

TWO LIES THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

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The Nationalisation of Women

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BM HURRICANE
LONDON
WC1 3XX
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Two hoaxes emanating from Tsarist Russia cost the world millions of lives.

One was the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, 'discovered' by the Russian police who altered a French satire on Napoleon III. The other was the Decree for the Nationalisation of Women, written as a satire by a saloon keeper upon Anarchism which, as a rightwinger, he presumed was some form of extreme Bolshevism. It will be seen there are certain features common to both. The most important was that many honest people could not appreciate the truth about Bolshevik Russia when the facts seemed as strange as the fiction.

The state of ignorance and superstition which followed years of Tsarism meant that any lie could be accepted by elements of the population, whether it flew into the face of normal common sense or not. Fifty years of hostile lies and repression of Anarchism made it possible for the more sophisticated West to accept any lie about Anarchism, and it is no wonder two thousand years of lies and superstitions did the same about the Jews. The best part of a century later, the Jewish conspiracy story is still going the rounds.

ANTI-ANARCHIST HOAXES

The Protocols had a life of their own which goes merrily on in fascist, fundamentalist Islamic and ultra-montane Catholic circles. They have even got mixed up by some lefties with Zionism (though in fact the hoax does not suggest modern Zionism, i.e. Jewish Israeli Nationalism, but

the supposed internationalism of Jewry). It started life as a joke on Napoleon III and anyone who didn't see the point was held to be lacking a sense of humour.

The Immoral Decree may have also started off as a joke designed by a publican to entertain his customers, and anyone who didn't see it was held not to be a good fellow and boon companion. It got out of hand when used for propaganda purposes. Even though it hit the wrong target, it caused even greater suffering than the Protocols. It discredited anti-Stalinism. Many who should have known better decided that the stories of huge slave labour camps of State Communism must have come from the same school of forgery. When it was discovered they were true, it justified their casting aside illusions about socialism. They turned to the illusions of capitalism or even to those of nationalism which had started the forgery in the first place.

Specifically Anti-Anarchist hoaxes have been numerous, mostly subordinate to the Shock Horror story that all Anarchists throw bombs all at the time, no matter at whom or for what purpose, and all who throw bombs or use political violence are therefore Anarchists. The story was considerably useful to Tsarist police agents, but it originated as a hoax against Portuguese Republicans (hence the Portuguese-style hat and cloak). Since then, of course, there have been many anti-Anarchist hoaxes, reaching its crescendo with the supposedly neo-Situationist drop-out student movement producing fake pamphlets and newspapers patently ridiculous but purporting to be anarchist, which seems to be the present method of persistent camouflage by reactionaries.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

The "Protocols" started life as a satire on the Bonapartist regime. In his usual flashy style, Napoleon I called (1807) a meeting of Jewish "elders" - rabbis, leading businessmen, and unelected community representatives - in what he termed "The Grand Sanhedrin", a term from the biblical days of Jewish history, to answer certain questions which the Emperor put to them. If answered satisfactorily he guaranteed to relieve all disabilities suffered for profession of the Jewish religion. In fact, these had already been abolished by the Revolution, but it was a personal historical point that he wished to make.

Years after Napoleon's downfall and death, his alleged nephew Louis-Napoleon was elected President, made himself dictator in a military coup, then finally Emperor Napoleon III (the "second" was a fiction). His imperial dictatorship was long on repression, short on stability and he tried to reconcile all the different forces in France. He made overtures to the capitalists, flattered the workers, tried to manipulate every faction in his favour and against. He courted the anti-clerical Freemasons and the most extreme political Catholics, manipulated the Bourbon legitimists while invoking the Revolution that overthrew them. He dabbled in every kind of international intrigue and betrayed everyone, friend or enemy. Always he appealed to the legend of the grandeur of the first Napoleon.

There was a solid core opposed to his every move, the most famous being the writer and poet Victor Hugo, whom he had ejected from the elected government. Maurice Joly was an admirer of Hugo's and he wrote a satire on Napoleon III - "Dialogue des Enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquie ou le politique du xix.e siecle" (1864). In the

original version Machiavelli, in hell, explains to a French statesman how France should be run from the grave (i.e. Napoleon I giving the orders). It was published openly, without giving the names of the Bonapartes. In a later surreptitiously published version "Badinguet" (the accepted nickname for Napoleon III, for which there are alternative explanations*) ran a lodge, which met in a graveyard at one of the First Empire's battlefields. The "lodge" was based on the 1807 Grand Sanhedrin, but the only Jew in it appeared to be financier Achille Fould.

The German contribution

Joly's book went out of print after "Badinguet" surrendered to the Prussians in 1870 and the dynasty crumbled. Thirty years later a Russian picked up a second-hand copy, and realised its rabble-rousing potential. The story, rewritten as a Jewish plot conceived in hell, was now of a Grand Sanhedrin of rabbis meeting in a graveyard who planned by devious means, through capitalism and socialism, to conquer the world. The Grand Master was no longer Napoleon III but a mysterious Chief Rabbi of Everywhere. In the first Russian version his name is Badinski.

This story coincided with the birth of modern anti-Semitism and was based upon it. "Anti-Semitism", in the

* "Badinguet" is variously claimed to be (a) the name of the workman in whose clothes Louis-Napoleon escaped from a fortress prison (b) his real father, a dancing master, rather than a Bonaparte (c) a medical student called Badinguet, who in a cartoon views a suicide brought in for dissection, saying, "Isn't that the pretty Eugenie whom I had last week?" - coincident with the announcement of the imperial marriage to Eugenie (d) because of his mistress Miss Howard, who financed the coup, he may have been called derisively in English "Bad and gay" (in the old sense!) No satire on him could avoid the name.

sense that all Jews are responsible for each Jew, and each for all; and that Jewry is based on race rather than religion, so that whether they are for the Hebrew religion or against, are nationalists or cosmopolitans, capitalists or socialists, makes no difference. This "one big plot" theory is a modern invention by Wilhelm Marr, a German writing in the 1880's and 90's. It was created to discredit socialism and capitalism, and in favour of the feudal order. Up to then, all socialists had used what now seems anti-Semitic phraseology, classifying Jews with capitalism or religion, and taking for granted that a Jew who had become a socialist, anarchist or atheist was no longer one, just as the world in general accepted that a Jew who became a Christian was no longer a Jew. The most they admitted was a linguistic difference in some countries. This was logical but has become superseded by the idea of race floated first in the 80's by several German professors, misinterpreting contemporary research into the origins of the Aryan group (the Indo-Caucasian language) as racial rather than linguistic.

Much later, in Vienna, that a National Socialist twist was given to it, by Adolf Lueger and this was picked up in Germany in 1918.

The Okhrana steps in

In 1891 there was a systematic deportation of Jews from Moscow, based on religious bigotry. Pobelonstev, head of the Holy Synod, declared on behalf of the Orthodox clergy that there had to be a clean sweep of Jewry - "one third must convert, one third must die, one third must flee". (The first option shows it was still not racially motivated). This followed a series of anti-Jewish measures, all based on

religious persecution, favouring conversion and all emanating from the clergy. With the gathering revolutionary movement, the Russian secret police, the Okhrana, appreciated how useful to them the teachings of Wilhelm Marr might be in suppressing socialism. How perturbed the superstitious Russian peasant would be to find the enemies of the Tsar urging him to revolt were identified also as the enemies of God!

The unknown person, probably a freelance writer rather than a spy, who offered the rewritten Joly pamphlet to the Okhrana for reward, was at first disappointed. When the rewritten Joly was shown to the religious bigot Nicholas II, he knew it was a forgery because he had read the original, and the satire against Napoleon III (who had joined the Crimean War against Russia) was appreciated in the Kremlin. He declined his assent, saying that such a "holy cause" would be debased by use of a forgery. Nor did he did not approve of the implicit "debasing" of the Old Testament.

The convening of the first Zionist Conference by Theodore Herzl (at which the Tsar's policies came in for criticism) may have made him change his mind, or it may have been the Okhrana for once went against his wishes and had it published by the Union of Russian People. At any rate, in the aftermath of the war of 1905, it appeared in its first Russian version. Squads of reactionaries, self-styled "The Black Hundreds", were set up by the Union of Russian Peoples, specifically for acts of terror against the Jewish population (irrespective of belief or loyalty), with the intention of dissuading the revolutionaries from action by the knowledge that they would be the cause of the suffering. Their 'bible' was the Protocols.

The Protocols grow and change

Numerous versions of the Protocols followed with the desperate efforts of the Okhrana to stave off the coming revolution against Tsarism. Each version had different Grand Masters, sometimes "Grand Rabbis", and each was more fantastic than the previous one. The Rothschilds, supreme examples of capitalism, always figure prominently, as does Karl Marx, who in one version appears from a Prague grave to explain the code he gave in "Das Kapital"! (Why he had to travel from Highgate Cemetery is not explained). But amongst the "Grand Rabbis" in varying versions were such non-Jews as the mysterious Badinski (Badinguet?), Sir Stratford de Ratcliffe (British Ambassador to Turkey), anarchist Peter Kropotkin, Prime Minister Lord Palmerston and any number of prominent anti-Tsarists. Sometimes in high office one finds Jews as diverse as Leon Trotsky, Lord Reading and Theodore Herzl (he gives the orders direct from a special place in hell in one version). Even Queen Victoria turns up once (more often Prince Albert). These pre-World War I versions are strongly influenced by Greek Orthodox bigotry, and are always opposed both to capitalism and to socialism, as well as to the enemies of Imperial Russia.

With the rise of Bolshevism, the Protocols became more specifically anti-Semitic in the real sense (as distinct from anti-Judaic) equating all Jews with Bolshevism, and restricting attacks on capitalists to those of Jewish origin. They were the main reason for the pogroms in the Ukraine during the Russian Civil War, and they were introduced to the West by the London "Times", then and for many years before and since the organ of the British Establishment and

the Foreign Office in particular.

Our Lord and Ford

The British Establishment severed its connection with the forgery under pressure from members of the Cabinet such as Herbert Samuel and Lord Reading, opponents of anti-semitism, both Jews well within the British Establishment. During the war Dr. Chaim Weitzmann, head of the fledgling Zionist organisation, had persuaded Balfour and Churchill to adopt his plan for a "homeland" for the Jews in Palestine ("without prejudice to the rights of the existing inhabitants") Churchill seems to have given the absurdity of the Protocols' contention about "Jewish Bolshevism" some credence, since he stated that he supported Weitzmann in "the fight between Zionism and Bolshevism for the soul of the Jewish people". Under pressure from above "The Times" finally decided the Protocols were a forgery.

The story was picked up by Henry Ford, running an anti-Semitic campaign from Dearborn, Illinois, where his car producing empire lay. The "Protocols" were divested of their Greek Orthodoxy and embellished with clerical-fascist Roman Catholicism. The anti-capitalist message altered to being anti-financier. When Ford went into finance himself, he modified this too, and later abandoned the whole campaign which was affecting his car sales.

The "Protocols" were in full swing when the Nazis came along, though they did not make much use of them. What went down with superstitious Russian peasants, backward "Times" journalists and a superstitious car manufacturer from Illinois, would scarcely fool a modern German audi-

ence. Only when they came to power did the pornographic Nazi Rosenberg make use of them, but chiefly in cartoons. The inter-war British Fascists were chary of them after Sir Oswald Mosley went spare at a Henry Ford version featuring millionaire Levi Leiter (head of Marshall Field), who happened to be Mosley's first wife's grandfather as well as a backer of a commercial competitor of Ford, as the Grand Rabbi.

The current versions are either extreme rightwing Roman Catholic or Fundamentalist Islamic based and reflect those respective biases. Now the older post-Joly version has been revived in Russia there may well be a dialogue in some celestial or diabolical region between Joly and the unknown Russian freelance journalist as to which of them is entitled to sue for the royalties.

The other forgery was of less duration. It was the famous "Immoral Decree". In one respect both had the opposite effect to what was intended. No rational person could possibly believe either. As a result of both being alleged against Bolshevism, thousands and perhaps millions of intelligent people discredited the real truth about Soviet Russia. The two forgeries helped to discredit socialism by being associated with Bolshevism long after any intelligent person would have seen it was an oppressive slave state, because of the assumption that the real truth was a third forgery.



Russian peasants



Sholem Schwartzbard. Anarchist, watchmaker, born at Bessarabia (Russia) 1888, died Capetown 1938. He took revenge on the pogroms of the Black Hundreds by killing the Hetman responsible, Simon Petliura, in Paris on 25th June 1926. He was cleared by a French jury despite his admission that he killed Petliura.

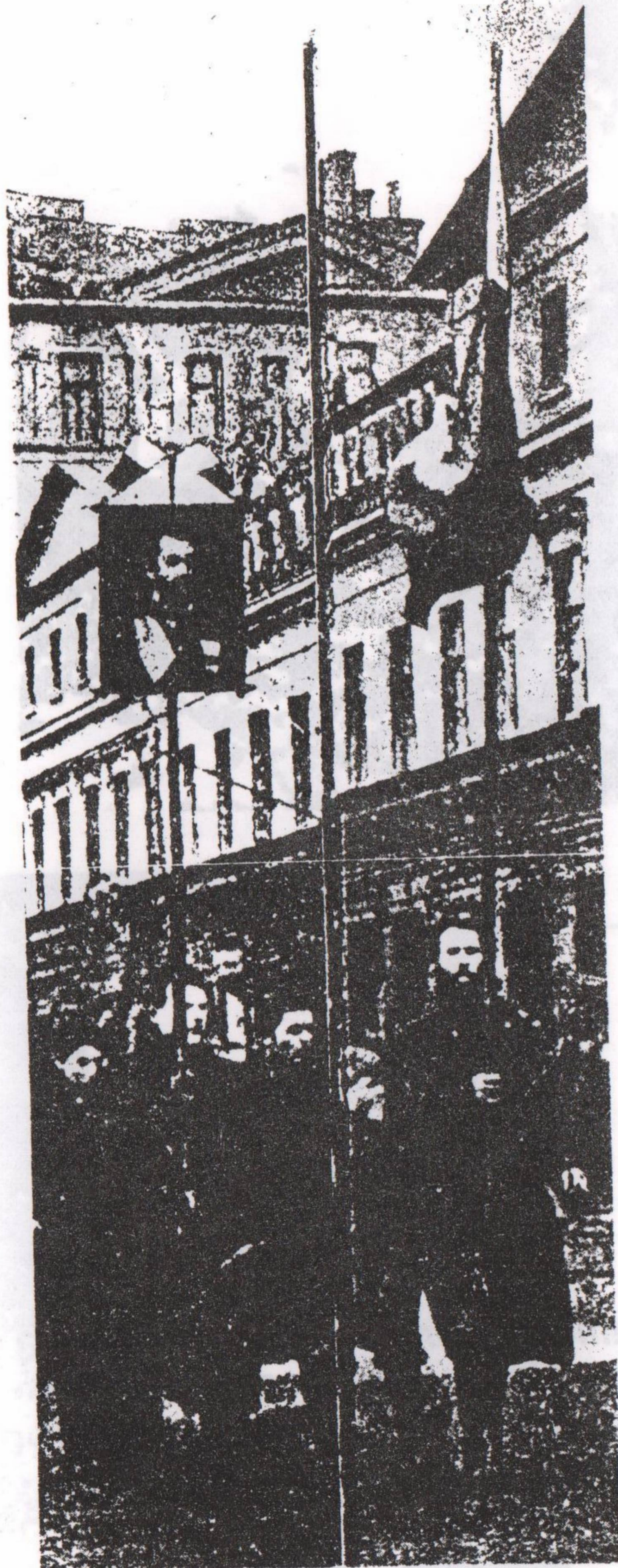
THE DECREE OF THE NATIONALISATION OF WOMEN

The riot at the Club

Early on March 1918 a furious mob, mostly consisting of women, gathered in the city of Saratov in Russia at the former Stock Exchange, which had become the Anarchist Club. They banged on the doors, shouting 'Hooligans!' 'Anti-Christ!' 'Godless swine!' 'Shame on you!' The door gave way and they rushed in, smashing everything. There were a few Anarchists present, who narrowly escaped through the back door. What caused the uproar? In every town where Anarchists had formed the local soviet they were popular. Workers control had been established, the peasants had seized the land, soviets were freely operating, there were no more taxes, no conscription, no forced labour, the prison doors were open. In particular, women had begun to shake off their age-old status of being serfs to serfs. Why the reaction against Anarchists, and especially from women, in Saratov?

It was an incident that reverberated round the world. The 'Free Association of Saratov Anarchists' had allegedly passed a 'decree for the abolition of private ownership of women' which was pasted on walls and fences all over the city, and this was the natural reaction.

Needless to say, it was a forgery, a hoax made in malice rather than jest. The reaction of the local women was swift, and makes utter nonsense of those who later alleged the women actually submitted to such a decree, whether in Saratov or elsewhere in revolutionary Russia. The reaction of the Anarchists immediately followed, Twenty of them entered the tea-house of Mikhail Uvarov, a member of the



***The Black Hundreds
in procession.***

Union of Russian People, a right-wing organisation, who was responsible for the forgery. They ransacked the place, found and killed Uvarov. It was stated that Uvarov had been shot as "an act of vengeance and just protest" at the havoc made of the club and the publication in their name of the "pornographic lampoon" entitled 'The Decree of the Socialisation of Woman'.

The 'decree' in question was dated February 28th 1918 and was formally modelled on other Soviet decrees. It consisted of a preamble and nineteen paragraphs. The preamble stated the document's motives: because of social inequality and matrimony "all the best specimens of the fairer sex were owned by the bourgeoisie in flagrant violation of the correct perpetuation of the human race". In keeping with the decree, beginning from May 1st 1918, all women aged 17 to 32 (except those with more than five children) would be withdrawn from private ownership and declared 'the property of the people'. The decree stipulated the rules of registration of women and the procedures for 'persual of specimens of public property'. The distribution of 'deliberately estranged women', the document said, would be put into effect by the Saratov Anarchists' club.

Except for the absurdity, the decree was framed exactly as Bolshevik decrees were framed. It went on to details. Men were granted the right to 'use' one woman 'no more than three times a week for three hours. They had to produce a 'certificate of their working class origin' issued by their factory committee, trade union or local soviet for the privilege. The former husband had preferential access to his former wife. In case of non-co-operation he was denied access to all women.

Those not certified of working class 'origin' were to pay a hundred roubles a month, i.e. 40 per cent of a workers

monthly wage, for the right to a woman, and the money would go into the People's Generation Foundation, to be paid in allowances to nationalised women in pregnancy and child benefits. Children were to be raised in people's creches until the age of seventeen, Pregnant women were relieved of the 'rightful duty' three to four months before childbirth, and a month after.

Those evading the ruling were declared enemies of the people, saboteurs, counter-revolutionaries and anti-anarchists. Significantly, the author of the 'decree' forgot to mention who would do the housework or staff the creches when all women, who presumably would do no other work, were being set aside to be sexually used by everyone.

Some at the time claimed that the forger, Mikhail Uvarov, owner of the teahouse (which had taken over from the tavern) may have intended a pub joke to amuse his customers. But it is more likely that as a political activist and counter-revolutionary, he knew the effects of the printed word on a superstitious and credulous peasantry and wanted to discredit the Anarchists as more extremist than the Bolsheviks, or show, in his opinion, where the Bolsheviks' decrees would lead. He more probably intended with malice the effect caused, but he did not get the chance to explain. However, the story of his decree did not end with his quick death. It reverberated around Russia and eventually around the world. Even now it is not quite dead.

The "Decree" libel spreads

The 'lampoon' spread like wildfire, losing nothing in its interest by being pornographic. During early 1918 it was reprinted in newspapers all over the Soviet Union, still free.

Some in modern "Sunday Sport" style wanted to titillate their readers, some in "Sun" style to express shock horror, some in "Daily Express" or "Mail" style, to denounce the Anarchists and equate them with the Bolsheviks, some, in Communist Party style, to discredit the Anarchists in contrast to the Bolsheviks! It could not fail, in those times and at that level of knowledge, to be taken seriously, even though it was in the public domain that Uvarov had been executed and conditions in Saratov had reverted to normal.

The government began to be alarmed at the spread of the story. The canard did not harm the Anarchists outside Saratov, since they did not publish 'decrees', immoral or otherwise, but the Soviets did. When the "Vyatsky Krav" newspaper published "The Immoral decree" as genuine, the local committee closed the newspaper and took all concerned to a tribunal. The Provincial Congress of Soviets, including at that time Bolsheviks, Left Socialist Revolutionaries, Maximalists and Anarchists condemned the lampoon saying "It would set the politically ignorant and uneducated masses" against the revolution. However the order against the paper was rescinded as too severe though the editor was reprimanded. This was probably because the Bolsheviks realised he was one of them, who had intended it as a libel on the Anarchists, but by that time it had become stock anti-Soviet and even anti-Bolshevik propaganda.

It was hoped this would lessen the tension but with the aggravation of the country caused by food shortages and growing dissatisfaction with Bolshevism, the 'decree' constantly bounced into life and the government began taking tougher measures against newspapers which printed it, even as a joke. In some places it was 'improved upon'. In Vladimir, for instance, the decree was given as coming from the local Soviet, and added the helpful remark that 'every

unmarried woman must register with the Bureau of Free Love. Upon registration, women might choose men aged 19 to 50 for co-habitation". This too was a hoax.

But in some far-away villages it was feared that local officials might take the decree seriously. In February 1919 Lenin himself received a complaint allegedly signed by residents of Simbirsk Kумыakinov, Baimanov and Rakhimova that the local committee had been distributing the young women of the town to their own friends "regardless of the women's *or their parents'* will or common sense." (our italics). Lenin ordered the Cheka to investigate. They found that the first two lived in Petrograd and nobody in the village had heard of Rakhimova. The hoax was now a standard anti-Bolshevik libel, and the Anarchists had been forgotten in its connection. When General Kolchak, commander of the White Guards, was arrested in January 1920, a copy of the document was found in his pocket.

The "Decree" as anti-Bolshevik Propaganda

Considering all the atrocities, both those at the time and foreseeable, of which the Bolsheviks could justly be accused, such an absurd story seems superfluous. Yet its psychological effectiveness worked not only on a backward peasantry, unused to irony, but in the sophisticated West, just as did the Protocols.

In February and March 1919 the US Senate Commission held official hearings on the situation in Russia. The following dialogue took place between Senator King and Mr. Simons, just back from Soviet Russia.

Sen.King: I have seen the original Russian text and an English translation of certain Soviet documents decrees

which, for all practical purposes, abolish marriage and introduce so-called free love. Do you know anything about them?

Mr Simons: You can find their programme in Marx and Engels's Communist Manifesto. Before we left Petrograd they had reportedly definite arrangements for the so-called socialisation of women. Every woman aged between 18 and 45 must report to the commissariat where she will then be handed over to a man to live with regardless of her wishes... You may call it marriage if you like. I saw quite a few people who subjected themselves to that Bolshevik system.

Sen. King: And so, strictly speaking, the Bolshevik Red Army and other Bolshevik males abduct, rape and seduce women as they please?

Mr Simons: Of course they do.

Why the canard did not die

This exchange was published in full in the official 1919 minutes of the Senate Commission. The "Anarchist" hoax had become part of Marx and Engels's original plan! The confusion between 'free love' and male-dominated concubinage, the way forced marriage was substituted for gang-marriage, point to deliberately lying. In an alternative version by the Nazi Alfred Rosenberg "commissar Uvarov" was given as author of the decree (which in a way he was!). The story was taken up in England by the Press and did not die until Russia became an ally in the Second World War.

So far as the Anarchists were concerned, it was revived briefly, but less offensively, in the Spanish Civil War when

the overthrowing of the pimps by the prostitutes was described as the "Anarchists" having collectivised everything, including the brothels. (An alternative lie was that the "Anarchists killed the homosexuals", an absurdity peddled by Prof. Woodcock among others). The reality was that prostitutes rose against the pimps (not the homosexuals), when everyone else rose against their bosses, and went into individual trade (they did not collectivise the brothels, as some humorists claimed). The anarchist women's organisation campaigned against prostitution as such but did not succeed.

The wisest comment about the socialisation of women in Russia came from George Bernard Shaw, who pointed out that the reason the bourgeoisie were ready to believe women were nationalised was because they themselves looked on women as a possession, and if property had been nationalised, they took for granted that women were too.

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