'nyi shpionazh i bor'ba s nim vo vremia mirovoi voiny i v nastoiashchee vremia* (Moscow , 1925), p.38. Nikolai conservatively estimates that there were 66 espionage cases in Germany in 1908 compared to 346 in 1913. Of those who went to trial (1907–1914) 107 were German, 32 from Alsace, 11 Russian, 5 French, 4 British, 3 Austrian, 2 Dutch, 1 American , 1 Swiss and 1 Luxemburger.

32 Ronge, op.cit., pp.5, 16 & 20. Their activities were co-ordinated by fifteen Habsburg officers based at Lvov, Cracow and Peremyshl'. Considerable funds only began to be assigned for espionage in Russia in late 1908 and even then, as Ronge complained, the funds ‘were barely enough for the annual upkeep of the director of an “average” bank.’ In 1906 Austria-Hungary’s yearly assignation for intelligence in total was 120,000 crowns.

33 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.34, *Tsirkuliary* 1911 g., l.146, 11 Sept. 1911 [based on a circular of 25 Dec.1910]. See also: GARF f.102 (1910) op.240 d.14, *O kontrazvedke*.

more on intelligence than counter-intelligence.³⁴ On the practical side this meant that the Okhrana stepped up its surveillance of foreigners (particularly those with military connections) travelling through and resident in Russia. This was already a long established practice, partly explaining the Okhrana's infamy abroad.³⁵ The *Evropeiskaia* Hotel – the focal point of foreign presence in St Petersburg – had long been the most closely watched building in the empire. Prior to 1908 Austro-Hungarian spies had not been the Okhrana's principal concern. Indeed, the Austro-Russian Mürzsteg agreement of 1903 on Macedonia meant that the espionage duel between the two states was quieter than ever before up to 1908. From 1904 to 1906 particular interest was paid to the Japanese residents of St Petersburg.³⁶ British subjects also came under scrutiny, partly as a result of the 1902 alliance with Japan and partly due to Anglo-Russian rivalry around India.³⁷ The suspicion of the Japanese in particular did not die away after the settlement of the peace. In 1906 the Okhrana identified the three principal Japanese military intelligence *rezidenty* in the capital.³⁸ They also became suspicious of a Japanese parliamentary delegation that was travelling through the empire in 1906, 'allegedly to study the political mood of the people.'³⁹ Comprehensive lists were drawn up by St Petersburg Security Section of 309 Japanese officers resident in the capital in

34 Alekseev, *Voennaia razvedka*, vol.2, pp.37–41.

35 Russia launched large-scale arrests of agents in 1889 (28 in the Kiev region alone): such as Lieutenant von Ursin-Prushinskii, who was interrogated and compromised the work of the Vice-Consul (secretly acting as an intelligence officer) in Warsaw, Julius Pinter. Pinter then had to be recalled to Vienna. Consequently, the Minister for Foreign Affairs wanted to ban these *poezdki*. In 1902 Col.Grimm, a Russian working as a spy for Major Erwin Müller of Habsburg intelligence, was arrested by the Okhrana in Warsaw

36 GARF f.111 op.3 d.9, 29 and 119.

37 GARF f.111 op.1 d.4319- *Nabliudenie za Velikobritanskimi poddannymi (1904g.)*, ll.1–6: lists the names of 33 British subjects under investigation in Aug. 1904. The Okhrana noted that the British were still sending agents to listen to lectures at the Nicholas Academy in 1914. The British (Buchanan and Alfred Knox in particular) also complained that the Russians were still spying on their Embassy.

38 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.119, ll.1–6, July 1906: the agents were named as Colonels Takaianagi, Khamaomote and Kikuchi. GARF, f.111, op.3, d.225, ll.69 and 367: The Central Detective Detachment kept up permanent surveillance of a Japanese officer, Matazaki Khamaomate, in 1908.

39 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.119, l.8, Sept. 1906.

1908.⁴⁰ They even monitored 26 Chinese subjects in the capital.⁴¹ This was partly due to a concern that some might be Japanese posing as Chinese.⁴²

As Russian relations improved with Britain and deteriorated with the Central Powers from 1907–1909, the Okhrana shifted its focus accordingly.⁴³ (This was in marked contrast to the broader concerns of the War Ministry’s intelligence section – where the spending on the western section only overtook the eastern section at the beginning of 1914.)⁴⁴ There was even a transition period before the annexation crisis where Austrian and Japanese espionage was seen as connected. For example, St Petersburg Security Section identified, ‘the Austrian representative of the Austrian *Korrespondentz Bureau*, calling himself “Baron Stenbok-Fermor,” is in actual fact a Jew by the name of Schlesinger [Shlezinger], an Austrian and Japanese spy.’⁴⁵ Of course, the most serious dangers of military espionage would come from insiders: Russian military officers betraying state secrets. The highest risk group naturally were those privy to state secrets: particularly Russian military *intelligence* officers. For example, Baron von Ungern-Sternberg – an assistant of the director of Russian intelligence in Zurich and Berne, Col.D.I.Romeiko-Gurko – had been under surveillance whilst still a cadet in St Petersburg in 1907 and was arrested in 1910 on the orders of von Kotten (for supposedly betraying secrets to Austro-Hungarian intelligence).⁴⁶

40 GARF f.111 op.3 d.9 ll.1–29.

41 Ibid., ll.30–32.

42 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.23, l.62, 16 Feb.1909. On the Japanese spy Captain Sara-ki-ki moving between Kazan and St Petersburg. He had converted to Orthodoxy in 1906 taking the name Boris Petrov, worked as a professional wrestler and pretended to be Chinese under the name Zhin-do-fu.

43 GARF, f.102, d.238 (DPOO, 1908g.), d.390, *Ob organizatsii kontr-razvedki*; & f.102, op.240 (DPOO, 1910), d.114, *O kontr-razvedke*.

44 In 1913 the War Ministry set the annual budget at 311,600 rubles for espionage in the east and 203,600 rubles in the west. Prior to the war in 1914 the War Ministry had already set the annual budget at 289,700 rubles for espionage in the west and 271,300 in the east. See: Alekseev, *op.cit.*, p.41.

45 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.119, DPOO to StPbOO, l.52, 25 April 1907.

46 Ibid., l.54, 30 April 1907: On Karl Gustav Ernst and Baron von Ungern-Sternberg. Ronge, *op.cit.*, pp.35 & 53–54: The Baron was accused of betraying secrets from military discussions in a closed Duma session. Ronge denied that Ungern-Sternberg ever worked for Habsburg intelligence. See also: Alekseev, *op.cit.*, p.51: On the arrest of Ungern-Sternberg and a Captain Postnikov. There is a possibility that this Baron Ungern-Sternberg was the same man who became

Another symbolic example of this change-over of enemies was the fact that by 1910 St Petersburg Security Section no longer appeared to be spying on Japanese residents. Indeed, Petersburg OO was even involved in *protecting* Japanese ambassadorial staff from bothersome members of the Austrian and German Press. Captain Luk'ianov, head of the Okhrana's bodyguard service, was entrusted with the task of 'personal security for Baron Motono', the Japanese Ambassador.⁴⁷

By 1910 the Germans were frequently included among the Okhrana's prime targets. For example, Petersburg Security Section supervised the arrest of a clerk, A.P.Pekar, working in the Main Artillery Directorate in January 1910 for selling secret documents on arms factories to the Germans.⁴⁸ In October 1910 St Petersburg Security Section organised the arrest of two Jewish spies connected to the SR party: Bergman (a.k.a. Mordovskii) and E.K. Bel's— who were living with a General's widow and had stolen military plans in her possession to sell to the Germans.⁴⁹ Yet on the whole, Austro-

infamous during the Civil War. See: V.V.Klaving, *Belaia gvardiia* (St Petersburg 1999); Peter Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze: Lenin's Dream of an Empire in Asia* (Oxford, 1984), pp.123–36; and for an unusual semi-fictional account: Vladimir Pozner, *Bloody Baron. The Story of Ungern-Sternberg* (New York, 1938). Baron Roman Nikolaus Fedorovich von Ungern-Sternberg was born in Reval (Tallinn) 22 Jan. 1885. He was killed on 15 Sept. 1921. He was a graduate of the *Pavlovskoe voennoe uchilishche* in 1908. He supposedly served in the Mongol war against China in 1911. During the Great War he was attached to Nerchenskii regiment where he formed life-long friendship with future ataman Semenov. Their commanding officer at the time was none other than Baron Wrangel as the commander of the Caucasian division 1914–1916. Sternberg served in the Paris Embassy from 1916 to 1917. The Kereniskii government sent him to Siberia with Semenov to find recruits for the Russian army. Sternberg served under Semenov's Asiatic division from 1917–20. He was promoted very rapidly: Esaul in 1916; Major-General in 1918; Lt.General in 1919; he received title of Prince from the puppet government of Mongolia and became the 'dictator of Mongolia' in Feb.1921.

47 GARF f.111 op.3 d.29 ll.1–1, Dec. 1909– March 1910. Luk'ianov had the aid of four Okhrana agents. When the Japanese President visited St Petersburg in Sept. 1910 he was not given Okhrana protection, however, because the visit was unofficial. Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 141, folder 1a, p.4, DPOO to Foreign Agency, 5 Jan. 1910. The offending journalist— Dr Adrian Polli (a.k.a. Polachek), a German newspaper correspondent in St Petersburg— had been under Okhrana surveillance since 1907.

48 GARF, f.102, op.240, (DPOO 1910g.), d.38, *O propogande v voiskakh*, l.1, 21 Jan. 1910.

49 Ibid., ll.56, 83, 84, Oct. 1910.

Hungarian – and not German – intelligence remained Imperial Russia’s principal espionage foe in the west. The Russian War Ministry spent over twice the intelligence budget of its German section on Austro-Hungarian operations.⁵⁰ The relative quantity of Okhrana reports on both countries seems to indicate that Fontanka operations also focused on combating Habsburg espionage.

3) Military Intelligence blunders

The Okhrana also continued to expand into the domain of the Russian War Ministry’s intelligence section to compensate for some of the perceived inadequacies of the latter. This dim view was not held by the Okhrana alone. One of the leading Austrian counter-intelligence officers noted that the Russian War Ministry’s intelligence section, ‘lacked organisation and energy; their agents were ill prepared and insufficiently trained by their infrastructure.’ In contrast to this, he noted, Russian counter-intelligence operations directed by the Okhrana, ‘stood on a high-level.’⁵¹ The War Ministry had not updated its intelligence system in decades. Prior to June 1905 the principal training guide for military intelligence agents was a set of instructions written in 1880. Only the cream of the officer corps (viz. those who passed the exams to study at the Nicholas Academy of the General Staff – numbering about 70 officers/students per year after 1906) received any theoretical education in intelligence work. And this was only a minor course on the ‘Intelligence [*razvedyvatel’naia*] service,’ which provided no practical training on how to recruit secret agents.⁵² Even this short course was neglected: ‘Secret intelligence was simply not included in the syllabus at the Academy,’ one military intelligence officer later recalled, ‘it was even considered to be a “dirty” business, which was best left to detectives, gendarmes in disguise and other such shady characters.’⁵³

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50 Alekseev, op.cit., p.41. All the same, according to Ronge, Austria-Hungary had begun to share information on Russia with the Germans as early as the 1890s.

51 Ronge, op.cit., p.11.

52 Alekseev, op.cit., pp.27 & 43–44. Alekseev estimates from the Academy’s library records that it possessed in 1911 only five books on ‘Intelligence. Security. Secret Intelligence. Cryptography.’ [*Razvedka. Okhranenie. Tainaia razvedka. Kriptografiia*].

53 A.A.Ignat’ev, *50 let v stroiu* (Moscow, 1948), p.15

To the modern eye there is something comical about the feeble subterfuges of early twentieth century Russian military intelligence operations: involving little more than intelligence (*razvedka*) work in the most literal sense (the word for boy scout and intelligence officer is the same in Russian: *razvedchik*.) So officers in the 1870s and 1880s would simply cross the sparsely policed borders into Galicia, complete with false beards, swordsticks, carrier pigeons and sketchbooks to draw pictures of military fortifications. An officer could make up to twenty intelligence trips (*poezdki*) a year. As late as 1914 the same amateurism was still in evidence – for example, Col. Semenov, the military attaché to Vienna, was spotted on the eve of war by Habsburg intelligence travelling in the south-eastern parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire posing as a tourist!⁵⁴ Indeed, the ‘secret’ intelligence operations of Russian military officers were so blatant in this period – with officers often merely crossing the border without even bothering to change out of uniform or hide their curiosity – that they inspired a new gambling term in the officers’ messes of eastern Germany: ‘Russian impudence’.⁵⁵

These shortcomings were fully exposed when Russian military intelligence came into open conflict with a far more efficient opponent: Japan. The contemporary Polish press poked fun at the Russian War Ministry’s intelligence services, which in 1905 employed the ‘poor and untalented’ dregs of the military and relied on French maps against the ‘very best, most educated and talented officers in the Japanese army.’⁵⁶ At this time the War Ministry’s intelligence section possessed only one Japanese secret agent and the Oriental languages faculty of the General Staff did not even teach Japanese before 1905. And even after 1906 thorough courses in Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Manchurian were relatively neglected

54 Ronge, op.cit., p.53.

55 Alekseev, op.cit., p.154: Alekseev gives it as *Ruskaia naglost*’ in Russian.

56 *New Reform*, 12 April 1910: DPOO translation, GARF, f.102, op.240,d.38, l.56: See also: *Zeit* and *Berliner Tageblatt*, 4 Oct. 1910 and *Hamburger Nachrichten* for more revelations on Okhrana spies in Galicia and the arrest of Ivan Ekspozito. For a summary of the inadequacies of Russian military intelligence in the east see D.H.Schimmelpenninck van der Oye: ‘Russian Military Intelligence on the Manchurian Front 1904–05’ in *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.11, no.1 (Jan.1996).

in Petersburg and taught mainly in Vladivostok.⁵⁷ The Russian military attaché in Tokyo complained in 1908 that they were still having no success in collecting secret intelligence because Japanese intelligence officers: ‘consider all foreigners visiting Japan to be spies and immediately encircle them with surveillance.’⁵⁸

Yet it would be a mistake to see Russian weaknesses as unique in this regard. The principal flaw in the Russian War Ministry’s intelligence work was common to most of its European contemporaries: The use of military attachés based in Russia’s embassies abroad to manage and supervise their network of secret informers. This system provided no sort of buffer or middleman between the spy and the attaché. This system meant that foreign governments always knew who the Russian spies’ case officers were. Foreign governments could, therefore, catch most spies and traitors serving Russia *in flagrante delicto* merely by the simple process of placing the local Russian military attaché under surveillance. Thus, the spy would be uncovered as a result of meetings with the attaché and the attaché compromised as a result of meetings with the spy. In 1897 Austrian surveillance of the Russian military attaché in Vienna, Col. Zuev, and his assistant, Lt.Col.Voronin, enabled them to uncover numerous traitors in the Austrian officer corps.⁵⁹ Later Russian military agents and attachés to Vienna were also forced to leave due to spy scandals: N.S.Ermolov in 1905; K.I.Vogak in 1906; N.K.Marchenko (1906–1910);⁶⁰ M.I.Zankevich

57 Alekseev, op.cit., pp.45–47: 12 teenagers were sent from Russia to a Japanese seminary in Tokyo in order to perfect their linguistic abilities. However, only one student returned to serve in Russia. The General Staff’s Asiatic section in St Petersburg taught Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Mongolian. Urdu, essential for spying on India, was taught only in Tashkent

58 V.K.Samoilov qudt. in Alekseev, op.cit., p.107.

59 Most notably Paul Bartman, an officer who ran a network of agents in Galicia over the past six years concentrating on the railways. He received five years imprisonment (the highest possible sentence): Ronge, op.cit., p.13.

60 Police searched the flat of one Habsburg artillery officer, Alfred Krechmar, on 15 Jan.1910. They discovered proof that he was working for Russia since 1899, France since 1902 and Italy since 1906. Ronge, op.cit., p.31.Colonel N.K.Marchenko, was even briefly arrested in Feb. 1910. GARF, f.102, op.240, d.38, l.16. *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 12 Feb. 1910. Marchenko was released soon after. His chief spy, Alfred Krechmar [Krechmer], was sent to prison. Col.Golmzek at first replaced Marchenko as the chief Russian intelligence officer in Vienna.

(1910–13);⁶¹ and 1913–14 Colonel Baron A.G.Vineken. And their network of informers usually collapsed at the same instant. Russian military attachés in Berlin fared little better: for example, Col.Shebeko was forced to leave on charges of espionage in 1906; as were his successors, Col.A.A.Mikhel'son and Col.P.A.Bazarov (along with his secretary), in 1910 and 1914 respectively.

Nevertheless, the attaché system was not entirely unsuccessful (and of course is still employed in part to this day). Attachés operating on 'neutral' territory were reasonably effective. Col.A.A.Igant'ev spied on Germany from 1907 to 1912 while based in Sweden. L.G.Kornilov (another intelligence officer later to achieve fame after the 1917 revolution) spied on Japan from his base in Peking from 1907 to 1911; as did his assistants Lt.Col.A.M.Nikolaev in Shanghai and Lt.Col.Afanas'ev in Mukden. Neutral territory was so important that a leading director of Habsburg counter-intelligence noted: 'Switzerland was the keystone of both French and Russian espionage.'⁶² The principal directors of Russian espionage here before the Great War were Col.D.I.Romeiko-Gurko in Zurich and Berne and Mikhail Dodonov in Geneva.

The attachés achieved even greater success when assisted by competent directors inside the Russian Empire: most notably Colonel N.S.Batiushin— the director of intelligence as Senior Adjutant in the General Staff of Warsaw Military District from 1905 to 1914.⁶³ His section's principal asset was a spy working as a leading officer in *Evidenzbüro* (the intelligence/counter-intelligence section the Austro-

61 Austrian counter-intelligence had to be cunning as to how they watched Zankevich, because the Habsburg Foreign Office forbade surveillance of him. Zankevich's departure in April at Habsburg Foreign Minister Berchtold's behest was the result of the former's connections to various Serbian spies. Ronge, op.cit., p.57.

62 Ronge, op.cit., p.53. Major Baron G.A.Rozen directed Russian espionage from Switzerland from 1905 to 1906. Dodonov went on to direct guerilla operations in Galicia during the Great War.

63 Some of his various assistants have been named as: Captains Terekhov and Lebedev, and numerous officials from apparently Jewish backgrounds Zigel'berg, Pinkert, Solomon Rosenberg, and Joseph Herz. The latter described by a future head of Austrian Intelligence as 'the right hand of Batiushin, a specialist in forging passports, plans of fortifications etc.' Ronge, op.cit., p.52.

Hungarian General Staff): Col. Alfred Redl.⁶⁴ Col. Gurko in Switzerland was assigned as Redl's principal supervisor. This was in many ways a textbook piece of recruitment. Redl's reliability as a Russian mole was underwritten by the gold standard of espionage: a guilty secret – Redl was homosexual. He was also originally from Galicia (a borderland area where loyalties to the Habsburg dynasty were not so clear-cut) and a spendthrift: two things that also recommended him to Batiushin's intelligence service. Batiushin and Gurko were careful to preserve Redl's cover: even to the point of inventing stories of a rich mistress to explain his comfortable income and to give something for Redl to talk about in Catholic confession. (According to various accounts both sides employed Catholic and Orthodox priests as spies.)⁶⁵ Batiushin even kept the Okhrana in the dark about Redl's service: archival records show that Redl was second on Fontanka's list of hostile foreign spies.⁶⁶ Batiushin and Gurko's caution yielded great results: Redl's spectacular acts of betrayal stretched over a period of more than ten years. He supplied them with highly valuable information, including copies of the Austro-Hungarian army's entire mobilisation plans in 1911.⁶⁷ And the longer

64 Georg Markus, *Der Fall Redl* (Vienna, 1984). On Russo-German espionage rivalry see: Heinz Hohne, *Der Krieg im Dunkeln* (Munich, 1985). See also: R.B. Asprey, *The Panther's Feast* (London, 1959) – a semi-fictional account (though with some factual basis: notably the official dossier on the affair held in the Vienna War Archive); Harold C. Deutsch 'Sidelights on the Redl Case: Russian Intelligence on the Eve of the Great War,' *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.4 (Jan.1989); & Ian D. Armour, 'Colonel Redl: Fact and Fantasy,' *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.2, no.1 (Jan.1987), pp.170–183. Redl began working for Austrian Intelligence in 1900.

65 Gurko gave an interview in 1938 in which he still nurtured the belief that Catholic priests in the Habsburg army informed on those who admitted to espionage during confession. Deutsch, 'Sidelights,' pp.827–28. Russians were also said to use Orthodox priests: For example, Ronge [*Voينا*, pp.55–56] asserted that the priests Maks Sandovich and Ignat Gudima arrested for espionage in Galicia were part of a spy-ring involving Austrian journalists, Habsburg government officials, the Russian Count Bobrovskii and Pochaev monastery: 'In this way espionage and agitation on behalf of the "Orthodox Church" worked hand in hand.'

66 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.23, ll.14–15 ob., 14 Jan.1909. The list, issued by the head of the Special Section, E.K.Klimovich, consisted of 60 persons, mostly Austrian and German officers, with a few Hungarian and Japanese. Top of the list was Col.Evgenii Gordlichka, the head of Austrian Intelligence up to 1909.

67 Austria-Hungary had enjoyed success in this area also in the past: At the end of the 1880s Captain Erwin Müller obtained complete copies of the Russian mobilisation plans in St Petersburg (where he was the Austro-Hungarian military

an agent's cover was preserved, the more secure his loyalty to his case-officers: the growing scale of Redl's crimes only increased Russian intelligence's reserve assets in guilty secrets.

However, this piece of infiltration did not run as smoothly as it appeared. For example, it was never clear who benefited most from the operation. Redl learned early on that Batiushin was embezzling Russian government funds and supposedly blackmailed his case officer into a periodic exchange of expendable agents over the years.⁶⁸ Moreover, Redl's exposure was directly linked to the poor tradecraft of his case-officer, Col. Gurko. In April 1913 Gurko posted to Redl a large amount of money through the ordinary postal system, in an envelope bulging with Austrian bank notes. This suspicious parcel was left uncollected at the Vienna central *poste restante*. It was returned to its point of departure, Berlin, where the post office opened the letter and found that it contained 6000 crowns and the addresses in Geneva of apartments known to *cognoscenti* as operational centres of Russian intelligence.⁶⁹ Major Nikola, the head of German intelligence, informed the Habsburg government of his findings. Not knowing to whom the letter was intended (a pseudonym – 'Nikon Nizetas' – had been used) the Austrian counter-intelligence service decided to redeliver the letter to the Vienna *poste restante* and wait for the traitor to pick up his money. Two further letters also arrived at there in May containing 7000 crowns. The letters were picked up on 25 May 1913. Detectives traced the collector through the taxi he'd caught to the Klomser Hotel in Vienna's fashionable Herrengasse. They discovered his identity from a penknife sheath, which he'd dropped in the taxi and then foolishly collected from the hotel's front desk. Redl had also evidently begun to suspect surveillance after this blunder: he panicked and shredded a piece of paper he'd been carrying. This turned out to be, not for the last time, a highly unreliable means of destroying evidence. Detectives retrieved the paper and when reconstructed they found that it listed addresses connected to Russian, French and Italian intelligence.⁷⁰

attaché). In 1906 they acquired copies of Russian mobilisation plans for 10,000 rubles (Ronge, *op.cit.*, pp.15–16).

68 Armour, 'Redl,' p.176.

69 The names listed were Captain Larg'e, and Messrs Rosetti, Rosselet, Tullio Menozzi, and Trokki.

70 Ronge, *op.cit.*, p.60.

Yet Russian intelligence agents were not the only ones to bungle the affair. That same evening Austrian counter-intelligence officers, Colonels Forlichek and August Urbanski von Ostrymiecz, entered Redl's hotel room only to find the traitor – later to be dubbed 'the hangman of the Austrian army' – in the process of trying to hang himself.⁷¹ Once cornered Redl confessed to some – but not all – of his crimes. Urbanski and Forlichek, wishing to avoid the scandal of a long treason trial, agreed to give Redl a revolver so that he could complete his suicide attempt. When they returned to the Klomser hotel room the next day, 25 May 1913, Redl was dead with a single bullet wound to the head. However, they did not manage to avoid a scandal after all, as the locksmith who helped Urbanski break into Redl's Prague flat leaked details of the affair to the Prague press on 26 May. (The rumour that Redl's wardrobe was full of women's clothing certainly did not help matters). Criticism of Austrian counter-intelligence naturally followed from parliament, from other branches of the military (who were robbed of the opportunity to fully interrogate the traitor and discover the extent of his treachery) and even from the Habsburg royal family (whose Catholic sensibilities had been offended by the suicide).⁷²

The Redl affair, perhaps because of – not despite – all the blunders, revealed the similarities between the Okhrana's struggle with the revolutionary underground, and the espionage duel between Imperial Russia and Austria-Hungary. After all, using the attaché as a case officer was not so dissimilar from the Okhrana's preferred practice of using gendarmes as case officers to their own secret agents. Moreover, the Redl affair revealed the specific hazards in using secret agents, which were only too familiar to the Okhrana. Like Malinovskii and Azef, Redl was loyal to neither side. He was promoted by those he betrayed (the Habsburgs) because he did his job well (i.e. successfully spied on Russia). This showed yet again that a spy who preserved cover was useful to the case officer, but the scandal following the exposure of a spy was often even more useful. So one might argue that the Okhrana expanded into military intelligence not because it lacked the flaws of the War Ministry's system, but

71 Armour, 'Redl,' pp.171–72.

72 Ronge, *op.cit.*, pp.61–62.

rather because military and Fontanka intelligence operations shared the same flaws – and both could benefit by some sort of pooling of resources and learning from one and other’s mistakes.

4) The need to pool resources

Fontanka’s involvement in renovating military intelligence was therefore a natural corollary of previous Okhrana and military mishaps. This was also a product of the rapid escalation of espionage activities: Informers were recruited at a rapid rate. The War Ministry was not able to be too selective about whom they called upon for help. Consequently numerous shady characters entered the service of military intelligence (including ex-*okhranniki* residing on Fontanka blacklists) and the Okhrana was occasionally called upon to vet new recruits. For example, it placed a Captain Maier under surveillance for a short period of time in 1910 and subsequently gave the green light for his appointment as assistant head of the Special Directorate of the General Staff (viz., administrative centre of military intelligence).⁷³

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Moreover, the Okhrana had a reservoir of trained personnel eager to move into a more respectable and patriotic area of intelligence work. Thus, from 1910 to 1911 Fontanka’s Special Section coordinated the transfer of many gendarme officers to the new ‘special counter-intelligence sections’ based in the western cities of the Russian Empire as the ‘principal barrier’ against foreign spies.⁷⁴ The gendarmes were advised to assist the War Ministry’s new counter-intelligence sections in 1911 primarily in the ‘recruitment of secret agents.’⁷⁵ The *okhranniki* had been the key figures in the joint War and Interior Ministry meetings formulating the staff training, structure and functions of these new institutions in the first place.⁷⁶ This move

73 Alekseev, op.cit, p.47.

74 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.34, *Tsirkuliary* 1911 g., l.146, 11 Sept. 1911. See also: GARF, f.102, op.260, d.396, ll.414–415, 25 Dec. 1910; & GARF, f.102, op.308a, d.34, ll.13–14, DP to all Security Sections and Gendarmre Directorates, 18 Sept. 1911.

75 Report of joint MVD-War Ministry meeting of 14 July 1908 qudt. in: Alekseev, op.cit, p.78. A.A.Ignat’ev, the military agent to Paris in 1906, consulted A.M.Harting, the head of the Okhrana’s Foreign Agency, with regard to the recruitment of spies. See: A.A.Ignat’ev, *Obzor raboty Russkogo voennogo agentov Skandinavii i Frantsii, 1908-18gg.*, part 1 (Moscow, 1956), p.23.

76 GARF, f.102, op.316, d.390, *Proekt instruktsii po kontrrazvedki*, ll.3–8, August 1908.

marked the recognition that the old organisational (attaché) system was no longer sufficient; and also that new stricter conspiratorial methods needed to be employed (particularly regarding the more widespread use of spies). One can highlight several areas in which fundamental changes were occurring in military espionage.

– **Military espionage was becoming more specialised.** For example, both Austria-Hungary and Russia established separate desks on individual countries and increased the emphasis on linguistic training for officers according to their field of expertise.⁷⁷

– **Military espionage was becoming more technical.** There was an increasing emphasis on signals intelligence. For example, the Austrians attempted to tap into Russian and Italian telegraph lines beneath the sea. All sides were recognising the need to introduce complex codes, ciphers and establish their own codebreaking departments.⁷⁸

– **Military espionage was becoming more devious.** This is evident from the shift away from the direction of espionage by official diplomatic representatives. The Okhrana was highly influential in this process. For example, the first Russian officers to adopt false identities and live undercover (i.e. without diplomatic protection) while directing military espionage in western Europe were former *okhranniki*: Col.V.M.Lavrov (who posed as a civilian under the pseudonym ‘Ivanov’ while operating in France from 1911) and Col. M.F. von Kotten (who directed operations from Switzerland posing as a civilian by the name of ‘Viktorov’ from 1914). Russia also looked for new recruits in novel and unexpected areas. For example, in 1910 a Lieutenant of the Austro-Hungarian army Baron Alexander Murmann came to the attention of the German General Staff on suspicion of espionage (as he was observed meeting the Russian attaché in Berlin). Murmann had a previous conviction for espionage

77 See: Alekseev, op.cit., pp.150–54. In 1907 there were seven sections in the Habsburg Intelligence Bureau: Russian, Italian, German, French, English, Italian & Balkan. It had a total staff of only 14 officers in all. From 1890 to 1903 Austria-Hungary annually sent two officers from the General Staff to study Russian in Kazan’.

78 Ronge, op.cit., p.43. The Austrian cipher office was directed by Ronge himself (who had been introduced to this kind of work by Major Dzukovskii after his recruitment by Gordlichka in 1907) and Captain Andreas Figl’. It was established in 1912 with 8 officers in all.

on behalf of Russia in 1898 and had since moved to Warsaw. Murmann was caught a second time when his mother, a Vienna schoolteacher, had tried to recruit the mother of another Austrian officer to persuade her son to work for Baron Murmann as a spy. When the Baron arrived in Vienna in 1911 he was arrested, along with his mother.⁷⁹ Mother and son were released, but it later came to light that he was a key figure in training Russian spies in a 'secret school' in Warsaw. He was rearrested in Vienna in 1912.

– **Military espionage was becoming a more cynical business.** The cases of provocation, bribery and blackmail were just as frequent and underhand as any experienced in the struggle between the Okhrana and 'the Revolution.'⁸⁰

– **And in the final analysis military espionage was becoming a more serious business.** Accusations of military espionage came to attract far more severe punishment than simple political offences.⁸¹ France was the first to pass a criminal statute specifically against espionage in 1886, then Britain and Italy in 1889, Russia in 1892, Germany in 1893 and Austria-Hungary in 1896. In 1912 the Imperial Russian State Duma approved a more severe law on High Treason, increasing the maximum sentence from eight to fifteen years hard labour (*katorga*). In the immediate pre-Great War years Russia's spies risked a great deal: In Slovenian and Croatian parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire charges of espionage came to be dealt with by military courts with the power to sentence people to death.⁸²

79 Ronge, op.cit., pp.54–55; & ibid., pp.29–30: on the development of disinformation (particularly in the case of Dloiz Perizich in 1909). And ibid., p.54: on the Cold War-like periodic exchange of captured spies. E.g., the pre-1914 swap of a Russian spy, Lt.Col. Iatskevich, captured in Lvov for a Habsburg spy captured in Warsaw, Lieutenant Robert Valolokh.

80 For example, in early 1914 Alexander Ramanik offered a Russophile member of the Reichsrat, Vladimir Kirilovich, important military documents stolen from Lvov regiments. Kirilovich denounced Ramanik thinking him a *provocateur*. However, when he realised that Ramanik was the real thing he withdrew his denunciation and the case fell through.

81 GARF, f.102, op.240, d.38, ll.30–31: Third Section, Chapter One of the *Voinskii ustav o nakazaniakh* (1869, 3rd pub.) and Chapter Four of the *Ugolovnoe ulozhenie* (criminal code): *O Gosudarstvennoi izmene* (On State Crime).

82 Ronge, op.cit. pp.13 & 53. 'High Treason' carried death penalty (for Austro-Hungarian subjects) whereas 'espionage' (i.e. for foreigners accused of spying) carried five years. See for example, the case of the network of agents under the

5) The Okhrana as Holistic Intelligence Agency

Perhaps the most important reason why the Okhrana expanded into military espionage was the simple fact that it was impossible for it to fight the revolutionary movement purely on one front alone. Intelligence agencies can never be hermetically sealed off from the ordinary world at large, and consequently they become subject to a rather absurd logic of continual expansion, an omnivorous hunger for information of all kinds. Therefore, as 'internal sedition' spread into vast new areas during the course of the 1905 revolution— so the Okhrana had to follow suit. Thus, the unreliability of the army drew the secret police into spying on the army. Thus, attempts by revolutionaries to smuggle guns into the empire drew Fontanka into policing contraband. Finally, and most importantly, the Okhrana perceived that there was no clear dividing line between external and internal security: defeat in war had provoked a revolution, and revolution at home had made the state less secure on the international stage.⁸³ Thus, the secret police in St Petersburg was subject to centrifugal forces in intelligence gathering: pulled ever further outwards both thematically (contraband, criminal behaviour, Court intrigue, national questions, international relations etc.) and geographically (agents from Petersburg were drawn into other Russian cities, into the borderlands and abroad).⁸⁴

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Russian case officer Gampen in 1911. One of his agents, Bravura, was uncovered and arrested in Budapest. Another, a Finn, Jan Kopken, was eventually arrested in Agram: this was a part of Austro-Hungarian Empire that carried the death penalty for espionage. His sentence, however, caused outrage and it was commuted to 16 years. Dr Schaupp was the head of the Higher Court for trying cases of espionage in Vienna. In contrast to this prior to the 1890s charges of espionage in Austria-Hungary risked a maximum of only five years hard labour.

83 On this connection see D.M.McDonald, 'A lever without a fulcrum: Domestic factors and Russian foreign policy, 1905–1914,' in *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. H.Ragsdale (Cambridge, 1993).

84 Bogucharskii, 'Tret'e otdelenie,' pp.92–94: Military revolt was even the prime factor motivating the original expansion of the Third Section beyond Russia's borders in response to the Polish 'mutiny' of 1830. They sent spies abroad to monitor the activities of Polish émigrés. In the 1840s Chaikovskii went as an emissary to Turkey, but also to establish a system of espionage on the southern borders (in the Caucasus, Odessa and Bessarabia). In 1843 the Third Section launched an investigation into disaffection in the army. In 1838 & 1847 it also issued warnings about the 'grumbling of the people' (*ropot naroda*) against the recruitment system

The Russo-Japanese war was the crucial turning point in this regard.⁸⁵ Particularly the affair referred to in chapter six – involving the notoriously unscrupulous Captain M.S.Komissarov. The British Ambassador to St Petersburg, Sir Charles Hardinge, first received a hint of Okhrana penetration into the British Embassy in June 1904, when a prominent Russian politician warned him that he, ‘did not mind how much I reported in writing what he told me in conversation, but he begged me on no account to telegraph as all our telegrams are known!’⁸⁶ In September 1904 Hardinge discovered further details that a department of the Interior Ministry had been founded, ‘with a view to obtaining access to archives of the foreign missions in St Petersburg.’⁸⁷ This ‘department’ was directed by Komissarov and subordinated to the *de facto* head of the Okhrana, P.I.Rachkovskii, in 1905.

Captain Komissarov’s other targets were the American, Swedish and Belgian Embassies. The British Embassy reports indicated that Komissarov’s operations were rather less than secret. In February 1906 one British Embassy official reported that the problem was getting worse: ‘The porter and other persons in connection with the Embassy are in the pay of the Police department and are also paid on delivery of papers...Emissaries of the police are constantly waiting in the evening outside the Embassy in order to take charge of the papers procured.’⁸⁸ Hardinge wrote upon his return to the Foreign Office in 1906 that, ‘During my occupancy of the Embassy a sum of £1000 was offered to the Head Chancery servant for one cipher... A letter was also extracted at night from one of y[our] desp.[atch] boxes by means of a false key and photographed by the secret police.’ Another report stated that: ‘Recently documents have been supplied, which show beyond doubt that access has been obtained to the archives of the Embassy, which have been taken off to the house of

85 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 63, folder 2: Manasevich-Manuilov was in charge of the Okhrana’s intelligence gathering on Japan from 1904–1905. They followed almost every step of the Zilliacus and Dekanozi conspiracies and acquired a copy of Japan’s diplomatic cipher.

86 Christopher Andrew & Keith Neilson, ‘Tsarist Codebreakers and British Codes,’ *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 1 (1986), p.6.

87 Spring Rice to Grey, 12 April 1906, secret dispatch 263, FO 371/123/12817

88 Spring Rice to Grey, 28 Feb. 1906, secret dispatch 151, FO 371/123/7670

the Agent Komissarow [sic], where they have been photographed.’⁸⁹ The purloining of documents appears to have ended in May 1906 with the accession of a new Foreign Minister, A.P.Izvolskii, and a new British Ambassador, Nicolson. Komissarov blamed the cessation of his activities on the fact that: ‘In 1906 someone evidently betrayed us because the English Ambassador, Benckendorff, received inquiries about a department which controlled and threw its weight about in all the Embassies. My name was also mentioned. On the basis of this the office was closed.’⁹⁰

Policing the Borderlands: Galicia

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The holistic tendencies of the Okhrana’s work in military espionage can also be detected in the problem of policing Russia’s borderlands. The War Ministry’s strategic surveillance of Russia’s western borders was tied up in the nationality question, as was the Okhrana’s counter-revolutionary struggle. For example, in 1906 Josef Pilsudski allegedly offered his services gathering intelligence in Peremyshl on behalf of Austria-Hungary in return for support for his Polish socialists (as did Dr. Vitol’d Iodko).⁹¹

From 1900–1905 P.I.Rachkovskii organised a ‘Galician agentura’ under the future head of the Special Section and former internal agent, M.I.Gurovich.⁹² The Okhrana’s overlap into military espionage was exposed in particular by the Polish opposition with the aim of rallying anti-Russian sentiments.⁹³ They provided convincing evidence that the Okhrana was branching out, citing, for example, the case of

89 Spring Rice to Grey, 12 April 1906, secret dispatch 263, FO 371/123/12817

90 PTsR, vol.3, *Dopros M.S.Komissarova*, p.141. Russian decryption of British ciphers undoubtedly continued into the war when a Russian official warned the British intelligence officer Sir Samuel Hoare that his existing ciphers could be read as easily as a ‘newspaper.’ Sir Samuel Hoare, *The Fourth Seal* (London 1930), p.57.

91 But Vienna turned down the offer (Ronge, op.cit., p.16). In 1913 the DP reported that Polish socialists were forming armed units to fight on behalf of the Habsburgs if they went to war with Russia. See: Alekseev, op.cit., p.79.

92 Agafonov, *Zagranichnaia agentura*, pp.36–42.

93 See for example the series of articles on Russian espionage in the Polish language Cracow newspaper ‘New Reform’ from Feb. to May 1910.

Cheslav Dekert, a former secret agent of the German government, who had been arrested by the Okhrana in 1906 while smuggling arms from Austria-Hungary to Polish Russia. According to the press reports of his trial Dekert was recruited after his arrest by 'Russian security' (*Russkaia okhrana*). At first his task was to spy on various Polish parties in Austro-Hungarian Galicia. His case officer, Marian Kozlovskii at St Petersburg Security Section, allegedly directed Dekert to organise a new Polish revolutionary party and then to betray them to the police. However, Kozlovskii also gave Dekert an additional task: 'To study the lay-out of forts around Cracow.'⁹⁴ A similar case arose in January 1910 with the arrest of Ivan Novoselov in Lvov on the charge of espionage on behalf of Russia in Galicia, allegedly under the direction of Captain Arkhipov, a gendarme at Warsaw Security Section.⁹⁵ The Galician, Berlin and Viennese press publicised the details – some of them apocryphal – of a spate of arrests of Russian citizens in Austria-Hungary on charges of espionage.⁹⁶ The Austrian press claimed that the agents were all supervised by the former head of the Okhrana's Foreign Agency, Harting.⁹⁷

The well-publicised unscrupulousness of the Russian secret service was a helpful tool for Austro-Hungarian propaganda in these cases

94 Press cutting from *Galichanin*, 2 Feb. 1910: GARF, f.102, op.240 (1910g.), d.114, *O kontrrazvedke*, l.2. Dekert was sentenced to two years imprisonment, and Kozlovskii six months.

95 *Berliner Morgen Post*, 6 March 1910, translated into Russian by the Main Directorate of Press Affairs: *Ob areste russkikh shpionov*. See GARF, f.102, op.240, d.114, 5–8. Novoselov (also given as Novosel'tsov) confessed to studying and photographing the fortifications in Sokal', Okhnov, Bel'ets and Lvov on behalf of Russia. Warsaw Security Section denied that either of the men worked for them. Capt.Arkhipov was later identified as a border guard.

96 *Ibid.*, ll.13–57. Other arrestees included Ieches (Iestses) in 1910; Lieutenant Nikolai Semenov (who was found to be in possession of over 200 military plans and drawings); a Petr Kuzov (a border guard who claimed to be working for the Polish Governor General Skalon); a student called I.V.Demin; Antonin Renkasevich; and Petuzov – about whom *Berliner Tageblatt* (14 April 1910) & the Habsburg-Polish press alleged were working for Warsaw Security Section. From Feb. to May 1910 Milobenskii (a Lvov Social Democrat), Tencharovskii, Vladimir Dobrzhanskii, Serzhputenskii, Georgii Shreier, Vasilii Ivanov, Mechislav Kuchmaevskii (who was said to have worked for Harting and Bylov since 1906) and Edward Gol'dberg were amongst the other Russian subjects arrested in Lvov and Cracow for allegedly spying on behalf of the Okhrana.

97 GARF, f.102, op.240, d.114, l.29, Krasil'nikov to DPOO, April 1910.

of espionage. For example, when 30 Russian terrorists were arrested by Austrian police in Vienna in September 1910 the authorities claimed to have apprehended a number of Okhrana *provocateurs* amongst them.⁹⁸

Spying on the Balkans

The Okhrana was also drawn into the Balkans while investigating connections between Balkan nationalist groups in Macedonia and Russian terrorists.⁹⁹ Although the Bucharest headquarters of the Balkan Agency closed in 1905, the Okhrana continued to spy on the area, relying on information supplied by the Odessa Gendarme Directorate. Indeed, if anything, interest in this area grew. In 1911 the Special Section established a new office (under a former *okhrannik*, Captain Krechunesko) to spy on the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, based in the Constantinople Embassy. The 'Intelligence Section' (*Razvedyvatel'noe otdelenie*) in Prague also assisted the Okhrana as its main source of information on the Pan-Slav movement.¹⁰⁰

The Okhrana had different motives from the Ministries of War and Foreign Affairs for spying on the Balkans. As a result its attitudes on international policy were frequently at odds with the dominant tendency in Russian foreign policy. This was because the Okhrana's interest in foreign affairs was purely a function of its overriding responsibilities to maintain order inside the Russian Empire. For example, the Special Section was a significant dissenting voice in the Pan-Slav sympathies underpinning many of the government's attitudes in international relations.¹⁰¹ The Okhrana's Balkan Agency frequently drew attention to the close relationship between Slav

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98 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 142, folder 1h, DPOO to Foreign Agency, 22 Sept. 1910. See also: 'Arest terroristov' in *Rech'*, 19 Sept. 1910.

99 See GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, Tsirkuliary 1907 g., ll.65 & 84, July & Aug. 1907. See also: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 213: on Russian revolutionaries sending 30,000 rubles to the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee to purchase explosives in 1907.

100 GARF, f.111, op.4, d.23, l.1, 5 Jan. 1910. On the Pan-Slav society 'Mladina'.

101 GARF, f.111, op.5, d.309, ll.125 & 187: Okhrana reports on the Pan-Slav Congresses at Prague in 1909 and in Sofia in 1910.

nationalists in the Balkans and Russian terrorists. The Director of the Department of Police, Zuev, kept the Foreign Ministry informed of the anarchist conference being held in Bulgaria in June 1910.¹⁰² Bulgarian nationalists working in Macedonia (the IMRO) contained a significant number of anarchists and socialists and they were reported to be in collaboration with Russian anarchists in Salonica.¹⁰³ These groups were also a cause for concern because they helped train Armenian nationalist groups.¹⁰⁴ The Okhrana monitored the press in the Balkans on themes as varied as the Bulgarian elections in February 1914, and the Limon von Sanders affair in April of the same year.¹⁰⁵

The secret police thus had a far less romantic view of Pan-Slavism than most government officials. Krechunesko argued that the teaching in Rumanian in schools in Bessarabia was mostly harmless because, ‘Rumanian nationalist songs are not of a revolutionary character...[and the inhabitants] appear to be loyal citizens.’¹⁰⁶ Fontanka seemed to make a distinction between loyal subjects (be they Rumanian or whatever) of the Russian tsar and disloyal subjects of all nationalities. For example, the Department of Police was deeply suspicious of connections between Russian and Rumanian socialists— such as the Russian SR Mikhail Brandinski who fomented opposition to Russian foreign policy in Bucharest in 1914¹⁰⁷, and the émigré Arbore-Ralli who, like Burtsev in Paris, made a habit of exposing Russian spies in Rumania.¹⁰⁸

The Okhrana’s reports on the shifting groupings of international alliances in the Balkans were fairly prophetic. Krechunesko reported

102 GARF, f.102, op.240 (DPOO, 1910g.) d.94, l.81.

103 GARF, *ibid.*, l.96, Odessa Gendarme Directorate to DPOO, 16 July 1910.

104 GARF, f.102, op.260, d.289, *Tsirkuliary: Armianskaia revoliutsionnaia organizatsiia “Dashnaksutium”*, ll.1–7; particularly– ll.1–2, 2 July 1907 DP circular to gendarme border posts. The report notes that Armenian armed divisions and terrorists (53 students in all) were being trained by Bulgarian nationalists in Sofia. See also *ibid.* l.4, DP circular to District OOs, 20 Feb.1908: On estimates that there were 100 Armenian students in Bulgarian military schools connected to the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee and the noted bandit-terrorist leader Boris Sarafov. These Armenians were allegedly connected to groups that had carried out assassinations of Russian gendarmes in 1905.

105 GARF, f.102, d.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.300 (1), ll.5–6, l.33.

106 GARF, *ibid.*, ll.8–9.

107 GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.9, ch.1, l.26, 21 June 1914.

108 *Ibid.*, l.18, 20 Feb. 1914.

throughout the first half of 1914 to the head of the Special Section, M.E.Broetskii, on Bulgarian military preparations at the port of Dedeagach, which was ‘hurriedly fortifying itself, and inside they are constructing a warehouse for shells. Our agents are convinced that Bulgaria has secured an agreement with Austria and Turkey and in February an uprising [*vozstanie*] will start in Macedonia, and then a war will begin – Bulgaria and Turkey against Greece and Serbia. For this uprising they have already formed Macedonian bands, and in Giumiul’dzhina and her surrounding area in Bulgaria the Turks have concentrated 45,000 *bashibazouks*. A week ago the nephew of the murdered Nazim-Pasha, Zeki-Bei, came ashore in Dedeagach with six Turkish officers to take charge of the *bashibazouks* in Giumiul’dzhina. The predominating conviction is that a general war this year is inevitable.’¹⁰⁹

The source of these interests in the Balkans was the lesson learned from the 1904–05 war with Japan and the efforts of Colonel Akashi to cultivate unrest inside Russia in order to weaken the regime’s confidence on the international stage. As a result of this the Okhrana grasped the contiguous relationship between domestic and foreign policy. The Turks were observed to be following Akashi’s footsteps not just after the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, but also before the Ottoman Empire officially entered the war in October 1914: By fostering Muslim separatist groups inside the Romanov Empire, political agitation in Baku, the organisation of bandits in Dagestan and even spreading propaganda calling for an independent Georgia.¹¹⁰ In the south, by August 1914 Kutais Provincial Gendarme Directorate, under Captain Levitskii, took over the duties of spying on the Ottoman Empire from Krechunesko. The latter had already been forced to cease his activities in Constantinople despite the fact that Russia was not yet at war with Turkey. Nevertheless, the Okhrana clearly expected that war with Turkey was imminent. Levitskii was responsible for monitoring the build up of troops on the Turkish border in the autumn of 1914.¹¹¹ The gendarmes in the southern provinces were responsible for fighting the guerrilla tactics of bands of Turks

109 GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO 1914g.), d.300 (1), l.4, Krechunesko to head DPOO, M.E.Broetskii, 4 Jan. 1914.

110 Ibid., ll.66, 80, and 105, reports Aug.–Sept. 1914.

111 GARF, f.102, op.244, d.300 (2), ll.1–240.

who were acting, ‘with the aim not only of intelligence, but evidently also of blowing up bridges [in Bessarabia in November 1914].’¹¹² Since January 1914 Levitskii had also been watching malcontent Turks and Armenians who were hostile to the Young Turk regime.¹¹³ The greatest coup for the Okhrana came when Krechunesko was involved in the surprise defection of the former Chief of Turkish Police, Shadi-Shasik-Oglu who appeared on the steps of the Russian Embassy on 23 January 1914 and was smuggled out by the Russians four days later.¹¹⁴

Watching the skies¹¹⁵

The secret police had been interested in aviation ever since the successful long distance flight of Count Zeppelin’s dirigible in 1908¹¹⁶ and the development of the aeroplane by the Wright brothers after 1903— as the brothers began negotiating the sale of individual planes to various European governments. Fontanka took fairly comprehensive measures against the possibility of radicals using aeroplanes to perform terrorist attacks:¹¹⁷ Zuev compiled a list of all qualified pilots and air clubs in the Russian Empire. He also ordered the Foreign Agency to watch the Paris air clubs with an eye for any known terrorists who were learning to fly.¹¹⁸ In 1907, despite their reservations on a moral level, the Wright brothers entered negotiations

112 GARF, f.102, op.244, d.300, pr.1, l.36, report from 24 Nov. 1914.

113 GARF, f.102, op.244, d.300b, l.1, 21 Jan. 1914: Iusuf-Rasikh Bei and his brother Khasan Ali had been scouring Batum and Odessa with a Turk, Akhmend-Safumat-Bei, to recruit supporters in their fight against the Young Turk committees.

114 Ibid., l.3.

115 For a broad cross-section of Okhrana reports on airplanes on the Western borderlands in 1914 see: GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.71, *Nabliudenie za vozdukhoplavaniem*.

116 Alfred Gollin, *No Longer an Island: Britain and the Wright Brothers, 1902–1909* (London, 1984), p.315

117 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 140, folder 1e, p.881, 11 Aug. 1909. The Foreign Agency compiled a list of all the aeronautical clubs in France and Germany for the Special Section.

118 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, Zuev to all Gendarme Directorates, 12 Aug. 1909. See also the Okhrana report from 1911 published in *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no.3 (1961).

(through a certain Charles Flint) with the Russian government (represented by Admiral A.M.Abaza).¹¹⁹ By 1908 the Russian government had taken over the patent in Russia: partially neutralising any direct risk of revolutionary groups purchasing aircraft and mitigating the risk of aerial terrorism, at least in an age before passenger flight.¹²⁰

The Okhrana's interest in aviation was just part of a broader process of its growing interest in technological advances. The Special Section created a 'technical section' in 1909 to watch innovations in technology that could have a bearing on security policing. The result was that some of their concerns appear to be rather far-fetched. For example, the border posts were issued a warning about the so-called 'Kaiser Torpedo' in 1909: a time bomb which could be fitted to an express train and 'launched' at the Russian border.¹²¹ But then again, unexpected and unorthodox methods are the very essence of political terror.

The secret police's interest in technological developments proved invaluable by 1914 and the Special Section was one of the first government agencies to recognise that the principal use of the aeroplane was for photographing military defences.¹²² In July 1914 the Okhrana began to co-ordinate information gathering on the sightings of German reconnaissance planes on the Russian border.¹²³ They relied on reports of sightings of German planes from the local population. However, collecting information on the western borderlands appeared to have been difficult because there was a large pro-German element to the population. The chief gendarme in Aleksandrovsk claimed that German families were running the engines on their cars all day to hide the sound of aeroplane engines and that the local police and priests were all pro-German. Meanwhile

119 Gollin, *No Longer an Island*, pp.200–01 & 260–61.

120 From a report by Col. H.C.Lowther, *quid.* in *ibid.*, pp.385, 404–05. As a result the British government commissioned a report which was produced by Colonel Guy Wyndham on 15 Dec. 1908 entitled: 'The Development of Aerial Navigation in Russia.'

121 Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 10, S.E.Vissarionov, 5 July 1909.

122 GARF, f.102, op.244 (DPOO, 1914g.), d.71 dub.(1), ll.1–72. The gendarmes were also entrusted with the task of destroying airfields in the city of Mitava by order of General Rennenkampf.

123 GARF f.102 op.244 (DPOO 1914g.) d.71 lit.b; d.72.

the anti-German inhabitants were often just as unreliable a source of information due to a certain element of mass hysteria which the Special Section called 'war psychosis' (*voennyi psikhoz*). Captain Rogovskii, from St Petersburg Provincial Gendarme Directorate, reported on cases of rumours of German spies in the area that, 'in every single case...[the rumours] appeared to be the product of fantasy owing to mass psychosis [*na pochve massogo psikhoza*] under the influence of the current military events.'¹²⁴

The ghosts of 1905 profoundly influenced the activities of the Okhrana from 1906 to 1914. The shared neurasthenia among *okhranniki* often induced a distortion and misinterpretation of the threats to the tsarist regime. Their presumption was that if a revolution was to begin again then it would follow the same pattern as the 1905 revolution. The Okhrana therefore organised its intelligence gathering accordingly. Frederic Zuckerman has argued that this created a flaw in the interpretative abilities of the Department of Police, 'that of evaluating the present in terms of the past.'¹²⁵ This is true in some cases. For example, Fontanka's specific worries about a revival of the terrorist movement in 1914 were a little misplaced.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, in general these were rational fears: political assassinations, from Sarajevo in 1914 to Leningrad and Marseilles in 1934, were repeatedly the trigger for revolutionary transformation in European politics over the next twenty years. Moreover, the concern that the 1905 revolution would repeat itself was not an altogether unreasonable conclusion: the course of events in 1917, after all, was not so different from the initial pattern of events in 1905.

Consequently, the outbreak of war in 1914 was greeted warily by the Okhrana. As Komissarov pointed out in his memoirs, 'all but one official [of the Security Sections] reported that war would lead to military defeat and revolution.'¹²⁷ The Director of the Department of Police told all the Security Sections to prepare themselves for the

124 GARF, f.102, op.244, d.71b (2), 15 Sept. 1914. Captain Ivanov was sent to discuss the matter with aviators Lt.Gen. Koven'ko, Col.Ul'ianin and Col.German on 29 Aug. 1914.

125 Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police in Russian Society*, p.211.

126 A.A.Miroliubov, 'Dokumenty po istorii Departamenta politzii perioda pervoi mirovoi voiny,' *Sovetskie arkhivy*, vol.3 (1988), p.81.

127 *New York Times*, 12 Oct. 1924, IX, 1.

coming revolution.¹²⁸ The substance of police reports in 1914 shows that the Okhrana had gained a reasonable understanding of how and why revolutions start. It had gained this as a result of a unique experience: it was a counter-revolutionary organisation that had survived a revolution. Contrary to most interpretations, this had enriched, modernised and expanded the Okhrana's understanding of political sedition.¹²⁹

The so-called Durnovo Memorandum to Nicholas II in February 1914 showed that police experience invested a remarkable prescience in some of the more gifted officials. It provides a convincing demonstration of Teodor Dan's contention: 'However paradoxical it sounds, the extreme reactionaries in the Tsarist bureaucracy grasped the movement of forces and the social content of this coming revolution far sooner and better than all the Russian "professional revolutionaries" and particularly the Russian Marxist Social Democrats.'¹³⁰ The former Minister of the Interior predicted that an all-encompassing war would soon break out as a result of Anglo-German economic rivalry and he even accurately predicted the alignment of the other European powers in this war.¹³¹ He asserted categorically that Russia was not ready for war. Russia had neither the industrial base nor the rail network to fight Imperial Germany. He predicted that the war would devastate the traditional officer corps, viz. the backbone of military stability and support of the Romanov regime. Thirdly, he predicted that not even the liberals would be able to hold in check the demands of peasants and workers awoken by a full-scale war. Therefore, as a result the revolution would be not just political, but social.¹³² Virtually all branches of the secret police

128 Hoover, Okhrana Archive, Box 194, folder 2, MVD, Department of Police Circular no.175641, 2 Sept. 1914. GARF, f.102, op.245, (1915g.), d.27, ll.87–92.

129 F.S.Zukerman, 'Political Police and Revolution,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.27, (1992), p.295. Zuckerman argues that: 'the political police in the post-1905 era, especially after 1911, was considerably less modern and less capable than between 1902 and 1904.'

130 Also qtd. in D.Lieven 'Security Police,' p.251. See T.Dan, *The Origins of Bolshevism* (New York, 1970), p.399

131 Mark Aldanov, 'P.N.Durnovo- Prophet of War and Revolution,' *Russian Review*, Vol.II (1942), pp.31–45.

132 For various publications of the full text of the memorandum see: E.V.Tarle, 'Germanskaia orientatsiia i P.N.Durnovo v 1914 godu,' *Byloe*, XIX, pp.161–176. Michael Pavlovich (ed.), 'Zapiska Durnovo,' *Krasnaia nov'*, no.10, 1922,

delivered warnings of revolution in 1916 and early 1917.¹³³ Petrograd Security Section chief, K.I.Globachev, gave the government ample warning in 1916 of the imminence of the coming revolution.¹³⁴ The Moscow Security Section chief, A.P.Martynov, provided even more incisive reports explaining *why* the regime was in severe danger of collapse. He controversially argued that the unrest of the masses was not due to internal sedition but rather as a result of mistakes made by the government, decline in the prestige of the tsar, and the scandals emanating from the murky world of Court intrigue.¹³⁵ The Okhrana's warnings went unheeded because of a common failing in the relationship between all intelligence agencies and the state: "“Unwelcome” reports will always be considered unbelievable by the home offices... “welcome” reports, confirming previous notions of the home offices, war ministries, general staffs, and foreign offices, will be least discounted.”¹³⁶

The security preparations in Petrograd were highly efficient and the Okhrana successfully neutralised the organised leadership of the revolutionary parties.¹³⁷ However, the revolution of 1917 was more than a conspiratorial *coup d'état*: it was a social revolution and military mutiny, and the Okhrana was not designed to deal with a mass militarised uprising. Some kind of fundamental transformation in the Russian polity was clearly in the making by 1914. Yet, the war was all-important in the nature and extent of the eventual collapse. To mangle a phrase from George Dangerfield: Imperial Russia may have been comparable to a seriously ill man with a gait slowed down by his ailments, but the cause of death in 1917 was collision with a very large bus.

- pp.178–199. The first English translation is given in F.A.Golder (ed.), *Documents on Russian History, 1914–1917* (New York, 1927).
- 133 V.S.Diakin, *Russkaia burzhuazia i tsarizm v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny, 1914–1917* (Leningrad, 1967), pp.314–15– for the text of Petrograd OO's warnings to the tsar of the imminence of revolution. See also: 'V ianvare i fevrale 1917: Iz doneseniia sekretnykh agentov Protopopova,' *Byloe*, no.13, kn.7 (July 1918), pp.91–123. 'Obshchee polozhenie k iuliu 1916 g.: Zapiska departamenta politzii,' *Byloe*, no.3 [31] (March, 1918), pp.24–30.
- 134 'Politicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune fevral'skoi revoliutsii v zhandarmskom osveshchenii,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, no.4 [17] (1926), pp.4–35.
- 135 'Tsarskaia okhranka o politicheskom polozhenii v strane v kontse 1916g.' *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no.1 (1960), pp.204–09. See Zuckerman, 'The Political Police, War and Society in Russia,' pp.44–47.
- 136 Alfred Vagts, *The military attaché* (Princeton, 1967), p.xiii.
- 137 See for example 'Fevral'skaia revoliutsiia i okhrannoe otdelenie,' *Byloe*, no.1 [29] (January,1918), pp.158–76.

Some Concluding Remarks

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The Marquis de Custine referred to the immense importance of outward appearance in Russian statecraft during the reign of Nicholas I when he wrote on the three expressions of the tsar: severity, solemnity, politeness. ‘It is a visible change of decoration, with no transition, like a mask put on or off at will. Do not misunderstand what I mean here by the word “mask.” I am using it in the strict sense. In Greek, *hypokrites* meant an actor: a hypocrite was someone who wore a mask for a theatrical performance. So that I mean that the tsar is always playing his part and that he carries it off like a great actor.’¹

De Custine intended this to suggest that the tsarist system was fundamentally different to those of the West. Yet it was in this very regard which Imperial Russia had the most in common with evolving constitutional systems in western Europe: Russia was not the only place where the reality fell far short of the ceremonial pretence. All the same, Russian liberals felt themselves to be the only ones short-changed on the reformist promises of an autocrat. P.N.Miliukov condemned the Fundamental Laws in 1906 (borrowing a phrase from Max Weber) as ‘sham constitutionalism.’ True, the Fundamental Laws constructed little more than the façade of constitutionalism. Yet this was a fairly typical beginning for an evolving constitutional system. Take, for example, George Orwell’s comments in perhaps one of the finest essays on England’s unique identity: ‘An illusion can become a half-truth, a mask can alter the expression of a face. The familiar arguments to the effect that democracy is “just the same as” or “just as bad as” totalitarianism never take account of this fact. All such

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1 Marquis de Custine, *Letters from Russia* (Reprint, London, 1991), p.72

arguments boil down to saying that half a loaf is the same as no bread... Even hypocrisy is a powerful safeguard. The hanging judge, that evil old man in the scarlet robe and horsehair wig, whom nothing short of dynamite will ever teach what century he is living in, but who will at any rate interpret the law according to the books and will in no circumstances take a money bribe, is one of the symbolic figures of England. He is a symbol of the strange mixture of reality and illusion, democracy in privilege, humbug and decency, the subtle network of compromise by which the nation keeps itself in its familiar shape.²

The Okhrana undoubtedly shared most of the flaws of England's 'evil old hanging judge', with rather less of the virtues. The paternalistic posturing of enlightened bureaucrats and gendarmes as 'defenders of the weak' was quite clearly a hypocritical charade. Ever since the foundation of the Third Section the secret police had kept a close watch on public opinion: internal instructions show that this was by no means motivated by a desire for greater democracy: 'Public opinion,' the founder noted, 'has the same importance for the authorities as a topographical map has for an army commander.'³ The political police was designed to preserve the power of entrenched interests. Political police officers were mostly motivated by an innate conservatism and an eagerness to get on in life: an often servile desire to please, to belong. Thus on the micro- (individual) and macro-historical (departmental policy, ideology) level there was very little evidence of good intentions behind the actions of the *okhranniki*. But then sometimes the road to reform can be paved with bad intentions. The Okhrana repeatedly warned the government that widespread social discontentment needed to be ameliorated in order to preserve entrenched interests.

Moreover, the hypocritical charade served a purpose: it suggested that the government ought to listen – rather than dictate – to the people, if only for appearance's sake. The self-created mythology of police personnel compelled them also to play a part: taking into

2 George Orwell, 'The Lion and The Unicorn: Part I: England Your England,' in idem, *Essays* (Penguin, London, 2000), pp.144–45.

3 Squire, *The Third Department*, p.201.

account tolerance, moderation, ‘morality’ and ‘honour’.⁴ To back up this charade they had to act on it: the line between seeming and doing was very thin indeed. (Just as later rhetorical emphases on scientific amorality, ruthlessness, the cleansing of society and the surgical removal of enemies etc. were to have their own consequences in the Soviet period.)

This fundamental difference to the Soviet era can be seen from the fact that the *okhranniki* defined their opponents as enemies of the *state*, not ‘enemies of the people.’⁵ Consequently, rather than a war for survival they saw the struggle as a kind of duel.⁶ Such values might seem odd to us now, but the Okhrana should be judged by the morality of its own age, and not be subjected to anachronistic condemnation as a totalitarian police in embryo.⁷ This will help us

- 4 See Spiridovich’s training lecture: Anything that ‘is repugnant to the morale of the officer’s calling [and] to the honour of the officer’s uniform must not be tolerated in the methods of political investigation.’ Schneiderman, ‘From the files,’ pp.88–89. If anything, this belief was even more pronounced in military intelligence. Eg, General Batiushin was described by one of his subordinates as: ‘a quiet efficient man, who directed espionage more from a sense of right than from a sense of duty. General Batiushin defined the position of the average secret agent in the following words: “A spy must remember that honour is a man-made word. All honour to him who dishonours his name, and ends the case with silence as the only reward”.’ Col.V.K.Kaledin, *K.14-O.M.66. Adventures of a double spy* (London 1934), p.15.
- 5 Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution* (London, 1960), p.289. The term “enemy of the people” (*vrag naroda*) became popular among the Russian revolutionary underground in the 1860s. But was only adopted by the political police in 1918, and only regularly in the 1930s.
- 6 A perfect example of this concern with honour was the Interior Minister P.A. Stolypin. He had supposedly been injured in a duel in his youth. He later challenged the Duma deputy F.I.Rodichev to a duel after the latter had referred to hangman’s noose as a ‘Stolypin necktie’ (Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.30). While attending an air display in 1910, Stolypin climbed into an aeroplane piloted by a staff-captain Matsevich, whom he knew to be a supporter of the terrorist branch of the SR party. Stolypin was challenged by the man to come up and fly with him, Stolypin looked into his eyes, believed his pride as a sportsman to be stronger than his political convictions and so agreed. Matsevich died in a plane crash shortly after. Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.97. Spiridovich resolved to challenge Guchkov to a duel after Guchkov’s suggestions in the Duma that there was something more behind the Stolypin assassination. (Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.159).
- 7 On the origins of duelling in connection with social change in Russia see: Abby A.McKinnon, ‘Duels and the Matter of Honour,’ in *Russia and the World of the Eighteenth Century*, R.P.Bartlett, A.G.Cross & Karen Rasmussen (eds.) (Columbus, Ohio, 1988). On duelling and moral turpitude amongst Russian army officers see: Aleksandr Kuprin, *Poedinok* (St.Petersburg, 1905). Kingsley

to understand why the Okhrana was so vilified *in its own era*. For example, the placement of spies inside terrorist organisations might be seen as a very sensible precaution today, but offended the moral sensibilities of most ‘right-thinking people’ at the time. Outsiders at the time also saw the struggle as a duel (though with rather less sympathy towards the Okhrana). George Kennan remarked that ‘we have at present a strange spectacle. Before our eyes there has taken place something like a duel between the mightiest power on earth armed with all the attributes of authority on one side, and an insignificant gang of discharged telegraph operators, half-educated seminarists, high-school boys, and university students, miserable little Jews and loose women on the other, and in this unequal contest success was far from being on the side of strength.’⁸

The essence of this duel was a hypocritical concept of honour: the Okhrana fought to defend the state’s outward integrity, rather than any inner values. Duelling throughout the ages has retained this essential feature: it was a ritualistic social action, acting a part, protecting external appearance above all else.⁹ Duelling was a game, albeit a potentially deadly one. As was espionage. Of course it takes two to tango: a large section of the revolutionary opposition also took on the duellist mentality.¹⁰ It was perhaps for this reason that the officers of the Okhrana showed a degree of restraint, tolerance and humanity towards their sworn opponents (the revolutionary agitators) which was lacking in the actions of its successor, the Cheka.

Amis used similar stories of boredom and moral decay among the Russian officer corps as inspiration for his novel *Russian Hide-and-Seek*. The title referred to a style of duelling played in the pitch dark (preferably late on moonless nights) where each player had to shout out in the dark and the others had to shoot in the direction of where they heard the shout. Each player was honour bound not to move after shouting; though, of course, most usually did.

8 G.Kennan extract from *Siberia and the Exile System*, vol.2 (New York, 1891): qtd. in W.B.Walsh, *Russia and the Soviet Union* (London, 1958), p.395.

9 See: Irina Heyffman, *Ritualised Violence Russian Style: Duelling in Russian Literature and Culture* (Stanford, 1999).

10 A.A.Petrov carried out the assassination of Karpov to clear his own personal sense of honour (Zhilinskii, *Organizatsiia i zhizn'*, p.55.) Aleksandr Ulianov also saw the revolutionary struggle as a duel between the intelligentsia and government, see: Manfred Hildermeier, ‘The Terrorist Strategies of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Russia 1900–1914,’ in Mommsen et al. (eds.), *Social Protest*, p.81. As did Aleksandr Mikhailov, who called for ‘single combat with the government’: Qtd. in Hosking, *People and Empire*, pp.256–57.

Accepting that their own position was based on a charade meant that the *okhranniki* could hardly work up a violent level of moral indignation against those who opposed them. One leading security official, S.P.Beletskii, gave an interview to the press shortly after his fall from grace in 1916. Saving his venom for the scheming bureaucrats who had brought about his demise, he mused in contrast to this that: 'I understand the struggle with the revolution, with the enemies of the state order. It is an honest struggle, eyeball to eyeball. They blow us up and we prosecute them and penalise them.'¹¹ This explains why the *okhranniki* appear to be more 'civilised' than one might expect. Alexander Herzen found gendarmes to be: 'quite kindly individuals.' Others found them to be 'gentlemen.'¹² Early on in his career the future head of Moscow Security Section, Martynov, was witness to Trusevich's interrogation of Balmashev, the murderer of D.S.Sipiagin (the Minister of the Interior in 1902). Martynov describes a scene which would be unthinkable just twenty years later. Balmashev, still wearing the officer's uniform he had worn to accomplish the assassination, was invited in to the office of the district prosecutor, M.I.Trusevich. The future Director of the Department of Police did not threaten, beat, humiliate or torture the assassin, he merely offered Balmashev a cigarette from his gold cigarette case and engaged him in a 'friendly chat'.¹³

This sort of role-play can be glimpsed even in supposed arch-reactionaries like the former Minister of the Interior, P.N.Durnovo, who in the words of one historian, 'had no hate for revolutionaries. His attitude towards them was one of gentle irony, and to those whom he considered to be intelligent and gifted men (like the writers Korolenko and Anensky, and the scientist Klements) he even strove to be useful, so far as this depended on him.'¹⁴ The highly conservative head of St Petersburg Security Section, Aleksandr Gerasimov, could not conceal his profound respect for the bravery of a terrorist – Zinaida Konopliannikova, the murderess of General Min – when he watched

11 *Birzhevye vedomosti*, 7 March 1916: Quoted in Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka Sixteen*, p.307.

12 Squire, *The Third Department*, p.187. Daly, *Autocracy Under Siege*, p.15.

13 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.40.

14 Mark Aldanov, 'P.N.Durnovo – Prophet of War and Revolution,' *Russian Review*, vol.II (1942), pp.39–40.

her fearlessly walk to the scaffold.¹⁵ Indeed the respect that the tsarist ‘oppressors’ reserved for their opponents sometimes bordered on admiration. This can be glimpsed in the reaction of one *okhrannik*, Colonel Ivanov, after he had interrogated the murderer of Stolypin, Dmitrii Bogrov. Ivanov enthused that the terrorist was ‘one of the most remarkable people I ever met. An astonishing man.’¹⁶ In a similar vein is the tribute of a prosecuting attorney after he had sent the seven members of ‘Karl’s Flying Detachment’ (a terrorist cell) to the gallows: ‘They were genuine heroes.’¹⁷

The Okhrana *mentalité* was, therefore, closer to the revolutionary movement than to the liberals in many ways. When the tsarist regime collapsed in February 1917 it was the revolutionaries – such as Vladimir Burtsev – who argued that the secret police should be preserved and the liberals – such as Lvov and Guchkov – who considered the prospect intolerable.¹⁸ The centre parties opposed retaining a political police force because they judged its use to be antithetical to progress, liberty and democracy. However, secret political police forces are antithetical to the liberal progressive state only as a theoretical concept. In the day to day affairs of liberal democratic states the ideals of liberty, democracy, and progress are hardly sacred: ‘Compromise in thought and action is the essence of a liberal constitutional regime.’¹⁹ And it is possible for a liberal constitutional regime to emerge from a system of autocratic imperial domination: ‘Systems of domination survive by adjusting to the demands of the emancipation movements: by mimicking emancipation, systems of domination attempt to forestall more fundamental change. Emancipation movements emulate the oppressor in order to subvert oppression. Together domination and emancipation, empire and liberation constitute a force field in which they increasingly interpenetrate one another, and in the course of backstage negotiation

15 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.122–23.

16 Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, Richard Wraga intro., p.xi.

17 Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.122.

18 R.Deacon, *A History of the Russian Secret Service* (London, 1972), pp.202, 208–09. In the autumn of 1917 the Provisional Government were beginning to wake up to the need for a secret service and sent Svatikov to try and salvage what was left of the Foreign Agency’s network of spies.

19 T.H.von Laue, ‘The Chances for Liberal Constitutionalism,’ *Slavic Review*, vol.24, no.1 (1965), p.42.

the actual process of humanisation of social relations takes shape. Thus time and again we see today's emperor wearing the clothes of yesterday's emancipation. Naked, except for the clothes of yesterday's emancipation.'²⁰

Yet the Russian liberal movement did not play along with the game: they never wasted an opportunity to point out, loud and clear, that the emperor was naked. This hardly endeared them to the Okhrana.

Miliukov believed that the centre parties had not formed a working relationship with the government because unlike their Western counterparts they lacked 'the cement of hypocrisy.'²¹ This was an acknowledgement of a flaw as much as a proud defence of principles: It was the source of what Miliukov referred to as the 'maximalist' tendency in Russian politics.²² Imperial Russia was undone not by its contradictions, but by an unwillingness to brush these contradictions under the carpet.

In practice the political police had proved to be a necessary adjunct to liberal reform. The Third Section was established on the understanding that internal security consisted not only in 'crushing the criminal plans of rebels' but also in the government doing all in its power 'to retain in its hands the standard of the progressive movement which it itself has started.'²³ The Okhrana continued in this tradition: the 1880-81 formation of a more pervasive security police was to act as the stabilising element in a cocktail of reforms which included the creation of a consultative assembly that the tsar

20 Jan P. Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation: power and liberation on a world scale* (London, 1990), pp.366-67. See also Ariel Cohen, *Russian Imperialism*, p.19.

21 Paul Miliukov, *Russia and Its Crisis* (New York, 1962), p.26. See Von Laue, 'The Chances for Liberal Constitutionalism,' p.42. Von Laue points out that the phrase was borrowed from E.B.Lanin (E.J.Dillon), in *Russian Characteristics*.

22 P.N.Miliukov, *Rossii na perelome* (Paris, 1927), pp.35-36. See, for example, the statement of V.M.Chernov: 'in the sphere of the spirit, in the sphere of pure thought, there is no space for compromise. Minds and hearts can be moved only by an idea which marches fearlessly to its logical conclusion.' Qutd. in Von Laue, 'The Chances for Liberal Constitutionalism,' p.42. See: V.M.Chernov, *The Great Russian Revolution* (New Haven, 1936), p.140.

23 Qutd. in D.Lieven, 'The Security Police,' p.250. Memorandum to Alexander II in 1861.

endorsed hours before his death on 1 March 1881.²⁴ The founder of the Department of Police, M.T.Loris-Melikov, reported that ‘police and punitive measures are insufficient,’ and proposed that repression should be accompanied by measures which ‘indicate the government’s attentive and positive response to the needs of the people, of the social estates and of public institutions.’²⁵ His plans for more representative government were ruined, not prompted, by the revolutionary threat. Just over a quarter of a century later Stolypin echoed these sentiments when he wrote that: ‘If we occupy ourselves purely with the struggle against revolution, then at best we will only remove the consequences and not the cause.’²⁶

No event evinces the survival of this dualistic role for the Okhrana more clearly than Stolypin’s ‘*coup d’etat*’ of 3 June 1907. In this *coup* Stolypin dissolved the Second Duma, expelled the SD deputies and introduced a new electoral law.²⁷ His methods in this act were condemned as reactionary and unconstitutional for four reasons: firstly because he relied on the services of St Petersburg Security Section, the bugbear of the constitutionalists. Secondly, because St Petersburg OO supposedly gained the compromising document – setting out SD plans to spread propaganda in the armed forces – through a *provocateur*, Ekaterina Shornikova.²⁸ Thirdly because the

24 Hans Heilbronner, ‘Alexander III and the Reform Plan of Loris-Melikov,’ *Journal of Modern History*, 33 (Dec. 1961), p.384. Idem, ‘The Administration of Loris-Melikov and Ignatiev, 1880–1882’ (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1954). PSZ, series 2, vol.54, part 2, no.60492, article 9.

25 Hosking *People and Empire*, p.337.

26 Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.35: Stolypin note of Feb.1907.

27 For the text of Stolypin’s 3 June 1907 Manifesto – see *Gosudarstvennaia дума III sozyv 3, 1 sessiia. Spravochnik 1910 g.* (St Petersburg, 1910). For the 3 June law see: Russia. *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossisskoi imperii. Sobranie tret’e* (34 vols., St Petersburg, 1885–1916), vol.26, no.27805, arts., 86 & 87; & vol.27, no.29242.

28 A.Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Authority Restored*, (Stanford, California 1992) p.339. The security measures taken in this coup were massive: StPbOO directed the arrest of 200 persons on 3 June and up to 600 political unreliaables in the next few days alone. Troops were placed around the Tauride Palace, at all surrounding bridges and all railway stations in Petersburg. Eight newspapers were heavily fined (to the tune of 7000 rubles) and masses of literature were confiscated including even sheet music for the *Internationale*. See Alfred Levin, ‘June 3, 1907: Action and Reaction,’ in A.D.Ferguson & A.Levin (eds.) *Essays in Russian History* (Hamden, Conn., 1969), pp.231–273. And for reports from Gerasimov to Stolypin on the massive liquidations of the revolutionary parties see: *Revoliutsiia 1905–1907gg. v Rossii: Dokumenty i materialy*, Series E, Vol. IV, Prt.I: 1907 (Moscow 1963), p.161.

document had supposedly been written in the first place by agents of the Okhrana and then passed on to Shornikova.²⁹ And finally because when it appeared that the Duma would not give in to Stolypin's demands and expel the 55 SD deputies, Stolypin persuaded the tsar to dissolve the Duma and create a less democratic election law by Imperial *ukaz*.³⁰

However, in defence of the Okhrana's role in the coup, the accusations of provocation regarding the actions of their agent, Ekaterina Shornikova, are flawed. Firstly, because Shornikova didn't even write the incriminating document which provoked the stand-off with the SDs. The document was in fact written by a genuine revolutionary, V.S.Voitinskii.³¹ Secondly, because the conviction of the deputies didn't even depend on this document. The key piece of evidence in the conviction was in fact a copy of the resolutions at the Third SD Party Congress calling for an armed uprising.³² Moreover, the depiction of the *coup* as a reactionary measure is debatable. The passage of the electoral law by Imperial Ukase was still (just about) within the bounds of the constitution as it was enacted on the authority of article 87 of the Fundamental Laws. (Though of course the change in electoral law was a change in the Fundamental Laws, which was supposed to be illegal.) Yet, if we follow the Möbius strip of Stolypin's political strategy we find that the intention of this limitation of suffrage was to save the Duma from political collapse. Far from wishing to turn back the clock, he was convinced that to abrogate the Fundamental Laws would be 'a wicked provocation and the beginning of a new revolution.'³³

29 Solovev, 'Tsarskie provokatory i delo sotsial-demokraticeskoi fraktsii II gosudarstvennoi dumy,' *Voprosy istorii*, No.8 (1966), pp.124–9.

30 SOGD, 2nd Duma, 2nd Session, Vol.II, zasedanie 34, 7 May 1907, pp.193–292: Stolypin first had to answer questions from the Duma on the reasons for the apparently illegal police raid on the flat of SD Duma representative I.P.Ozol' on 7 May. He went on to demand the expulsion of the 55 SD deputies on 1 June 1 1907 (2nd Duma, 2nd Session, 52oe zasedanie).

31 V.S.Voitinskii, 'K istorii aresta i suda nad sotsial-demokraticeskoi fraktsiei II Gosudarstvennoi dumy,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.3 (16), p.76. See also: V.S.Voitinskii, *Gody pobed i porazhenii*, Vol.II, pp.201–4: in which he admits that the accusations against him and the SD fraction were largely true.

32 Ruud and Stepanov, *Fontanka 16*, p.103.

33 Stolypin to L.A.Tikhomirov in: A.Levin, 'P.A.Stolypin; A Political Appraisal,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.37 (1965), p.448.

Stolypin's actions were motivated by the fact that the extreme-left threatened to bring just this sort of abrogation about, by making a mockery of the existing constitution. A large portion of the extreme-left in the first two Dumas had only entered parliament in order to use the tribune as a means of freely spreading revolutionary propaganda (as speeches in the Duma could be printed in full in the press). As a result the Duma came to be seen by the Okhrana as 'a kind of All-Russian revolutionary meeting.'³⁴ Consequently, Nicholas II, his court advisers (Prince Meshcherskii in particular) and the extreme-right (particularly the demagogic URP) favoured curbing the powers of the Duma and reducing it to the status of a mere consultative assembly.³⁵ In engineering a more conservative Duma, Stolypin showed that the parliamentary system could work and thus preserved their legislative powers. Even the reactionary rival of Stolypin, P.G.Kurlov, conceded that 'this law provided a workable [*rabotosposobuiu*] State Duma... [and] the possibility of co-operation between the government and the Third State Duma... [which] was in all regards more productive than all other sessions of the Duma.'³⁶ The third June system was a quintessentially middle-of-the-road measure: it frustrated the attempts by both the extreme-left and the extreme-right to destroy the Duma. The Okhrana's role was central because it neutralised the possibility of the revolutionary parties exploiting the situation to foment mass insurrection. The Okhrana was, by this very fact, instrumental in saving the Duma from political emasculation.

This role is at odds with the explicit convictions of the leading *okhranniki* in the last years of Romanov rule. P.G.Kurlov submitted a report to Protopopov at the end of 1916 calling for the dissolution

34 Gerasimov, *Na lezviu*, p.75.

35 See his editorials attacking the Okhrana in the journal *Grazhdanin*, vol. 37 (25 Sept. 1911), pp.12–15. Andrew Marshall Verner, 'Nicholas II and the Role of the Autocrat During the First Russian Revolution 1904–1907' (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1986). One alternative model preferred by the tsar was the so-called 'Bulygin Duma' of 6 Aug. 1905. See: George E.Snow, 'The Peterhof Conference of 1905 and the Creation of the Bulypin Duma,' *Russian History*, no.2 (1975), pp.149–62. On Court hostility to liberals see: Alexandra to Nicholas, 14 Dec. 1916. The tsarina suggested arresting and exiling the leading liberal politicians: Fuhrmann, *Wartime Correspondence*, p.675.

36 Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi Rossii*, pp.95, 98 & 101.

of the Duma and a return to the pre-1905 constitutional situation.³⁷ As a result of this rumours were circulating on the eve of the revolution that the Ministry of the Interior was plotting yet another *coup*, only more reactionary than the third June measure. The head of Petrograd Security Section, General Globachev, recommended on the eve of the February Revolution that the dissolution of the Duma was the only measure which would restore order.³⁸ Globachev has been quoted as motivated by a virulent anti-liberalism, accusing them of 'high treason' and that: 'All the subsequent work of socialists and Bolsheviks toward the decomposition of Russia is only the logical consequence of the treachery of these turncoats.'³⁹

However, these attacks have been taken out of context. Globachev became so irritated with the Duma liberals not from a purely theoretical abhorrence of liberalism, but because they upset social tranquillity and agitated for dismantling authoritarian rule during the Great War. At this time most European liberals were temporarily submerging their differences in the interests of fighting a united war effort on behalf of their own nation, even erecting temporary systems of authoritarian rule. Russia's liberals – Globachev argued – not its reactionaries, were unique at this time. 'They tried to discredit the prestige of higher power in the eyes of the grey masses... The State Duma, the representative organ of the country, became the agitational platform for the revolution in this country... The people's representatives...not thinking about the consequences, decided to rouse the dark masses on the eve of a turning point in military fortunes on the front, with the exclusive aim of satisfying their own personal ambitions. Surely this was not a patriotic scheme. On the contrary, by their work, these people committed high treason. History knows of no other examples of similar treachery. All the subsequent work of socialists and bolsheviks is by comparison merely the logical outcome of the treachery of these turncoats.'⁴⁰ Certainly his comments

37 Ibid., pp.285–6.

38 Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police*, p.51; Globachev, 'Pravda o Russkoi Revoliutsii,' pp.25,27,80.

39 Ibid., p.3. See F.S.Zuckerman, 'The Political Police, War and Society,' in Frans Coetzee (ed.) *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War*, (Oxford, 1995) pp.43–44. Kurlov, *Gibel' imperatorskoi Rossii*, pp.285–86.

40 Globachev, 'Pravda o Russkoi Revoliutsii,' p.3.

betray an inclination towards the ‘stab-in-the-back’ theory (similar to a rather more notorious embittered loser, Adolf Hitler): ‘If Russia faced a general front of the Central Powers on the outside, then the Central Powers had allies in the form of our foremost intelligentsia, forming an internal front to lay siege to the authorities to the rear of our armies.’⁴¹ This sort of myopic delusion could well have formed the basis for unpleasant developments in Russian reactionary politics in the future. But to take this idea any further would not only be counter-factual game-play, it is also confuted by the behaviour of most *okhranniki* after the February Revolution, as they attempted a reconciliation with liberalism. On the more concrete level of established historical fact— it shows that Globachev did not consider the Okhrana and the Duma to be natural enemies: Quite the contrary – one cannot be ‘betrayed’ by one’s enemies, only by one’s allies, friends, collaborators.

Constitutionalism and the Okhrana need not be seen as wholly incompatible. In actual fact they needed one another in order to survive. The police could not control nor keep track of the behaviour of the masses. The Duma was not always an albatross around the Interior Minister’s neck. Stolypin found it useful to pressure the tsar into pre-emptive reforms: e.g. he encouraged Nicholas II to approve reformist measures prior to the convening of the Duma on the grounds that these measures were going to be introduced by the Duma in any case and if Nicholas did not institute the reforms then the Duma would gain all the credit.⁴² Unfortunately, Stolypin was the exception rather than the rule. All the same his tenure had offered a glimpse of a glimmer of hope for the post-1905 compromise.⁴³ Even one of his worst enemies, P.G.Kurlov, described Stolypin’s appearances in the

.
41 Ibid., p.4.

42 ‘Perepiska N.A.Romanova i P.A.Stolypina,’ *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.5 (1924), pp.102–128; 7 *ibid.*, Stolypin to Nicholas II, 10 Dec.1906, pp.106–07. This collection of letters covers correspondence between the Prime Minister and the tsar from 1906 to 1909. The letters show that Nicholas was resistant to liberalisation of the restrictions on Jews, which Stolypin wanted to relax in order to bring about some sort of uniformity in the laws of the empire.

43 Of the 43 ministerial incumbents over the five years before 1917 only two were taken from the Duma. This might also have been the beginning of co-operation between the Okhrana and the Duma had the incumbents, Aleksei Khvostov and Protopopov, not been so thoroughly unsuitable individuals.

Duma as ‘a series of thoroughgoing triumphs,’ noting that even at times when Stolypin had to express bitter truths his speeches were met ‘with noisy applause.’⁴⁴ When the Duma eased the pressure for police reform (e.g. 1909–11 and 1915–17) the Okhrana slipped out of the control of the Interior Ministry and fell under the corrosive influence of Court intrigue.

Meanwhile, the Duma needed the police because Russian society was too unstable, too divided, too idealistic, prone to political extremism and unaccustomed to open democratic government. Unfettered democracy in this environment was extremely unstable. A recent comparative study of the collapse of tsarism and of the Soviet Union draws attention to the views of the reforming bureaucrats of the nineteenth century, whereby constitutions: ‘have to be in step with a country’s political, social and cultural realities, and they go ahead of them at their peril.’⁴⁵ The Okhrana observed a growing recognition of this fact among liberals towards the end of 1916: ‘The Kadets quite literally contemplate a revolution with feelings of horror and panic. This dread is so great that if there was only the tiniest possibility of agreement with the government, if the government offered the slightest concession, the Kadets would run to meet it with joy.’⁴⁶ But it was a little late in the day for some sort of tenuous alliance. Miliukov conceded as much himself in August 1917, ‘inwardly... we know that all the events of recent months have shown clearly that the people could not accept freedom...All this is clear, but we cannot admit it. Admission would mean the failure of the whole cause and our whole life, the collapse of the whole world view we represent.’⁴⁷

44 Kurlov, *Gibel’ imperatorskoi Rossii*, p.95. For Stolypin’s speeches in the Duma see: P.A.Stolypin, ‘*Nam nuzhna velikaia Rossiia.*’ *Polnoe sobranie rechei v Gosudarstvennoi dume i Gosudarstvennom Sovete, 1906–1911* (Moscow, 1991).

45 John Gooding, ‘Constitutional Government in Russia: Problems and Perspectives,’ in Ian D.Thatcher (ed.) *Regime and Society in Twentieth Century Russia* (London, 1999), p.70. He was paraphrasing: M.M.Speransky, *Proekty i zapiski* (ed.S.N.Valk, Moscow 1961), p.33. On the weak social basis for constitutionalism, see: R.B.McKean, ‘The Constitutional Monarchy in Russia, 1906–1917,’ pp.44–67 in *ibid.*

46 StPbOO report on the Kadets Nov.1916, *qutd.* in Pearson, *Russian Moderates*, p.122.

47 *Qutd.* in A.S.Senin: “Liberals in Power: Is History repeating Itself?” in *Russian Studies in History: Journal of Translations* (Winter 1994–5), p.41.

Most senior officials in the tsarist regime had long-since abandoned the ‘dreams of a beautiful autocracy’ guided by an all-seeing benevolent secret police. The political police used conspiracy in a more pragmatic, even cynical, short-termist strategy of repression of the organised centres of radical opposition. The ‘dread Okhrana’ was a form of government bluff, which might be called sooner or later, a paper currency underwritten by fool’s gold. But all the same it bought the regime time. Without a security police force to protect it, the Provisional Government was toppled by a small well-organised band of conspirators exploiting the irresistible social revolution in October 1917. The Okhrana had specialised in liquidating just this sort of organisation and cutting it off from the masses. The formidable tsarist police *apparat*, despite its manifold evils, assisted political reforms by maintaining a degree of control over the more radical elements of the left. The security police system of late Imperial Russia was far from ideal, to say the least. And, to be sure, it had certainly not reconciled itself to liberal democracy. It even struggled to come to terms with the rudimentary democratic environment of post-1905 Russia. Yet, the Okhrana helped create a situation more conducive to ‘Victorian compromise’ transitional politics and the slow but steady evolution of a parliamentary system. An overemphasis on the collapse of the tsarist regime in February 1917 and the ensuing police terror of the Soviet era has tended to obscure this fact.

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