

**A GRAND CAUSE
THE HUNGER STRIKE AND THE DEPORTATION
OF ANARCHISTS FROM SOVIET RUSSIA**

Grigorii Petrovich Maksimov (G. P. Maximoff)
with a biographical essay by Anatoly Dubovik, translated by
Szarapow

Grigorii Petrovich Maksimov (better known to western readers as G. P. Maximoff) was Secretary of Russia's Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation and editor of *Golos Truda (The Voice of Labour)*. He experienced at first hand the Bolshevik repression which crushed other revolutionaries and subordinated popular revolt to party dictatorship. This is his story of the 1921 hunger strike in which some of the leading lights of Russian anarchism staked their lives in a desperate gamble to expose Bolshevik repression – and win their freedom.

This text comes from his indictment of the Bolshevik regime *The Guillotine at Work: Twenty Years of Terror in Russia* (1940). It has been footnoted by the Kate Sharpley Library to throw the light on the stories of other Russian anarchists as part of our Anarchists in the Gulag, Prison and Exile Project.

Maksimov's years of exile were dedicated to anarchist activism and propaganda, criticising the Leninist counter-revolution and attempts to extend solidarity to anarchist prisoners in Russia. He died in 1953 and was buried in Chicago's Waldheim Cemetery.

Anarchists in the Gulag, Prison and Exile Project
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A Grand Cause: The Hunger Strike and the Deportation of Anarchists From Soviet Russia by Grigorii Petrovich Maksimov (G. P. Maximoff) with a biographical essay by Anatoly Dubovik, translated by Szarapow

Source: *The Guillotine at Work* (1940), pages 475-503; 508-512.

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What is Anarchism?

Anarchism is a political theory which opposes the State and capitalism. It says that people with economic power (capitalists) and those with political power (politicians of all stripes left, right or centre) use that power for their own benefit, and not (like they claim) for the benefit of society. Anarchism says that neither exploitation nor government is natural or necessary, and that a society based on freedom, mutual aid and equal shares of the good things in life would work better than this one.

Anarchism is also a political movement. Anarchists take part in day-to-day struggles (against poverty, oppression of any kind, war etc) and also promote the idea of comprehensive social change. Based on bitter experience, they warn that new 'revolutionary' bosses are no improvement: 'ends' and 'means' (what you want and how you get it) are closely connected.

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Introduction

The Russian revolution was a turning point in anarchist history. A largely libertarian revolt from below ended with the creation of a party dictatorship. Slogans about socialism covered the subordination of workers and peasants to their new masters. From this point on anarchism no longer stood "face to face with the enemy" (in Luigi Galleani's words) but face to face with its enemies: against Church, State and Capital (as always) and against the new delusion of "revolutionary dictatorship".

Western readers will know some of the battles which followed, like the Kronstadt revolt of 1921 (a working class and not purely anarchist rebellion) and the Makhnovist movement in the Ukraine. But beyond these is a barely known history of ever-worsening repression and police persecution, of anarchists executed, imprisoned or given endless sentences of internal exile, often in the frozen north. Books like *Letters from Russian prisons* (1925) and *The guillotine at work: twenty years of terror in Russia* (1940, from which this account is taken) tell some of what happened. But a full history, drawing on both Russian sources and the publications and archives of anarchists outside Russia, has yet to be written. We have used footnotes to try and recount some of the fates of other anarchists Maksimov mentions, using published sources and Memorial's vital lists and biographies of socialists and anarchists repressed under the Bolshevik regime.

The Russian anarchist movement did not disappear in a puff of logic once the Bolshevik dictatorship over the proletariat arrived. This contemporary eyewitness account of Bolshevik repression, from a comrade who spent his whole life in the anarchist movement. It will shed some valuable light on how Lenin's regime was consolidated, and the anarchist response. We hope to bring you more on Bolshevik repression of anarchists, anarchist resistance and international solidarity. Get in touch if you can help; and look out for the forthcoming double issue of KSL: Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library for (among other things) more information on Janis Birze, Francesco Ghezzi, Otello Gaggi, Khodounov and Alexei Borovoi.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Anatoly Dubovik for letting us reprint his biographical essay on Maksimov, and also thank Szarapow for translating it. Thanks also go to Paul Sharkey and Barry Pateman of the Kate Sharpley Library for help with footnotes. These footnotes draw heavily on the work of the Memorial society of Moscow (<http://socialist.memo.ru> – especially Anatoly Dubovik of its anarchist section). Thanks for providing exile publications go to the Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme (CIRA), the International Institute for Social History (IISH) and Kate Sharpley Library (KSL.)

Anarchists in the Gulag, Prison and Exile Project

GREGORY PETROVICH MAXIMOFF (1893-1950)

On March 16, 2005 it will be 55 years since the death of Gregory (Grigoriy) Petrovich Maximoff (Maksimov). An anarchist who participated in the revolutionary movement for nearly forty years out of the fifty-seven he lived. An ideologue and leader of anarcho-syndicalists in Russia and later in the USA. A man who was considered a classic libertarian thinker by the entire international anarchist movement. Philosopher and political fighter, talented scientist and equally talented practical organiser.

Maximoff didn't have much luck with the historians. In the works of 1970s-1980s Soviet "anarchologists" his name is occasionally mentioned, although only in more than general lists of anarchists (e.g., S. Kanev: "Active figures of anarcho-syndicalism were Voline, Yarchuk, Maximoff, Sandomirsky...") During the Perestroika period, when articles and even books dedicated to Makhno, Nikiforova, Borovoi and other anarchist leaders started to appear due to a peaking interest in the country's history, particularly that of the October revolution and twenty following years, Maximoff remained unnoticed and unmentioned by the historians. Only Alexander Shubin, then an anarchist himself, published a couple of articles in the samizdat magazine *Obschina (Community)* and analysed Maximoff's 1920s views in an address at one of the scientific conferences. Maximoff's biography wasn't included in 1993's biographical dictionary *Political figures of Russia. 1917*, nor in the more detailed encyclopaedia, 1996's *Russia's political parties, Late 19th century-early 20th century*.

But he belongs in the first line of anarchist leaders beyond a doubt. Lack of any detailed and accessible information about him makes us concentrate on informing the reader about the life and activities of Gregory Maximoff in this anniversary article. More in-depth analysis of his sociopolitical views would be a subject for further articles.

Gregory Petrovich Maximoff was born on November 10, 1893 in the Smolensk province village of Mityushino (*Sam Dolgoff lists it as "Mitushenko" but he misspells some Russian names etc. so I guess Dolgoff's Russian isn't to be trusted completely – Fragments, p. 43 – translator's note*) in a peasant family. His revolutionary activity started among peasants in 1912 when Russia's anarchists were reviving their activity after the violent clampdown of the several years of reaction. Three years later Maximoff left for Petrograd but he didn't appear to want to break up with the village world. He studied to be an agronomist (he obtained his diploma after 1917). He underlined his peasant origin later by taking on a pen name "Gr .Lapot" (*"Lapot" is Russian for bast shoe that the peasants often wore – translator's note*).

During the February revolution Maximoff, alongside other Petrograd anarchist communists took part in the demonstrations and organising a strike in the

Vyborgskaya Storona district of the city. Later on he took part in creation of the Petrograd Student Group of Anarchist Syndicalists (Petrogradskaya studencheskaya gruppa anarkhistov-sindikalistov) and the Golos Truda (Voice of Labour) group. In the Summer of 1917 when anarchist emigres returned to Russia from the USA the Union for Anarcho-Syndicalist Propaganda (Soyuz Anarkho-Sindikalistskoi Propagandy, SASP) was founded. As the Union's representative, Maximoff took part in the conferences of the workers' organisations and was elected a member of the Central Soviet of the factory committees of Petrograd.

Maximoff's articles, which were published in Summer and Autumn of 1917 in the anarcho-syndicalist newspaper *Golos Truda* and in the anarchist-controlled *Izvestiya Petrogradskikh Pochtovykh I Telegrafnykh Sluzhaschikh (Proceedings of the Petrograd post and telegraph workers)*, made him one of the leading anarcho-syndicalist ideologists. Maximoff paid most of his attention to the questions of practical organisation of economical and social life on the principles of self-government and statelessness and remained perfectly indifferent towards the question of power – which Lenin considered the main question of any revolution. Even during the October coup d'etat and a few months after it he thought that anarchists shouldn't pay much attention to the political fuss of the statist parties. Their duty is organising the lower strata of the proletariat to take over the production and prepare for the anti-state social revolution. Much like the majority of anarchists then, he proposed to fight against the counter-revolution alongside the Bolsheviks, "before they themselves turn into a new reactionary force," that is to say before their regime becomes entrenched.

Just half a year later it turned out impossible to continue being friends with the Bolsheviks and not betray anarchist principles. In April 1918 detachments of Chekists, Red Latvian Riflemen and units of the Red Army attacked anarchists in different cities of Russia and the Ukraine. Clubs and printing-houses were closed, newspapers were banned, activists were arrested. In Moscow, where SASP was by then based, the repressions mostly touched the more radical anarchist communists. The syndicalists got off with a temporary closing of *Golos Truda*. The minority in the Union, however, rebelled against the continued block with the Bolshevism. SASP split up, and the minority organised the Volniy Golos Truda (Free voice of labour) group. A little later, during the Summer of 1918, it published a newspaper of the same name.

Maximoff found himself among the leaders of the dissenters. As early as late April he went on a propaganda tour of the industrial cities of Central Russia with Efim Yarchuk, one of Russia's first anarchists who was a member of the legendary [Chernoe Znamia: Black Banner] Bialystok group of 1903-1904. They spoke at

workers' meetings and gatherings criticising the Bolshevik party and its government. From the Spring of 1918, Maximoff forever remained in opposition to the existing "revolutionary" authorities.

In the Autumn of 1918 anarcho-syndicalists attempted to organise on the national level and held two conferences. The Provisional Secretariat (Vremenniy Sekretariat) was created, of which Maximoff was a member. The unification wasn't completed not only because of disagreements between syndicalists but also due to Chekist harassment. To give some examples, *Volniy Golos Truda* was banned after its fourth issue, and the second of the aforementioned conferences ended with the arrest of all delegates although all of them, including Maximoff, were soon freed. Maximoff was arrested five more times. For instance, in Kharkov he was held in the Spring of 1919 for his ideologically motivated refusal to be mobilised by the Red Army. Maximoff then faced death by the firing squad as a malicious draft evader and deserter, and only the firm protest from the All-Russian Union of Metal Workers (Vserossiyskiy Soyuz Rabochikh-Metallistov) saved him.

Anarchist historian A. Gorelik in his 1922 book *Anarchists in the Russian Revolution* named Maximoff as one of the "Soviet anarchists" whose position included support for the "revolutionary Soviet state" (and thus put themselves outside the limits of anarchism which denies any state) and close co-operation with the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). It seems that for Gorelik who was an active member of the uncompromising KAU Nabat (Nabat Confederation of Anarchists of the Ukraine) throughout the Civil War all of Russia's anarchists – with the exception of terrorists Kovalevich, Sobolev and their comrades – seemed too peaceful and thus keen on the compromise with the Soviets. But that isn't true as regards Maximoff and many others. It doesn't even matter that "keenness to compromise" doesn't combine very well with continuous arrests (six arrests in four years of living in Soviet Russia – that's more than one per year!) After leaving the SASP in the Spring of 1918, Maximoff continuously underlined his opposition to Bolshevism. At the March 1920 All-Russian congress of the trade unions of workers of food industry Maximoff, who headed the anarcho-syndicalist faction, opposed the Bolsheviks in all of the main questions. Along with the other anarchist delegates he submitted reports and resolution projects on the "Current situation," "Org[anisation] question," "Our tasks in the organisation of production," "Tariff question," and "Labour protection." The programme report "Tasks of the trade unions," as is evident from its very name, went far beyond the narrow professional interests of the workers in the food industry, basically giving a comprehensive and concrete plan of leading the country out of the economic and social cul-de-sac. As it turned out later, at the same congress, Maximoff proposed

another, secret initiative – he took part in the creation of the Federation of Workers in the Food Industry (Federatsiya Rabochikh-Pischevikov) which was an illegal militant trade union opposed to the Bolsheviks and their rule consisting of anarchists, Maximalists and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

However, the underground struggle of anarchists and other socialists against the Bolshevik rule still remains under-researched, and as of yet we cannot say anything for certain regarding Maximoff's participation in it. In the legal movement he remained one of the most influential figures of anarcho-syndicalism. He lectured, and worked for different publications, *Golos Truda* – which resumed publication for just one issue – and *Moskovskiy Nabat* (*Moscow alarm*). This work continued throughout the 1918-1921 period and was only interrupted by arrests. With time, the need to create an organisation, a need for unity of action and programme was increasingly evident to Maximoff and other thinking anarchists. Lack thereof was catastrophic for the influence of the ideas of anti-authoritarianism and self-organisation on the course of the revolution.

In the Autumn of 1920 Maximoff, Yarchuk and Marcus who had previously (in 1918) been members of the syndicalist Secretariat announced a creation of the Provisional Executive Bureau (Vremennoye Iсполnitelnoye Byuro) of a new organisation – the All-Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation (Rossiyskaya Konfederatsiya Anarkhistov-Sindikalistov, RKAS). The bureau which proclaimed itself a temporary organ called on the country's anarchists to prepare for a congress where the RKAS would finally be formed. Before the congress could take place, the bureau members started on the preliminary work drawing up the programme documents of the Confederation to be, made connections with the provinces and mailed out the literature. Aforementioned A. Gorelik had this to say about RKAS founders: "Ideologically the Bureau is characterised by the distinct position against the Communist rule but also a strong deviation towards political state organisation, "recognition of the transitional stage" etc." The latter circumstance, quite important for understanding the further evolution of Maximoff's views, put the RKAS somewhat outside the mainstream anarchist movement which by early 1921 was undoubtedly on the rise in Russia. But the fatal role in the fate of the organisation which didn't quite manage to form was played by something different.

The constituent congress of the RKAS was scheduled for April 1921. But in March the Kronstadt mutiny broke out, and the ceaselessly spinning wheel of "red terror" brought down a new strike against the anarchist organisations. Alongside many other Moscow anarchists, the Provisional Bureau of the RKAS, including Maximoff, was arrested.

Arrests and prisons once again brought back the old weapon of the Russian revolutionaries – hunger strikes. The best-known of them took place in the Taganskaya prison in July 1921 when more than a dozen anarchists declared a hunger strike demanding their release. The authorities had to concede because the delegates of the international trade union congress which the Bolsheviks called in Moscow had found out about the hunger strike. The explanation that “only gangsters and counter-revolutionaries are doing time in red prisons” didn’t help, and the “troublemaker” anarchists were freed in order to save the Bolsheviks’ revolutionary image and influence on the European workers’ movement. Later, from January 1922, prisoners’ hunger strikes did, of course, resume, following new repressions, but Maximoff didn’t have to participate in them. He was deported from the RSFSR on January 10, 1922 as one of the ten anarcho-syndicalist leaders.

After finding himself in emigration in Berlin Maximoff had immediately joined the anarchist movement abroad. Along with the other deportees, he participated in the work of the Foreign Bureau of the RKAS (Zagranichnoye Byuro RKAS) which was accepted by the anarcho-syndicalist International as the Russian section – which by the way made the Soviet official “trade union leaders” literally furious. He participated in publishing newspapers and magazines – Berlin-based *Rabochiy Put* (*Worker’s Way*, as one of the editors) and US-based *Golos Truzhenika* (*Labourer’s Voice*) and *Volna* (*Wave*) as a regular contributor. He was a member of Committee for Protection of Anarchist-Syndicalists (Komitet Zashchity Anarkhistov-Sindikalistov) of the International Workingmen’s Association – the famous “Black Cross” organisation [Relief Fund of the International Working Men’s Association for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned or Exiled in Russia].

A task of no lesser importance which Maximoff took upon himself was writing the history of Russian revolution and the anarchists’ participation in it. As early as 1922 he, Yarchuk, Voline and others compiled collective works *Persecution of anarchism in Soviet Russia* (*Goneniya na anarkhizm v Sovetskoi Rossii*) and *How and why the Bolsheviks have expelled the anarchists from Russia* (*Kak i pochemu bolsheviki izgnali anarkhistov iz Rossii*). At about the same time (the year of the publication is not known exactly) Maximoff’s own book *Syndicalists in the Russian Revolution* (*Sindikalisty v russkoi revolyutsii*) was published. If we exclude the agitprop twaddle of Soviet ideologists (Yakovlev, Preobrazhensky etc.), it’s from these books that Maximoff had personally worked on that the historiography of the post-October 1917 anarchist movement starts.

By early 1925 the Foreign Bureau of the RKAS disbanded itself. *Rabochiy Put* closed a year before that. The anarchist emigres in Europe grouped around a

different centre which was represented by the then-united group headed by Arshinov (Archinoff) and Voline (the magazines *Anarkhicheskiy Vestnik* (*Anarchist Herald*) and *Delo Truda* (*Labour’s Cause*) which replaced it). But that very year Maximoff was invited to head the editorial staff of *Golos Truzhenika* in Chicago, and moved there. The last 25 years of his life were spent there, in America.

The first issue of Maximoff-edited *Golos Truzhenika* was published in July 1925. In the next few months within the organisations and groups of Russian anarchists – both emigres and those who stayed in the USSR – a most sharp discussion on the basic questions of strategy, tactics and organisation of the movement spread. It was initiated by the famous “Platform” of the *Delo Truda* group lead by Arshinov and Makhno. The Platform’s chief opponent was Maximoff’s old comrade in the SASP, leading ideologist of traditional anarcho-syndicalism, Voline.

In the ideological debates of the 1920s and early 1930s Maximoff finally formulated his version of the anarchist worldview centred around the idea of the so-called “transitional period.” Proceeding from the impossibility of an instant leap into an anarchist society, Maximoff postulated the inevitability and necessity of the historically lengthy period of a “communal-syndical system,” being a society made up of federations of free settlements (communities) and enterprises. The relationships between them would be based on market principles which would be gradually supplanted by communist ones. At the same time Maximoff considered himself a principled adherent of Bakunin and Kropotkin’s classic teaching (which he referred to as “constructive anarchism”), defended the class approach in sociology (at the same time underlining that after all “the interests of the individual human are Alpha and Omega of libertarianism”, i.e. anarchism) and furiously criticised attempts at liberal, amorphous revision of the anarcho-communist theory which he invariably referred to as “mental colour-blindness.” Getting ahead of our story, we shall remark that it was Maximoff’s views on the perspectives of anarchist project that gained support from the majority of Russian anarchist emigres by late 1930s-early 1940s.

In late 1931 Maximoff became the editor of *Delo Truda*. The publication was moved to the USA due to the break-up of the group of the same name in Europe and police persecution of its members. The magazine had turned into the ideological and organisational centre of the Federation of Russian Anarcho-Communist Groups of the USA and Canada (Federatsiya russkikh anarkho-kommunisticheskikh grupp SShA i Kanady), one of the leaders of which was Maximoff himself. Apart from working as an editor he lectured a lot, travelling all of the USA several times, and participated in the Federation’s conferences. Thinking it wrong for a socialist to be exclusively limited to his national movement,

Maximoff tried to participate in the American anarchist movement as actively as he could. He collaborated with the anarcho-syndicalist organisation Industrial Workers of the World and the Anarcho-Communist Federation (ACF), regularly contributing articles to ACF's Vanguard magazine. It's worth noting that Maximoff knew no English whatsoever upon his arrival in the USA, but after persistently learning it, in just a year he could freely lecture to American audiences.

Throughout those years he undertook a great work of systematically expounding the philosophical and theoretical foundations of anarchist theory, taking as a foundation the legacy of his beloved Bakunin who hadn't managed to systematically write down his teachings. These works by Maximoff were only partially published in his lifetime (*Conversations with Bakunin* ("Besedy s Bakuninyem"), 1934), two more books were published posthumously (*Constructive Anarchism* (*Konstruktivniy Anarkhizm*), 1952, and *Bakunin's Political Philosophy* (*Politicheskaya Filosofiya Bakunina*), 1953). Some of the manuscripts still remain unpublished.

Not just participation in the anarchist movement and questions of philosophy and sociology were within the sphere of Maximoff's interests. One of his most important works was the sizeable (over 600 pages!) book *The Guillotine At Work: Twenty Years of Terror in Russia (Data and Documents)* in which he gave an account of the Bolshevik terror, starting from the October revolution. *The Guillotine* was published in English in 1940, long before Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Robert Conquest, who are considered the authors of the first important studies on the subject, entered the world of historical science. Regretfully, *The Guillotine* remains absolutely unknown to the modern reader as it hasn't been published in Russian.

Maximoff fought against the hated Bolshevism and Stalin's regime not only on the pages of historical books. During the Spanish civil war of the 1930s Maximoff addressed the anarchist CNT-FAI trying to dissuade it from an alliance with the Communist Party, which played a fatal role in the fate of anarchism in Russia. He referred to the regime that formed in the USSR as "com[munist] fascism" ("komfashizm"), and considered it the biggest enemy of the international socialist movement. The desperation caused by the Spanish anarchist leaders turning a deaf ear to his entreaties even forced Maximoff to accuse them of "voluntarily surrendering their gains" and betraying the cause of revolution...

In 1939 two North American groupings of Russian anarchists merged to form the united Federation Of Russian Workers' Organisations in the USA and Canada (Federatsiya russkikh rabochikh organizatsiy v SShA i Kanade). Its printed organ was the *Delo Truda-Probuzhdeniye* (*Labour's Cause-Awakening*) magazine – the last publication of the Russian anarchists which was still published in 1960 [it ceased publication in 1963]. Maximoff was elected the editor-in-chief of *Delo*

Truda-Probuzhdeniye which once again confirmed his reputation as a leading anarchist ideologist.

By then due to obvious reasons the emigre newspapers and magazines in Europe and Latin America stopped publishing, so the ideological evolution of Russian anarchism on this final stage was connected exclusively with the Maximoff-edited *Delo Truda-Probuzhdeniye*. It was he who wrote all the magazine's editorials, and it was he who was tasked with drawing up projects of resolutions of various meetings and conferences. So there's nothing surprising in the fact that after 1946, when V. Voline died, Maximoff found himself the universally recognised leader of what remained of the world of Russian anarchism in exile.

Never having been strong and healthy, living in poverty (his work as an upholsterer [or "paperhanger", according to Dolgoff – *Fragments*, p. 47 – translator's note] provided only for the minimal level of conveniences), Maximoff was very sick in the last ten years of his life. He was more and more often forced to halt his lecture tours to American cities, and couldn't take part in several annual anarchist forums. Fellow emigres did what they could to help him and gathered donations for him to buy medicines. The treatment didn't help, and Gregory Petrovich died on March 16, 1950 (*March 10*, according to Dolgoff – *Fragments*, p. 48 – translator's note), not yet 57 years of age.

His personal archive remained after he died. From an article in *Delo Truda-Probuzhdeniye* it is known that they held numerous unpublished manuscripts, including such intriguing titles as *The 1917 Diaries* (*Dnevnik, 1917-y god*, 142 pages), *Scientific Anarchism. The Systematic Summary of M. A. Bakunin's Teaching* (*Nauchniy anarkhizm. Sistematicheskoye izlozheniye ucheniya M. A. Bakunina*, 595 pages), Russian text of *The Guillotine At Work* (*Gilyotina za rabotoi*, 353 pages). Where are they now? Will the researchers get a hold of them? Let's hope so.

By Anatoly Dubovik, 2005. Translated by Szarapow.

Original Russian text taken from the Memorial website, devoted to the history of Russian Socialists and Anarchists under the Communist regime, at <http://socialist.memo.ru/anniv/y04/maksimov.htm>

The G.P. Maksimov Papers at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam cover 1.85 metres. They include Russian manuscripts of *Constructive Anarchism*, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, *Scientific Anarchism* and *The Guillotine at Work*. – KSL

Anarchists in the Gulag, prison and exile project

We are researching Bolshevik repression of anarchists after 1917 (anarchists covers anarchist-communists, anarcho-syndicalists, individualists, universalists and Makhnovists, but not Tolstoyans). Repression includes executions and open combat like the raids on the Black Guards, but we're most interested in anarchists in prison and exile (we're also interested in foreign – Italian, Spanish, Polish – anarchists).

We're interested in biographies of imprisoned anarchists. These can cover their anarchist activities before, during and after 1917, not just their prison years. We would expect this project to also shed some light on solidarity work for the imprisoned anarchists, both from within the Soviet Union and from abroad. This foreign solidarity work has given us important material like *Letters from Russian Prisons*, *The Guillotine at Work* and the Bulletins of the Joint Committee for the defense of revolutionists imprisoned in Russia and Relief fund of the International Working Men's Association for anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists imprisoned or exiled in Russia.

Short articles can be published in the Kate Sharpley Library Bulletin (quarterly, six pages). Longer texts could be posted on the Kate Sharpley Library website: www.katesharpleylibrary.net. Ultimately we hope to publish a pamphlet (biographies of executed, imprisoned and exiled anarchists). Please contact us if you're interested in assisting with the project.

Memorial: Russian socialists and anarchists after October 1917 –
socialist.memo.ru

Its new web-portal (in Russian) “Rossijskie socialisty i anarchisty posle Oktjabrja 1917 goda” (“Russian Socialists and Anarchists after October 1917”, deals with left-wing non-Bolshevik politicians and revolutionaries, and their resistance against Bolshevik rule. The portal, maintained by a team around Konstantin Morozov (an acknowledged historian of the SR movement), focuses on Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries (SR) and Anarchists. In addition to a Biographical Encyclopedia, a photo archive and a section of digitized documents, the portal offers an immense amount of full-text publications – books and articles by the historical protagonists (often very rare and nearly impossible to find elsewhere) as well as scholarly monographs, articles and bibliographies on various subjects of the field. The portal functions not only as a source of information, but also as a communication tool within the growing community of Russian scholars dealing with the history of the non-Bolshevik Left.

http://raforum.info/article.php3?id_article=4926&lang=en

THE HUNGER STRIKE AND THE DEPORTATION OF ANARCHISTS FROM SOVIET RUSSIA

I THE SICKNESS AND DEATH OF P. A. KROPOTKIN

The year 1921 opened up in a disquieting manner for the Anarchists. Toward the end of 1920 Trotsky¹ effected a large surgical operation, having smashed up Makhno's army² which at that time still enjoyed the status of an ally; and along with the Makhno army was also smashed the “Nabat,” the “Confederation of Anarchist Organizations of Ukraine.”

Many active workers of that Confederation were arrested (Mark, A. Baron, A. Olonetzky, I. Kabas. Chekeres-Dolenko, Volin, etc.³). The same fate overtook all

¹ Trotsky, Leon/ Lev Davidovich (1879-1940), Bolshevik and organiser of the Red Army. Killed in Mexico on Stalin's orders.

² The Makhnovshchina: peasant revolt in the Ukraine against landlordism and the various competing governments fighting in the area, inspired by Nestor Ivanovich Makhno (1888-1934). A combination of conscious, ideological anarchism and intuitive peasant rebellion. See *The History of the Makhnovist Movement* by Peter Ashinov and *Nestor Makhno: Anarchy's Cossack: The Struggle For Free Soviets in the Ukraine 1917-1921* by Alexandre Skirda.

³ [Mratchny,] Mark (born Klavansky) (1892-1975), editor of the Makhnovist paper *Put' k Svobode (The Road to Freedom)* arrested 1920, exiled abroad 1921, worked with the Joint Committee for the Defense of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia. Later lived in the USA and edited the *Fraye Arbeter Shtime (Free Voice of Labor)* 1934-40. See interview in Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*.

Baron, Aaron Davidovich (born Kantorovich) (1891-1938?) “Baron's history as an anarchist dated from the revolution of 1905, when he was banished to Siberia for participating in the uprising. He escaped to the United States, however, and spent the early years of World War I in Chicago, where he and his wife, Fanya, were once arrested and beaten by the police for fomenting a mass demonstration against unemployment.” Paul Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, p205.

“When the revolution started in 1917, he returned to Russia where, as an anarchist, he took part in a range of revolutionary activities. In November 1920 he was arrested in Kharkov by the Bolsheviks, was locked up in the Cheka's ‘internal prison’ in Moscow and then committed to the Butyrki prison.

“After some incidents in Butyrki, he was removed to the prison in Orel. On several occasions he mounted a hunger strike and served a year and a half in various political prisons (Yaroslavl, Vladimir, etc.) and was finally brought back to Kharkov in 1922 where he was sentenced by the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee to be banished from the country, without any right of return to Russia. He was released to give him time to prepare to leave but when he reported back to the GPU to collect his passport, he was

the delegates at the convention called by this Confederation representing a number

rearrested. In protest he mounted a hunger strike, which was no impediment to his being sentenced administratively (and in the absence of a trial) to three years' detention in the Pertominsk camp. In 1923 he was moved with other anarchists to the Solovki Islands [or Solovietsky, notorious penal colony in the White Sea] where he came down with a serious eye disease. Having served his sentence in Solovki, Baron was banished by administrative order to Biysk, a town in the province of Altaï in Siberia. In 1925, he was rearrested for having corresponded with comrades abroad and dispatched to an even remoter location, Karasino, a tiny hamlet in the Turovkhansi district, where the post arrives only three times a year." International Anarchist Defence Committee "Bolshevik Repression of Anarchists", reprinted in Alexandre Skirda: *Les anarchistes russes, les soviets et la révolution de 1917*.

Also imprisoned at Yenisseisk, Tashkent, Tobolsk, Voronezh, Kharkhov; during which time he remained an anarchist agitator. In 1936 a CNT delegation asked for the liberation of imprisoned and exiled anarchists. Baron "was topping this list and he was the first one to vanish after the Spanish delegation left Russia." (*The guillotine at work* p624) Presumed executed in 1938.

Olonetzky [Olonetsky], Aleksei Stepanovich. "Student arrested in Kharkov in November 1920. He passed through the Butyrki, Orel, Vladimir, Kharkov prisons and so on, mounted several hunger strikes and finally, afflicted with rheumatism, was freed in November 1922. He was suddenly rearrested in October 1925 as an anarchist and banished administratively to the Solovki for three years. A heart complaint worsened his health. After the evacuation of the Solovki Islands, Olonetzky was transferred to the cellular political prison in Verkhne-Uralsk. He endured several lengthy hunger strikes. Now in exile in Tashkent." International Anarchist Defence Committee "Bolshevik Repression of Anarchists", reprinted in Alexandre Skirda: *Les anarchistes russes, les soviets et la révolution de 1917*.

Kabas (Tarasyuk, Kabas-Tarasyuk, Tarasyuk-Kabas) Ivan Vasilevich, (1893-?) Deported to Russia on the *Buford*, 1919. He had worked in Youngstown and Akron, and been active in Philadelphia. "Workman. Arrested in Kharkov in November 1920 and, after several hunger strikes and transfers from prison to prison, he was assigned administratively to the Kholmogory concentration camp for two years. In the wake of the beatings inflicted upon the anarchists there in November 1922 he was removed to the Pertominsk camp. Freed after serving out his term, he was rearrested after a short time and banished to Briansk where he was arrested again and dispatched to Arkhangelsk. In 1926 he was arrested yet again for having corresponded with friends abroad and locked up in Petropavlovsk." International Anarchist Defence Committee "Bolshevik Repression of Anarchists", reprinted in Alexandre Skirda: *Les anarchistes russes, les soviets et la révolution de 1917*.

Chekeres-Dolenko, [Dolenko, Nikolai Ilich] "Also on the roster of Nabat leaders was Nikolai Dolenko, a self-educated peasant from Poltava province [who contributed to] the New York *Golos Truda* and the fervently antimilitarist publication in Geneva, *Put' k Svobode* [...] worked with Maksimov and Iarchuk as an editor of *Vol'nyi Golos Truda* in

of Anarchist organizations. The circumstances under which the arrests took place, and also the hasty and mysterious transference of the prisoners from Kharkov to Moscow raised many fears for the life of the comrades. The Anarcho-Syndicalist conference taking place at that time in Moscow was swayed by those fears. A committee designated by the conference (it consisted of comrades A. Schapiro, A. Borovoy, A. Aleynikov⁴ and G. Maximoff) kept on visiting the All-Russian Che-Ka⁵, but all was in vain. These arrests agitated and disquietened the Anarchist circles. Another factor contributing to this state of anxiety was the alarming news about the health of P. A. Kropotkin.

A temporary improvement in the health of P. A. Kropotkin gave place to a sudden turn for the worse. The Bolsheviks dispatched two of the best physicians of Moscow." Avrigh, *Russian Anarchists* p206-7. Imprisoned 1921-23. Joined the Communist Party in 1924.

Volin (or Voline) [Eikhenbaum, Vsevolod Mikhailovich] (1882-1945) Active in the revolution of 1905 before joining the anarchist movement. "He was the editor of *Golos Truda*, an anarcho-syndicalist journal in Petrograd and Moscow, and afterwards of *Nabat* in the Ukraine. He took part in Makhno's insurgent army as a cultural and educational advisor, for which he was arrested by the Bolsheviks and imprisoned in Moscow. Allowed to leave the country, he went to Berlin where he edited *Anarckhicheskii Vestnik* (1923-1924) and published a catalogue of Bolshevik repressions against the anarchists. Volin moved to Paris in 1924 and embarked on his most ambitious work, *La révolution inconnue* [*The Unknown Revolution*]" Avrigh, *Anarchist Voices* p517.

⁴ Schapiro, Alexander [Aleksandr] (Abram) Moiseevich (1882-1946) "Until the First World War Schapiro was active in the London movement, alongside Kropotkin, Malatesta, and Rucker. [...] In 1917 he returned to Russia to take part in the revolution, only to leave in 1921 together with Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. Schapiro spent the inter-war years in Berlin and then Paris, where he edited the anarcho-syndicalist journal *La Voix du Travail* with Pierre Besnard. In 1941 he arrived in New York, a refugee from Nazi oppression, and edited *New Trends* [from 1945] until his death." Avrigh, *Anarchist Voices*, p489.

Borovoy, Aleksei Alekseevich (1875-1935) "a professor of philosophy at Moscow University, a gifted orator and the author of numerous books, pamphlets, and articles which attempted to reconcile individualist anarchism with the doctrines of syndicalism." Avrigh, *Russian Anarchists* p179. He was sacked in 1922, active in the Kropotkin Museum, and his ideas developed, being part of a Platformist group within Russia. He was arrested in 1929 accused of creating illegal anarchist groups and died in exile in Viatka. Memorial website gives his date of death as 21st November 1935.

Aleynikov, A. [Oleynikov] (?-1919)

⁵ Che-Ka, the Bolshevik secret police from Chrezvychainaia Komissiiia, Extraordinary Commission (for Combatting Counter-Revolution and Sabotage). See George Leggett *The Cheka: Lenin's political police*.

Moscow; from the Anarchists went comrade Atabekian⁶, a practicing physician and Emma Goldman⁷. The "Izvestia" (the official organ of the Soviets) began to publish daily bulletins informing the readers about the course of Kropotkin's illness. The Bolsheviks showered the utmost attention upon the sick man. – It was as if they tried to atone for all the evil they had done to Petr Alexeevich Kropotkin: chasing him from one apartment to the other while he was in Moscow, the numerous and petty persecutions to which he was subjected on their part in Dmitrov, etc. His illness, aggravated by his old age was getting the best of him. The news coming from Dmitrov was sad. It was felt that the great revolutionist and thinker was nearing his end and that soon he would be swallowed up by eternity. In connection with that, rumors began to circulate to the effect that the Bolsheviks were organizing a burial committee of members of the Moscow Soviet and that this committee would take upon itself the burial of Kropotkin. To bury the great champion of the Anarchist idea, the challenger of the State, at the expense of the latter. This, indeed, would be cynicism in its most naked form.

From Dmitrov came reports that P. A. Kropotkin would hold out only a few hours. This was on February the seventh; on the morning of February the eighth the sad news finally arrived: Kropotkin was already dead....

Immediately the Anarchist organizations designated a body calling itself "The Committee of Anarchist Organizations For the Burial of P. A. Kropotkin."⁸

Acting very energetically, this committee defeated the Bolshevik intent to bury P. A. at the expense of the State and thus to gain publicity before the international proletariat. And because of that the Bolsheviks tried in turn to molest this

⁶ Atabekian [Atabekyan], Aleksandr Moiseevich (1868-1933) Active in Switzerland in the 1890s. Arrested 1920, and presumed to have died in exile. Memorial website gives his date of death as 5th December 1933.

⁷ Goldman, Emma (1869-1940) Russian-American anarchist, imprisoned in 1917 for opposing the First World War and deported in 1919 on the *Buford*. Left Russia in 1921 firmly opposed to Bolshevik rule.

⁸ Photo in *The Guillotine at Work* gives members of the P.A. Kropotkin Funeral Committee: "Dr. A. A. Atabekian, died in exile; Meyer Rubinchik, repented in exile; Herman Sandomirsky, in prison since 1935; Petrovsky, fate unknown; N. K. Lebedeff, died in Moscow; Effim Yartchuk, deported in 1921 from Russia, repented; Lev Cherny (Turchaninov), shot to death in 1921 in Moscow by Che-Ka; Herman Askarov, in prisons and exile since 1921; Tania Shapiro, deported from Russia in 1922, A. M. Shapiro, deported from Russia in 1922; Prof. A. A. Borovoy, died in exile in 1936; Piro, in exile since 1926; Lidia Goghelia, fate unknown; G. P. Maximoff, deported from Russia in 1921; S. Markus, died in Moscow; Ansonov, fate unknown; Alexander Berkman, left Russia in 1921, died in 1936, in Nice, France."

committee in numerous ways, all of which was recounted in the report of the committee.

Immediately after the burial the committee resolved to organize a memorial week in honor of the deceased. Every day during the week lectures and symposiums were organized in various parts of Moscow, dealing with the personality of Kropotkin and also his doctrine. This week was not forbidden, only because the Bolsheviks feared the outbreak of an international scandal. The Anarchists succeeded during that week in unfolding a sweeping plan of propaganda. The All-Russian Che-Ka lay in wait for the proper moment enabling it to wreak vengeance upon all those who showed themselves active during this Kropotkin week, and also to square accounts with some members of the burial committee. This moment soon arrived.

II KRONSTADT EVENTS, ARRESTS

No sooner did the Kropotkin week draw to an end than various sorts of reports began to come from Kronstadt and Petrograd: some people were saying that Kronstadt and Petrograd were in the hands of the Whites, others asserted that the sailors rebelled and that they were joined by the workers of Petrograd. The Soviet papers kept a profound silence. No one knew what was the matter, what should or should not be believed. Finally, the Soviet press "opened up," and informed its readers that a rebellion was in full swing ... a White-Guardist rebellion. It was only when the resolutions of Kronstadt became known (through underground channels) that the Bolshevik lies took on their proper nature. It turned out that the sailors who still remembered the October days of 1917, rebelled in the name of the now trampled ideas of that revolution.

The Communist Party struck alarm. The all-Russia Che-Ka and the War Commissariat (L. Trotzky) began to work full speed. A wave of arrests swept the country. Troops were drawn toward Petrograd. Arrests and searches continued for more than two weeks. On the night of March 8 two members of the Executive Bureau of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation, Yartchuk⁹ and Maximoff (the two were also members of the Burial Committee) were arrested.

⁹ Yartchuk [Yarchuk, Iarchuk], Yefim (Haim) Zakharovich (born Zakharov) (1883-not before 1942) "... a veteran of the movement, one of the founders of the *Chernoie Znamia* [Black Banner] group in Bialystok before the revolution of 1905. In 1913, after a five-year term in Siberian exile, he emigrated to the United States, where he joined the Union of Russian Workers and the staff of its organ, *Golos Truda*. Returning to Russia in the spring of 1917, he came to Kronstadt and was elected to the local soviet, becoming the leader of its influential anarchist faction." *Avrich Russian Anarchists* p133. He joined the Communist Party in 1925 and returned to Russia. Arrested in 1936.

On the same night more than twenty Anarchists and an equal number of left Social-Revolutionists were taken to prison. (Among the Anarchists were Gorelik, Tikhon Kashirin, Vladimir Potiekhin¹⁰; the last two were executed in October 1921 in connection with the case of Liev Cherny¹¹). On the same night in Petrograd and Moscow a veritable “pogrom” was made upon the Anarcho-Syndicalist publishing house “Golos Trouda”.

After the “rebellion” of the Kronstadt sailors had been suppressed, some of the arrested Anarchists were released; and the others were placed in various prisons of Moscow: the prisons of the all-Russian Che-Ka, the Butirky, the Tagansky and Novinsky prisons.

It is to be noted that the arrests of March 8 were not confined to one locality, namely that of Moscow: they took place all over Russia. Anarchists were arrested in many cities. There were numerous cases when the arrested Anarchists were presented with demands to sign a statement forswearing any intention to go to the convention called by the Executive Bureau of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation for April 25, 1921.

III THE TAGANSKAYA PRISON

Thus the Communist prisons were filled up with new cadres. ... We are omitting here in our story the beating up of the Anarchist Kashirin and the left Social-Revolutionist Yeliseev, which took place in the prison of the all-Russian Che-Ka. Nor are we going to dwell at length upon the beatings administered en masse to the political prisoners in Butirsky prison, which took place on April 25, 1921, while the prisoners were being taken out for the purpose of distributing them in the various provincial prisons.¹²) We shall only point out in this connection that guided by some considerations of its own, the Che-Ka replaced the Butirsky prison with the Tagansky prison as the distributing center of the political prisoners: the political

¹⁰ Gorelik, Grigory Vladimirovich (1890-1956) called “Anatolii”. “... returned to Russia from American exile in 1917, and served as secretary of the Donets Anarchist Bureau before joining the *Nabat* organization.” Avrich *Russian Anarchists* p206. Author of *Anarkhisty v rossiiskoi revoliutsii*, Berlin 1922. Later active in Buenos Aires.

Kashirin, Tikhon and Potiekhin, Vladimir [Potikin] (1893-30.9.1921)

¹¹ Cherny, Lev [Turchaninov, Pavel Dmitrievich] (1878-27.9.1921) “On September 25, 1919, a group of anarchists and SRs bombed the Moscow Communist Party headquarters on Leontievsky Street killing twelve members of the part committee and wounding fifty-five others, among them Nikolai Bukharin, the eminent Bolshevik theorist. A number of anarchists, including Fanny Baron and Lev Cherny were executed for complicity in the attack” Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, p522.

¹² See *Letters From Russian Prisons*, pp. 134-139. [Original footnote]

section of the latter was rapidly being filled up with people brought from the south: Social-Revolutionists, Social-Democrats and Anarchists.

In May, some of the inmates of the Butirsky prison were also transferred to this section: among them were: Mark, Volin, Guyevsky¹³, about five more Anarchists and a few from groups of various political affiliations.

By that time the rigorous regime of the prison was undermined by the ceaseless struggle of the political prisoners with the prison administration and the Che-Ka, which resulted that the political prisoners enjoyed almost full freedom within the prison walls.

IV THE CONFINEMENT WAS TO BE LONG.

The political prisoners were distributed in groups corresponding to their party affiliations: every party collective had its own cells, its own elected delegate – “Starosta” (Elder); the entire section had a “Starostat,” that is, a committee of the delegates of all collectives.

The number of people in the Anarchist collective varied. In June it was about 13 people. In respect to the views of its members, the collective was far from being homogeneous. The members differed in their tactical, ideological views and interpretations of Anarchism, and also in the respective place held by each in the movement: alongside of gray-haired comrades were also youths who were newcomers in the movement. There were young people in this group (Mikhailov, Yudin, Voribiev, Sheroshevsky¹⁴) who just had entered the movement and who were arrested merely because they had met openly in a legal meeting place to discuss the problem of organizing the Anarchistically minded students of Moscow into some sort of body which would pursue the aim of self-education along Anarchist lines.

The prison collective also comprised members of “The Nabat,” the Confederation of Anarchist Organizations of Ukraine: Mark, member of the Secretariat; Gouyevsky, a worker from the Kharkov Railway shops, and Volin. Most of these people were arrested on November 25, 1920, in Kharkov on charges of carrying on active Anarchist propaganda and attempting to call an Anarchist convention. There were also members of the Executive Bureau of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation (Yartchuk and Maximoff) who were arrested in Moscow on March

¹³ Guevsky, Aleksandr, described below as “a worker from the Kharkov Railway shops”

¹⁴ Memorial website list these anarchists: Mikhailov: possibly either Mikhailov, Vladimir Andreevich or Mikhailov, Petr Mikhailovich (1901-?). Yudin: Yudin, Ivan Alekseevich, Voribiev: Vorobyev, Mikhail P. (1902-?), Sheroshevsky: presumably Shereshevsky [Sherishevsky] Lazar Moiseevich (ca.1900-?)

8, in connection with the Kronstadt events; their attempt to call an Anarcho-Syndicalist convention and trumped up charges of various kinds were placed against them. And, finally, there were: Fiedorov, Shilkin, Gorelik and Feldman¹⁵. Such was the make-up of the Anarchist collective of the Tagansky prison.

Every member of this collective felt that his confinement would drag out for a long time and that some would be sentenced to far away, starving and wild northern regions. There were many signs pointing to such a conclusion: the panic produced in government circles by the Kronstadt rebellion, the unrest among the workers of Moscow and other cities, the disquieting state of the villages, the woeful bread shortages, the rather dismal harvest outlook and, finally, the most portentous sign was the continuing ferocity of the all-Russian Che-Ka. Four members of the collective were already sentenced (without any trial, of course) to three years of concentration camp. The Anarcho-Syndicalist members of the collective (Yartchuk and Maximoff), who during the Bolshevik rule had been arrested more than six times but were never kept in prison for a long time, were now imprisoned for good, having been "promised" a long stay at the government's expense: until the new harvest at least, that is, if the new harvest promised to be good.

Everyone saw how hopeless the situation was becoming. Everyone knew that the confinement would last until the inner situation in the country becomes so favorable as to meet the expectations of the Communists, in other words, the confinement would drag out indefinitely. And many of the prisoners began to entertain the ideas of organizing an escape, of declaring a hunger strike and other means of obtaining freedom.

ALL DECIDE TO DECLARE A HUNGER STRIKE

The young people who languished in prison for no cause whatsoever began to talk about a hunger strike. This idea got hold of a few other people. The collective was now faced with the probability of having several hunger strikes carried out separately by a few individuals. The idea of a hunger strike got such a firm hold upon some that no amount of persuasion on the part of the older and more experienced comrades was of any avail. Nor was it of much use to point out to them that this measure would be highly inexpedient at a moment when the Communist reaction was raging throughout the country and hunger strikes were nearly becoming commonplace affairs, entirely ignored by the Communist authorities. Only when an appeal was made to them to wait until the entire collective be given an

¹⁵ Fiedorov: possibly Feodorov, Konstantin?, Shilkin: presumably Shilin, Aleksey Vasilevich (1895-) and Feldman, Abram Moiseevich (1884-?) (see *Letters from Russian prisons* p288-290 for questionnaire by Feldman).

opportunity to join the hunger strike, did they consent to withdraw their decision of declaring an immediate strike, thus averting sporadic outbreaks.

Time went on! The idea of the strike was taking root. Even the older and more self-restrained comrades began to give increasing thought to this idea. The opening day of the International Congress of Red Trade Unions¹⁶ was drawing near. All waited for the arrival of the convention delegates of our own persuasion who were coming from various countries. We placed hopes upon their forthcoming help, and we were not deceived in these hopes.

The idea of a hunger strike was working like a drill upon our minds. And then the final decision came. With all the pondering and weighing that was going on within us, it was one sleepless night that finally persuaded all in favor of this decision.

The prison was fast asleep. It was dark and quiet all around us. The stillness of the night was broken up by the nervous snoring of the sleeping prisoners and a quiet, very quiet whisper.

"Maximich, are you asleep?"

"No.... But why?"

"I can't fall asleep. ... You know I keep on thinking about the hunger strike. ... It may succeed. ... What do you think of it?"

There followed a pause, a long pause. And then came a quiet whispering reply. Long, throughout the dark night, the two kept whispering in the midst of the sleeping comrades.

All the pros and cons of this planned hunger strike were weighed during this whispered conversation. Everything was taken into account: the political situation, the lack of publicity in the country, the specific weight and possible role of the Red Trade Union convention, the degree to which the Bolsheviks happened to be interested in the Anarcho-Syndicalists of Western Europe, the kind and extent of the activity of our friends at large and with all that discussion, doubts still lingered.

"All right," said Maximoff, "I agree with this idea of a hunger strike, but only in case its principal aim is a protest, a demonstration to our Western European comrades who came to this Profintern convention. Up till now these comrades have not believed the truth that we were telling them ever since they were here in 1920. And in order to have them believe and thus to save the Anarchist movement of Western Europe from a Bolshevik tendency we must strike and even die. ... This is a grand cause. ... The release from prison should be only a formal demand. ..."

¹⁶ Profintern or Red International of Trade Unions, Bolshevik attempt to create a trade union international under their control.

"I agree to that," said Mark.

"Tomorrow morning we call a meeting of the collective and lay this proposal before it. ... And now, good night!"

"Good night!"

The whisper died away and stillness reigned again

In the morning, at a closed session, the entire membership of the Anarchist collective unanimously decided to launch this struggle which was not to be given up even if it led to the death of some of us; it was resolved that under the circumstances, it would be necessary to sacrifice ourselves for the triumph of our cause. This decision was conveyed to the comrades left at large – Olga Freydlin¹⁷ and others; their approval having been received, a declaration was presented to the all-Russian Che-Ka, the Executive Committee of the Soviets, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Executive Committees of the Comintern and Profintern in which the high-handed manner and the unwarranted character of the arrests and confinements were pointed out, and the immediate release of the prisoners demanded. If the request was not granted, a hunger strike would be declared upon the expiration of a five day period.

VI CELL NO. 4 ON HUNGER STRIKE

The Taganka prison is situated in one of the suburbs of Moscow. It is a low building of a dingy-red color, with grated windows and heavy, massive iron gates. On both sides of the building are stone walls with barbed wire and tapering nails on top of them. Those walls separate the street from the prison yard; the prison is in the background of this yard. Two parallel gates lead from this building to the large courtyard of the prison church.

¹⁷ Freydlin, Olga Isidorovna (ca.1894 -7 May 1973). Maximoff's partner. "Olga was still a young girl when she became an anarchist. In 1909 she was sentenced to eight years hard labour for smuggling and spreading subversive literature. But, because of her youth she was condemned to life-banishment in Yenesink [Yeniseysk] Province, Siberia. With the release of political prisoners by the February 1917 revolution, Olga came to Moscow. She also actively participated in the revolutionary movement in Kharkhov and other Ukranian areas – particularly in the anarcho-syndicalist and co-operative movements. Later Olga went to the Urals, and became active in the Ural Anarchist Federation, where she filled a responsible post in the People's Educational Committee. When it was occupied by the Czechoslovakian counter-revolutionary army, Olga returned to Moscow in 1918. She was very active in the Golos Truda group and it was there that she first met Maximoff" Sam Dolgoff's biography of Maksimov, page xvii of the 1979 (partial) reprint of *The Guillotine at Work*.

To the right side of the gate inside the courtyard, towers a huge, five-story structure, enclosed with a large wooden fence, the ring-like space between both being reserved for daily promenading of the prisoners. To the left side of the gate are the prison shops and the rectangle of the general building one side of which almost faced the gates. The ground floor of this wing contains the section reserved for political prisoners. A direct line traced from the gates to the background of the courtyard leads to a dingy three-storied building. Old stairs lead to the interior of this prison; to the left, other stairs lead to the second floor, the section for criminals of minor age; the third floor the prison hospital. On the basement floor was the section for "politicals." A massive door leads to the interior of this section; it covers another grated iron door beyond which is a small platform with a table at which the prison guard is seated. The grated iron doors opened into a long narrow corridor with broken windows. All along the right side of this corridor are strung the cells of the politicals.

Here is the first cell. It was occupied by the right Social-Revolutionists, the following was that of the Social Democrats, the third one was again held by the Social-Revolutionists; the following one was used for the kitchen and toilets, then came the cell occupied by the Anarchists, the following one was of mixed occupancy and then the last – the cell of the left Social-Revolutionists.

All the cells are about the same, differing only in size. A cell is a room with two or three windows on the same level of the ground, with low ceilings, damp walls, asphalt floors. Every cell contained twelve iron beds – six on each side – screwed on to the wall and covered with dusty straw mattresses. In the center of the cell is a wooden dining table with long wooden benches placed alongside of it.

As a result of the persistent and ceaseless struggle with the prison administration, the grated doors were never shut. And this was not the only concession extorted as a result of such a struggle: only the iron gates leading to the outside were closed for the political prisoners; the corridor was kept open. The political prisoners did not only have a chance to keep in touch with each other but were arranging lectures, debates; were walking about freely in the church courtyard where some played games while others took sunbaths under the shrubbery of a stunted acacia tree. Incidentally, sunbaths were a necessity, saving many a prisoner from scurvy which was sweeping the prison at that time.

Let us look into cell No. 4. Thirteen prison cots, and stretched upon them are thirteen people all of whom were recently healthy, gay and sprightly. Now their eyes are deeply sunk, the skin tightly drawn over the sharply protruding cheekbones; their voices are feeble, conversations are slow and sluggish, and gestures are lifeless. These are the Anarchists who had decided on their own "free will" to die or to obtain freedom. The hunger strike has already entered its sixth day. Some of

them cannot walk without aid, and that is why the comrades from the left Social-Revolutionists are keeping duty at the table.

But the strikers are in spirited mood. ... Three days ago, Chistiakov, the investigator of the all-Russian Che-Ka, came to the prison. He demanded that the hunger strike be given up.

"The government," he said, "will not yield, and certainly not under the pressure of a hunger strike."

"In that case," he was told by the representatives of the hunger strikers, "you can go back ... you know what we demand: freedom for all or you shall have thirteen corpses on your hands!"

A desperate, unequal struggle with the state was in full swing; it gave courage to and raised the spirit of the hunger strikers; from the outside, through comrade Olga Freydlin, our messenger and chief backer, (to whom we chiefly owe our victory) we were beginning to get consoling news: the Anarcho-Syndicalist delegates to the Profintern became interested in the situation of the Anarchists; in other words, our act of protest began to produce the desired result. A movement of protest had been stirred up among the comrades at large.

A committee was organized for the purpose of sending a delegation to Dzherzhinsky¹⁸ and Lenin. The committee was composed of Sirolle, Godeau, Laval, Orlandis [Arlandis]¹⁹, A. Berkman, A. Shapiro. When asked by Godeau as to the legitimacy of the arrests of Anarchists. Dzherzhinsky indignantly declared:

¹⁸ Dzherzhinsky, Feliks Edmundovich (1877-1926), creator of the Cheka.

¹⁹ Henri Sirolle, Prominent in the Railway Federation of the pre-war CGT in France and in the 1910 strike. And in the pro-class war, economics-only wing of French syndicalism attracted to revolution but dubious about Bolshevism. He was a member of the "Pacte", a band of "pure" syndicalists around ex-CGT leader Victor Griffuelhes. He and other "Pacte" members helped defeat the attempt to absorb the CGT into the Profintern. He was a bit of a maverick and agreed with the Bolsheviks, having been shown their dossiers against imprisoned anarchists (criminals) that he too would have had them shot, This might have been a clumsy way of ridiculing the charge sheets alleged against them.

Jean Godeau (or Gaudeaux or Godeaux) Sometime member of the Le Havre anarchist group. Close to Griffuelhes and a member of the "Pacte". He accompanied Griffuelhes on a visit to Bolshevik Russia and in 1924 published a book *Six mois en Russie bolcheviste*. No dates but was still alive in 1960.

Gaston Leval (1895-1978, real name Pierre Robert Piller) French draft dodger who fled to Spain in 1915 and frequented anarchist/pacifist circles there, When it was suggested that a delegate from the (pre-FAI) National Federation of Anarchist Groups should join the CNT's delegates to Russia he was chosen.

Hilario Arlandis Esparza (not Orlandis) (1888-1939). Originally an anarchist, he headed the CNT's prisoners' aid commission in Valencia and was enamoured of the Russian

"What a question! ... What do you think we have? A Che-Ka within the Che-Ka? ...' The delegation to Lenin consisting of Sirolle, Godeau, Orlandis, Tom Mann, Kaskayden and a few German comrades, had some difficulty in obtaining a hearing with Lenin. Having been finally compelled to receive them, Lenin declared that we, the arrested Anarchists, were dangerous bandits who cannot and should not be released, but since the Committee insisted upon a definite answer, he; together with Trotzky, Bucharin, Zinoviev and Kameniev²⁰, will discuss this question, and a definite answer will be given the next day.

We knew through comrade Olga Freydlin that the delegates were kept well informed of the situation by the comrades at large (through E. Goldman, A. Berkman, A. Shapiro, etc.) and this gave us strength and firmness to continue our hunger strike. The other collectives were not aware of it. They saw that the situation was becoming worse; in people who are out on a hunger strike for eight days, a process of intense bodily disintegration already sets in; the mouths of the victims give out a strong cadaverous odor; there are cases of fainting, (three comrades could not get up, and one of them began to lose consciousness and the faculty of hearing). The life of the other collectives (Social-Democrats, Social-Revolutionists) became a veritable moral torture. Moved by a sense of solidarity with our struggle, they decided to join the hunger strike, waiting only for our consent to launch upon it: but we were slow in granting our consent.

Everyone was struck with a feeling of horror when passing our cell. Even the prison authorities who had seen all sorts of sights would recoil in horror when going through the routine of the daily roll call: the guards would jump back, shutting the door violently; some would even keep back from entering our cell, so greatly shocked were they from what they had seen. ...

revolution. He was one of the CNT delegates sent to Russia in 1921 and on his return he lobbied for the CNT to join the Profintern but failed to persuade the CNT. Later he was active in the Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees (CSR), an attempt to capture control of a movement hard pressed by the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. After that he joined the Communist Party in its many variations and in 1931 was expelled from the CNT congress that he was attending as a delegate from the printing trades unions of Tarrasa and Tarrega. Author of *Los anarquistas en Rusia* (1924).

See also Ignacio de Llorens *The CNT and the Russian Revolution* and "Anarchists behind bars" by Gaston Leval in *No Gods No Masters*, edited by Daniel Guerín.

²⁰ Of this all-powerful group of five leaders, no one is now left in Russia. Lenin died; Trotzky is in exile, and the rest were shot by Stalin. [Original footnote]. Bukharin, Nikolai Ivanovich (1888-1938); Zinoviev, Grigorii Evseevich (1883-1936) and Kamenev, Lev Borisovich (1883-1936), all executed in Stalin's purges.

The Communists, however, were not in a hurry. The hunger strike was entering into its ninth day. Death already marked out three victims. ... It hovered in the cell. ... Its bony hand was ready to pounce upon the victim. ... Soon it will strangle its first victim, turning then to the second, third, getting everyone of us in turn.

A doctor, one of the imprisoned socialists (Litkens²¹), is constantly on duty in our cell, feeling the pulse of everyone of us.

At night, remembering the experience of the Butirky prison where the group of hunger strikers was broken up by forcible removal of the prisoners, the various collectives of politicals established their watches in order to forestall an attempt on the part of the Che-Ka to transfer the hunger strikers to the hospital and administer artificial feeding, and also break up the strike by isolating the members of the group. These measures of precaution on the part of the prisoners were taken ever since attempts to break up the strike had been made. On the sixth day of the hunger strike orders for the release of four comrades were received, but the latter refused to leave the prison without the others and they continued their hunger strike.

Another disquieting day passed, tense with anxiety. The tenth day of the hunger strike! The comrades at large deeply stirred up, showed great anxiety about our lives. At noon, the delegates of the Profintern Congress received a letter from L. Trotzky: this was Lenin's promised answer.²² The Communists decided to release the hunger strikers under condition of having them expelled from Soviet Russia. Trotzky demanded that the delegates write a letter to the prisoners on hunger strike, requesting them to give up the strike and accept the offered terms, and he promised to have this letter conveyed to the prisoners. However, the Che-Ka failed to transmit this letter to us. But we did find out about it through other sources (through our indefatigable go-between, comrade Olga Freydlin) on the very same day and we decided to concur with the wishes of the delegates.

Evening. ... The eleventh day of the hunger strike! It is dark everywhere, only in cell No. 4 the light is on. The comrade on duty, is watching with sadness in his eyes the agony of starving comrades. ... The politicals on guard, their faces closely leaning upon the window grates, are peering into the darkness. The prison is

²¹ Litkens, Vladimir Alexandrovich (1891 -?), Menshevik. Arrested on March 29, 1921 in Moscow, held in Butyrsky prison. In 1922 expelled from Moscow to Germany indefinitely. In 1927 returned to Russia. In 1931 arrested in Moscow, held in Butyrsky prison. On June 1, 1931 began 15-day hunger strike. In the same year, exiled in Alma-Ata. In February 1932 was in exile in Akmolinske [now Astana] (Kazakhstan). Further fate unknown. Source: Memorial.

²² See appendixes

enveloped by a dead silence: not a stir is heard. One can almost hear and feel the darkness. ...

And then the sudden clinking of the keys, the grating of the iron doors, the ring of the telephone piercing the dead silence and military steps resounding in the courtyard; the sound of voices.... of many voices. ...

At once the entire section became alive, the politicals jumped to their feet, ready to repulse any attempt at having us taken away by force. The death cell, which at first was plunged in darkness as a measure of precaution was suddenly flooded with light, following which the door opened suddenly and a military figure walking erect, with the firm measured gait of an army man, entered our cell, and cast rapid glances at both sides and addressed us, enunciating every word clearly:

"In the name of the government I have the following to announce to you: if you give up your hunger strike, you will be released and deported abroad."

We asked him to leave the cell for ten minutes so that we might confer on the proposal. Ten minutes later Yagoda, it was Yagoda who brought us this message,²³ came back and he was told that the terms had been accepted. Life triumphed over death. ...

Everyone heaved a sigh of relief, everyone grew merry, greeting us upon our victory, praising us for our steadfastness, grit and self-discipline: everyone was bustling joyfully, preparing our first meals. At three o'clock in the morning the entire section was alive, humming like an aroused bee-hive. They all had the impression of seeing before them dead men coming to life again.

The hunger strike was ended. What were its results? As far as we can see, its results were considerable. First, it showed the naked truth to our comrades from abroad. Second, it opened the eyes of the Profintern delegates and the Bolsheviki could not deceive them any longer. Third, it exposed the lies of the Bolsheviki: especially so after Bucharin took the floor at the last session of the Profintern convention presenting the point of view of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on political persecution, which stand was immediately contested in the counter speech delivered by comrade Sirolle. Fourth, it raised the prestige of the hunger strike and undermined the prestige of the government and it instilled a feeling of respect toward the Anarchists on the part of the other parties. It was a grand political manifestation which gave us ground for legitimate pride.

²³ Yagoda was executed by Stalin's order in 1937. [Original footnote] Iagoda, Genrikh Grigorevich (1891-1938), one of the chiefs of the Cheka, executed 1938.

VII WE ARE RELEASED

The hunger strike ended, but the struggle had to be kept up. Yagoda in announcing the terms of the government, declared:

“All of you will be deported, including those that refuse to leave the prison; you will be informed of further details.”

Indeed, on the same day Chistiakov arrived. He showed us a copy and the original of the “verdict” with Yagoda’s signature. The verdict contained more than 25 provisos. We were asked to sign this document, but sick as we were, we expressly declined to do it. We could not agree to the clause providing for gradual release, which was to take place only two or three days prior to the deportation. Nor could we agree to the pledge that upon release we would not conduct any party work or that we would refrain from meeting our friends in the movement.

We wrote a letter of protest, setting forth our minimum demands. We demanded: 1) The four comrades who were released from the prison by an order of the Che-Ka but who, impelled by a sense of solidarity remained in prison continuing the hunger strike, should be allowed to stay in Russia. 2) The young comrades be left in Russia. 3) The immediate release of the entire collective and granting its members the right to live in Russia not less than three weeks and 4) to delete the proviso touching collective assurance and the pledge not to meet “comrades in ideas.”

Chistiakov left carrying with him our declaration.

A few days later the prison was visited by the Chief of the Foreign Section of the all-Russian Che-Ka, Mogilevsky²⁴ who was placed in charge of our case. He said that we would be given a chance to leave the country under conditions, which in point of comfort would not differ from those afforded to members of the Comintern. But no sooner did we touch upon our demands, the Che-Ka representative would become evasive, declaring that it was not within his power to pass upon those matters and that it will be taken up, at his suggestion, by the Che-Ka board. We saw him, however, only three times after which he completely vanished out of our sight.

We did, however, obtain the release of comrades Guyevsky, Shilkin and Sheroshevsky; Fiedorov preferred to be placed on the deportation list.

We also obtained the annulment of the proviso of collective pledge “not to meet the friends in the movement.”

A month passed since the hunger strike had been ended, but we were still kept in prison. The joy afforded by our victory gave place to disquietude, doubts and the

²⁴ Lost his life in Caucasia. [Original footnote] Mogilevsky, Solomon Grigorevich (1885-1925), Chief of the Foreign Section of the Cheka. Killed in an aircraft accident.

drabness of the daily prison life. The holiday spirit induced by the struggle was at an end.

Time went on and we were still kept in prison. Our nerves were getting on the blink. The Che-Ka was putting on the brakes: it promised the Profintern to have us released immediately, but it kept us in prison.

By now the delegates, with the exception of Laval, left for their respective countries whereupon the Che-Ka began to act as if nothing had happened. Rumors began to circulate to the effect that the Anarchists would not be deported but left in prison, that the political prisoners of the Taganka prison would be dispersed throughout the other prisons of the country, etc. Our nerves became taut, nearing the breaking point. The atmosphere created in the collective as a result of all this was nearly impossible: everyone was nervous, irate, pessimism and dejection were the prevailing mood of all.

Suddenly, on September 1, the prison authorities, accompanied by big-ranking officials of the Che-Ka, came into our cell, declaring:

“All the political prisoners, with the exception of the Anarchists, will be transferred to the Butirsky prison.”

There followed a brief period of negotiations after which all the prisoners were taken away. We felt like orphans. The ten of us roamed the vast, deserted corridor.

A few days passed and still not a word from the Che-Ka. The regime became more and more rigorous. We showed resistance. It finally came to a pass: we were deprived of the right to speak directly to our visitors. Visitors were placed behind a double row of grates and only in such a manner were we allowed to have any visitors at all, that is, we were reduced to the position of ordinary criminals.

On Saturday, September 5, we decided to publicly manifest our protest. No sooner were our wives brought into the visitors room than we forced open all the grates, which immediately caused a great rumpus. Our wives were ousted roughly.

A call was sent out for the soldiers on guard. Soon the latter showed up in the yard, running toward the visitors room, loading their rifles on the way. The triggers were all cocked. ... Just a trifle longer and the rifles would be in action. ... But our calm attitude saved the situation from a bloody climax. We explained to the soldiers the entire situation, asking them to leave, since we also intended to leave for our cell. The soldiers left, while we returned to our cell, carrying the grates upon our shoulders and accompanied by the plaudits of the entire prison. Soon Chistiakov arrived and our representatives were called in to report on the whole matter. He left, promising that everything would be straightened out. Try hard, however, as the Che-Ka did, in order to capitalize on this outbreak, it failed in its attempt to frustrate our release. After two more agonizing weeks of prison confinement, we

were at last set free on September 17, with the only condition imposed upon us: that of a written pledge to refrain from party work during the forthcoming interim.

VIII WE ARE DEPORTED

We are free, and are among our closest friends. ... Patiently we await the day of our banishment. But time goes on. We are not permitted to work anywhere. Our means gave out; we sold everything we could in order to hold out. The State aid is miserably small, it suffices for two or three days and no more; in addition, we do not want that aid. Our wives are also unemployed, having given up their positions in order to share our banishment. The constant visitations to the Che-Ka were of little comfort to us.

"Your documents are not ready" – was the invariable answer to our anxious inquiries as to when we were going to be deported.

October is the date set for our departure and we begin bustling: we cover the city trying to see our friends and take leave of them; we begin packing and preparing for the long journey, and then on the following day the Che-Kists tell us with a smirk:

"You won't leave today, your departure is set for such and such a date."

This happened about five times. We gave up this business of taking leave of our friends in order not to make a laughing stock of ourselves.

Finally, we were told that on November 2, we shall definitely be sent to Petrograd. Somehow, we believed this promise. Comrade Marcus²⁵ (member of the Executive Bureau of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation) invited his friends from the Bureau and some of his prison cellmates to a small tea party. In the evening all the invited guests gathered in his place. Time glided on, fleeting by imperceptibly in the midst of friendly conversations, seasoned with the well-baked pies prepared for this occasion. At 11 o'clock Yartchuk and Maximoff rose from the table, having in mind to pay their last visit to Emma Goldman, to discuss with her the forthcoming work abroad, connections and other matters. Both took leave from the host, leaving the rest to spend another half an which they felt they owed to the genial host.

Upon returning home late at night, Maximoff failed to find his wife and the friends whom he left at the party in the apartment of Marcus. Their long absence kept him wondering. The clock struck three and they were still away.

"Something is wrong here, the Che-Ka is showing its hand," Maximoff thought to himself.

²⁵ Markus, Sergei, member of the Anarcho-syndicalist Executive Bureau. "Died in Moscow".

On the following day, early in the morning, both, Maximoff and Yartchuk, went over to Marcus in order to find out what was the matter. Fearing an ambush on the part of the Che-Ka agents, they decided that only one of them go upstairs, the other one to remain on the street to watch developments. The one that went up to the apartment knocked at the door.

Having learned that there weren't any Che-Ka agents in the apartment, he called up his friend waiting at the street. Upon entering the apartment, they found everything in a topsy-turvy state.

"What happened?"

"Only half an hour after you had left," we were told by the wife of Marcus, "the Che-Ka agents swooped down upon us, searched everyone and then shoving everyone of us into one room, they made a systematic search of the entire apartment. Nothing was found. They were going to leave, taking only Marcus along with them, but, having called up the central office of the Che-Ka, they received instructions to arrest everyone present at that gathering, which, according to the Che-Ka agent, was viewed 'as a political rally,' all participants of which were to be arrested except the wife of Marcus, and that because she has small children in the house."

The indignantly aroused Maximoff went over to the Che-Ka's main office and lodged a written protest.

"Don't let yourself be upset," he was told there, "it is only a trifle. ... Not all of you are going to leave today – only Volin, Yartchuk and Vorobiev are leaving. ... Your wife will be released today."

"But why my wife only? ... There was also her sister who kept aloof from any sort of political activity. There are Gogelia (Orgeiani), L. and N. Chekeres²⁶ – all of whom are my friends. ... I demand that all of them, Marcus included, be released."

"I can only promise as far as your wife is concerned," said the Che-Ka official. And then turning to Volin he said: "Volin, get ready, you leave at three o'clock..."

On that very night a wave of arrests swept throughout the country. In Moscow the organization of Anarchists-universalists was broken up and a number of comrades arrested. On the same night more than twenty Anarchists were arrested. The same thing took place in Petrograd.

Later on some of the arrested comrades were released, including comrade Marcus who declared a hunger strike, which lasted eleven days. The others were still held in the prisons. ... Two weeks later, the group of deported Anarchists left.

²⁶ Presumably Lidiia Gogelia, partner of G. Gogelia (K. Orgeiani) (both active in Geneva in 1903 with the Khleb i Volia group. Avrich, *Russian Anarchists* p39) and Nikolai Chekeres-Dolenko (see earlier footnote).

In Moscow they were told that their passports were ready and that all of them were to leave for Petrograd on the fifteenth.

Farewell Russia! Farewell Moscow, with its prisons and executioners who are now buried under the accompaniment of the "Internationale",²⁷ with its horrible dungeons where the blood of its victims, both revolutionists and counter-revolutionists, never dry, with its dungeons whose walls are stained with the blood of our comrades: Fanya Baron²⁸ and Lev Cherny tortured to death by the Che-Ka executionists! ... Farewell, Ghenghis-Khan-like Communism: more than ever we remain your inveterate enemies!

In Petrograd we were accommodated in one of the best hotels.

And then a new chapter in our trials and tribulations began.

The hotel "Spartak" was in charge of the foreign Commissariat. We were kept up by the State. Our dinners were served in the hotel "International" which belonged to the same Commissariat. All of us, however, were in a state of high tension since for all practical purposes we were but prisoners, confined in a convenient, comfortable jail.

At last Yartchuk and then Volin were shipped out. Well, we thought, the thing is moving along. Soon we shall go too. ... Yartchuk will come just in time to take part in the Anarchist convention which we were eager to attend and which we hoped to make in time.

²⁷ Here is an instance told to us by one of the outstanding political figures of revolutionary Russia, whose name we are not at liberty to reveal.

One of the Che-Ka executioners, Yemelianov, became deranged. He was placed in a well equipped hospital maintained by the Che-Ka. Everything possible was done to save the patient. The latter would jump up at the appearance of the nurse or anyone else, would twist the quilt into a semblance of a revolver and begin shouting: "Stand up against the wall!" – after which he would invariably start aiming at the person. ...

Medical science did not help – the executioner died. It was difficult to save "a man" who was celebrating the memorable date which brought up the list of people executed by him to 1,000 persons.

Yemelianov was buried with honor: a guard of honor, music. ... Under the accompaniment of the funeral march ("You fell as a victim in the fateful struggle") and the "International," the body of the executioner was turned over to the earth. The earth accepts everything! But there were plenty of candidates to take his place: now there are even women among the executioners. ... [Original footnote]

[Possibly Emelianov, Mikhail Filippovich (1887-) former Black Sea Fleet sailor and member of Cheka collegium.]

²⁸ Baron, Fanya Anisimovna (?-30.09.1921) active in Chicago and Kharkhov with her partner Aaron Baron. She was liberated from Ryazan prison by the Underground Anarchist group. Shot by Cheka with Lev Cherny (see earlier footnote).

Thus, at least, we were inclined to think. But the Che-Ka thought otherwise. After the departure of those two comrades the Che-Kists kept up the same bland tone and appearance: they did not deny our requests, were inquiring about our health, whether the food was good or whether we felt comfortable in the "Spartak" hotel, etc.

Yes, we replied, but we were quite willing to live in worse conditions, only at the other side of the border.

"Take your time, comrades," we were told. "Is it we who keep you back? We have no documents for you. Moscow, as if doing so by design, sent documents that would be of no use in your case: the old passports of the Tzar's times. But how can we send you out with such documents? You will be arrested abroad." And so we wait again. At last the awaited moment arrived.

"You are going," the Che-Ka agents told us, "as Czecho-Slovaks, under such and such names. You don't need any documents. You will simply be placed on the list of the echelon."

A truck took us to the railroad station. It turned out, however, that the echelon was not ready yet, in view of which we were put up for the time being in barracks. There, we got a good idea of the barrack life as well as of the conditions under which we would have to journey. The results of such a voyage were clear to us beforehand: typhus or prison, or both together. We refused to go under those conditions. And so back we went to the hotel. On the following day we handed in a written protest in which we reminded the government of its pledges given to the Profintern delegates.

And again the wearisome days dragged on. December was nearly gone. We gave up the hopes of being in time for the Anarchist convention. Our friends with whom we worked out plans of activity abroad, since we were supposed to have left before them, were already at the other side, knocking at the gates of unfriendly Germany, which thus far kept them closely shut. Other thoughts already occupied our mind: what sort of prison is awaiting us.

However, our gloomy fears seemed to have been dispelled for the time being.

"Within a few days those that have children, that is, Gorelik and Fiedorov, will be sent by steamer," we were told by the Che-Ka. "They will be given a certificate with a German visa. The rest will leave three or four days later and will be furnished with the same kind of documents."

But when everything was set for this promised departure, it turned out that for some reason we could not go.

And so again day after day of tedious waiting. Fears and suspicions grew again within us.

Our plans of revolutionary work went to pieces. ... Prison was facing us again. ... We were pained and grieved over the shattered hopes with which we lived for such a long time.

Our persistent inquiries at the Petrograd Che-Ka were met with replies which sounded like apologies.

"We cannot do anything. Let Moscow do. ... She is hampering the work. ... We ourselves demanded that in view of the situation they take you back and ship you out themselves or that they send good documents with which we might get you out."

"But what are we to do?" we asked them. "This business of being kept up by you at the expense of the State goes against our grain."

"Well, we shall have to ask Moscow again."

"Put an end to this rigmarole," we told them. "You decided to deport us: well do so. You want to put us in prison, go ahead. ... Only don't keep dragging it out. ..."

On December 25, one of the Che-Ka agents called on us, declaring in a rather authoritative tone: "Get your things ready. At seven o'clock in the evening you go to Moscow. ... I am going to get your tickets for the express."

"But why to Moscow? Why?"

"I do not know. ... I do not know anything. ... Neymark came from Moscow and brought this order."

"But, how is it you don't know anything about it? Aren't you the Head of the Foreign Department? ..."

"I am only carrying out orders. ... I have no time to discuss it. ..." And he vanished behind the door.

In the evening he came back together with another Che-Ka agent who was to escort us to Moscow.

"We are not going to leave for God knows where," we told the Che-Kists: "We demand Neymark here to explain what's what."

"The express is leaving soon. ... If you don't take the express, you shall have to leave with the freight train. Whichever way, but go you must, and today at that. If necessary, we will use force in putting you on the train."

"So that means we are arrested?"

"Whether you are or not is none of our concern. We are instructed to send you out to Moscow and that is all."

After a brief conference held among ourselves we decided to leave. Hastily our belongings were loaded into the automobile which took us over to the station.

At the station our belongings were just as hurriedly unloaded and taken over to the platform, but no sooner was the last suitcase brought over than the train left.

And thus we were left alone on the platform with our belongings piled up in front of us, with the children crying and the Che-Ka agents giving vent to their feelings in abuse and vituperations. It was decided to send us out the following day and to take us back to the hotel for the night. So we left our things in the baggage room in order to save ourselves the painful job of packing and unpacking. But again we were stuck: the automobile left. To walk back was a sheer impossibility since we had women and infants in our party. The Che-Ka agents went out to obtain an automobile. Some of us set out to walk toward the hotel. On the way we stopped over at some of our friends' places, trying to warn them of the fact that we are being taken back to Moscow and that the impression gained by us was that of being taken back to prison. To our great chagrin, none of our friends were at home.

Two hours after we had come back to the hotel, the Che-Ka agents were again after us.

"Get ready now. You are going today after all. A mail train is leaving soon."

It was no use to protest. We left. The conditions under which we traveled were terrible. It took us fifty-eight hours to reach Moscow. We arrived there on New Year's Eve (1921).

Were we going to be taken to the Che-Ka? And if not, where were we headed? Our escort did not say a word. The truck came and we were taken away.

"In the place I am taking you to," we were told by the Che-Ka agent. "You are not supposed to be known as Anarchists. ..."

Ah, we thought to ourselves, it is not the prison that we were being taken to. But where?

Back and forth we went from one place to another, from the all-Russian Che-Ka to the Zemlianoj Val,²⁹ where the Che-Ka agent was fumbling for an address, and then back to the old places. Finally we came to a narrow lane where we stopped near a house (afterwards we found out that this place housed the Federation of War Prisoners). The Che-Ka agent went into the house, telling us to wait for him. He came out shortly and ordered the chauffeur to drive us back to the Zemlianoj Val. We were brought to a house where the German and Austrian war prisoners were quartered.

"Take off your things."

Our baggage was unloaded.

"I am through with my task; from now on you will have someone else who will tell you what to do. ... Good-bye. ..." Our escort left us.

²⁹ Zemlianoj Val – a section in Moscow. [Original footnote]

Bewildered, we stood near our piled up baggage; stared at by the curious war prisoners.

“Sprechen Sie Deutsch?” [“Do you speak German?”] asked one of the moustached Germans.

There was no answer. We look at each other bewilderedly

“Sprechen Sie Deutsch?” the question was reiterated!

“Ja, Ja,” [“Yes, Yes”] one of us answered.

“Zimmer numer vier. . . .” [“Room number four”]

The baggage was carried into the next room. Soon we learned that we were no more Anarchists but civil prisoners, Czecho-Slovaks and that on January 3, (1922), we were going to leave with the party. There we also learned that the echelon was supposed to have left today but that it was detained on our account.

Now we came to realize whence the haste in shipping us out from Petrograd. We were to be relayed from the train to this party of war-prisoners and then sent away immediately as to make it impossible for us to refuse it. We were hungry, filthy and tired after the long journey. Those of us who had nowhere else to go remained in this bug-ridden place, the rest left for their friends' houses.

A short while before we had to leave we were told our new names, furnished with the very bad documents and together with the other members of the echelon we were placed on the train consisting of filthy freight cars, having wooden bedplanks on both sides and an iron stove in the center.

IX WE START OUT

For two days we lived in these freight cars before starting out on the morning of January 5. The voyage was distressingly hard, especially for the children. The poor children suffered from intolerable heat or from cold. Their lives were in danger from the awful draughts. One of the children fell sick; he began to utter hoarse cries which gradually died away into feeble groans.

There was Sebez. . . . Then came Latvia. Our documents were examined, the baggage was looked over; which was followed by a personal search. As far as we were, concerned, everything ended well, although here and there incidents occurred: an attempt was made to take away books and money from some of us. The search having ended, we started out again. A few miles further the train stopped. The border. . . .

“Get your documents ready, citizens! Throw everything out of the cars!” And so the wood boards and the stoves with the burning wood were flung out of the cars. . . . The documents were examined, the party left. . . .

Latvia! We are changing into other cars. The Letts put the passengers of two Russian cars, into one Latvian car. There we were served with a supper and

furnished with wood. Soon the train left. On the way we discover that the sick child died; it died quietly, without undue trouble. At the first Latvian station, on a dark night, the grief-stricken mother turned over the little corpse of her firstling to the station morgue. The Fiedorovs lost their child.

And now we are in the quarantine of the city of Riga. There we were kept as prisoners; we were not permitted to leave the premises. It was a cold, filthy place and in addition, we were kept on starvation rations.

Litva, Germany; changing to passenger trains! Poland and then Germany again. . . .

We were faced with the problem: how to get to Berlin, our destination? To get away from the party before it gets to Stettin – that we did not succeed in carrying out. We decided to make our escape from Stettin. But there was Stettin itself. . . .

Will the planned escape succeed? . . .

X STETTIN PRISON. WE ARE NO MORE CZECHS.

With the train drawing nearer to Stettin, we changed clothes, and put ourselves into a more dignified shape. We began to look like Europeans. Our things were all packed away in the trunks. Our plan was to hire a porter and have him stow away our things in a baggage room, while we ourselves would leave immediately for Berlin. In an emergency we were ready to abandon our things and get away.

However, the echelon did not land at the station; it was shunted off near the barracks. Guards were mounted at the car entrances and orders were given to carry the baggage out. This done, we were broken up into various national groups and were ordered to take our things into the barracks. The echelon was met by numerous representatives of the Red Cross who were also acting in the capacity of detectives. . . . No sooner did we settle in the barracks than two of those “gentlemen” came in, ordering comrade Maximoff to follow them. He was searched, given a few whacks, and then peremptorily told to “confess”.

“Tell us the truth,” the Red Cross representative kept on shouting. “Where are your belongings, your baggage?”

They came to the barracks for the baggage. There they arrested Maximoff's wife and placed both of them under guard. Soon Mark and the rest were fetched to the same place.

“Bolsheviks, Bolsheviks,” the detectives kept on saying joyfully while going on with their painstaking search.

In the evening a horse and wagon were brought over to our place. The baggage was put upon the wagon and the women were put upon the piled up baggage. Since there was no room for all of us, two had to walk their way, escorted by an

armed guard. The sergeant in charge of the convoy gave orders to beat us at the first attempt to escape.

We decided to reveal our identity in case we were put in prison. We preferred to be known as Anarchists and not as Bolsheviks. It would, indeed, be ironic to be imprisoned as Bolsheviks!

We revealed our identity.

Some believed us, others did not. We were put in the jail of the "Politzei Presidium"³⁰, but the women were permitted to stay in a nearby hotel, provided they show up every morning. ...

Everything seemed to have been lost. ... In the "Politzei Presidium" one could only hear:

"Bolsheviks !... Zuruck nach Russland!" ... ["...Back to Russia!"]

On the following day we declared that we preferred to be sent to the Zulus in Africa rather than go back to Russia.

"All right, we will send you to Czecho-Slovakia, but here you cannot remain."

"But we are not Czechs..."

"You have Czecho-Slovakian documents. We shall make believe you are Czechs. Otherwise you will have to go back to Russia."

Back to Russia – prison! Go to Czecho-Slovakia – prison again! And then? ...

And then some other prison.

What a consoling thought! Everything is lost. ...

While yet in Russia, confined in Taganka prison, it was decided that we go to Berlin, where there was a strong and healthy Anarcho-Syndicalist movement, and to launch upon a concerted work for Russia, acting as the foreign Bureau of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation.³¹ We thought a great deal about this plan. We had in mind to publish a paper for Russia, and also propagandistic and agitational literature, that is, to continue, without stopping, the work interrupted by the Bolsheviks. We hoped that with the material and moral assistance of German, French, American and other comrades we should be able to set up a publication in one or several European languages where the truth about the Russian revolution would be told, where one could share one's revolutionary experience and a series of problems brought forward by the revolution in Russia, and where one might appeal for the organization of an Anarcho-Syndicalist International, the

³⁰ Police HQ

³¹ Berlin saw the 1922 conference where the Anarcho-syndicalist International Working Men's Association (IWMA), later known as the International Workers' Association (IWA) was founded.

organization of a Syndicalist International based upon the principles of Bakuninism, of the First International, etc.

And suddenly all that went astray, irretrievably lost. ...

How distressing, how painful!

It was sheer joy then to have been told that we were going to be released from prison and placed under the surveillance of the police, having been warned, though, that at the first opportunity we shall have to be sent to Czecho-Slovakia.

We felt joyful, for now we obtained freedom of action: we could communicate with our Berlin friends whose joint efforts would snatch us from the clutches of the German police.

And we were not deceived in our hopes. ...

February 7, 1922.

G. MAXIMOFF.

APPENDICES

TROTZKY'S REPLY

To Com. Michel and to the other comrades who composed the delegation which visited yesterday Com. Lenin:

Dear Comrades:

The Central Committee of our Party has again, this morning, examined with due care the question of the imprisoned Anarchists which was called for in your yesterday's talk with Lenin.

We are fully aware of the necessity of being exceedingly careful in our handling the question of imprisoned Anarchists. The more is this necessary that the Western European Anarcho-Syndicalists, among them being those who play a very important and positive role in the revolutionary movement, do not always make the necessary differentiation between the Anarchists and Syndicalists who, while preserving the peculiarities of their opinions, consider it, nonetheless, as their revolutionary duty to support the dictatorship of the Russian proletariat against the world bourgeoisie – and those who, sheltering themselves behind an extreme revolutionary phraseology, carry out, in fact, a counter-revolutionary activity, dealing blows from behind to the Soviet Power, at a time when the latter is turned with its face to the imperialist enemies.

The fact that Anarchists, who have exterminated, helped to exterminate or advised to exterminate Communists, are hunger-striking in prison can, in no way – you will agree – serve as a pretext for their release. In the meantime those prisoners whom, as you know, we have found possible, at considerable risk, to release, refuse to go out of prison and continue their hunger-strike, demanding the release of the

others. We have no right whatever to expose the lives of fresh dozens and, perhaps, hundreds of Communist workers and peasants, a large number of whom have already fallen into the hands of the anti-Soviet Anarchist organization in which the imprisoned Anarchists were active. We consider it necessary to remind you again that the Communists who fall into the hands of that organization have no opportunity either to make any protests or to get into touch with delegates to International Congresses, or even to declare hunger-strikes – because they are immediately and mercilessly exterminated.³²

The hunger-strike is actually kept up by the false hope that the Soviet Government will, under the influence of the intervention of insufficiently informed foreign delegates, commit the error, approaching to a crime, and release its irreconcilable enemies, whose closest partisans and friends still continue by force of arms to destroy Soviet institutions and to exterminate Communists. As we cannot, fully conscious of our duties towards the revolution, take such a step, any *interview* of the foreign comrades with the prisoners which could not, because of the nature of the situation, give any practical results, *would be capable, however, of raising, among the prisoners, false hopes and of inducing them to continue a hopeless hunger-strike.*

Free from any spirit of revenge, considerations of revolutionary expediency alone dictating our steps, we would be willing *to let all the prisoners go abroad*, facilitating their departure by providing them with passports and financial means, and we are ready to accept, in this direction, any help, assistance and indications which you might give us.

We consider, nevertheless, that *the only right step on your part would be a written declaration on your part appealing to the prisoners to cease immediately their hunger-strike*, considering the manifest discrepancy between the means and the aim. Such letter would be immediately transmitted to the prisoners.

We do not wish to doubt that you will understand the actual sense and spirit of our answer and of our propositions. We still consider ourselves a revolutionary fortress, besieged by the world imperialism. Within this fortress no treason, treachery or counter-revolutionary rebellion can be permitted by us. The welfare of the revolution is our supreme law. This law takes sometimes a stern form. The advance-guard of the workmen of Europe and of the whole world will only then triumph over the bourgeoisie when they will learn to place the stern law of revolutionary expediency above all other consideration.

With comradely greetings,

L. TROTSKY.

12-7-1921.

³² He doubtless refers to the Makhno rebels whom Anarchists were accused of supporting. [Original footnote]

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE OF THE FOREIGN DELEGATES AND THE BOLSHEVIK GOVERNMENT.³³

Comrades, in view of the fact that we have come to the conclusion that your hunger-strike cannot accomplish your liberation, we hereby advise you to terminate it.

At the same time we inform you that definite proposals have been made to us by Comrade Lunacharsky³⁴, in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. To wit:

1. All Anarchists held in the prisons of Russia, and who are now on a hunger-strike, will be permitted to leave for any country they may choose. They will be supplied with passports and funds.

2. Concerning other imprisoned Anarchists or those out of prison, final action will be taken by the Party tomorrow. It is the opinion of Comrade Lunacharsky that the decision in their case will be similar to the present one.

3. We have received the promise indorsed by Unschlicht,³⁵ that the families of the comrades [who choose] to go abroad will be permitted to follow them if they wish. For conspirative reasons some time will have to elapse before this is done.

4. The comrades going abroad will be permitted two days at liberty before their departure, to enable them to arrange their affairs.

5. They will not be allowed to return to Russia without the consent of the Soviet Government.

6. Most of these conditions are contained in the letter received by this delegation from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, signed by Trotzky.

7. The foreign comrades have been authorized to see to it these conditions are properly carried out.

(Signatures)

Orlandis [Arlandis], Leval – Spain

Sirolle, Michel – France

A. Shapiro – Russia

The above is correct.

(Signed) Lunacharsky.

Kremlin, Moscow,

13. VII. 1921.

³³ This agreement supposed to be sent to the prisoners, but we never received it. [Original footnote]

³⁴ Lunacharskii, Anatoly Vasilevich (1875-1933), Bolshevik.

³⁵ Unshlikht, Iosif Stanislavovich (1879-1938), Polish-born Chekist, shot in Stalin's purges.

Alexander Berkman declines to sign because

- he is opposed to deportation on principle;
- he considers the letter an arbitrary and unjustified curtailment of the original offer of the Central Committee, according to which all the Anarchists were to be permitted to leave Russia;
- he demands more time at liberty for those to be released, to enable them to recuperate before deportation.³⁶

A RAY OF LIGHT FROM MOSCOW

At the Moscow conference of the delegates to the Congress of Red Trade Unions (it took place July 22, 1921) at which the opposition of this congress was organized, Trotzky, during one of the sessions of this conference, said the following:

“... All Anarchists (Russian, of course) are rascals and criminals. None of those who at present are kept in prison can be set at liberty.”

LEVAL: (Delegate of the Spanish National Confederation of Labor – CNT). Asks that this statement be substantiated by proofs.

TROTZKY: “And who are you, Leval? I do not find it necessary to answer you.”

When Orlandis [Arlandis] (also a delegate of the Spanish CNT) in turn also demanded proofs to corroborate the above cited statements, Trotzky answered: “You give me the impression of a hysterical woman, I am the People’s Commissar and find it superfluous to give you any explanations. My word is sufficient. The delegates to the International Trade Union Congress have no right to demand freedom for those counter-revolutionary bandits. We are responsible for our action right here in Russia. And we, who are in power here, act in the interests of the revolution. ...”

(From “Der Syndicalist,” No. 32, 1921, Berlin).

TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD

The frenzied terror of the deeply a-moral Communist party swept the country with the blood not only of White-Guardists but also of revolutionists: Anarchists, Syndicalists, Socialists, non-partisan workers and peasants.

The dread horrors of the most heinous and revolting terror unleashed by them exceeded anything of the kind in history.

³⁶ This document was published by Alexander Berkman in his book: *The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920-1922)*, pp. 315-317; Published, Boni and Liveright, 1925, New York. [Original footnote]

What is Thiers and Gallifet³⁷ in comparison! What is the crushing of the Paris Commune compared with the mass terror of the Bolsheviks!

Remember the terror attending the crushing of the Anarchists in Moscow, in April 1918, the June (1918) massacre of the Left Social-Revolutionists in the same city; remember the quelling of the peasants of the Samara, Penza and Saratov provinces who took up arms in 1919 in defense of the free Soviets;³⁸ remember the nightmarish, ghastly executions of workers in Astrakhan, in 1919;³⁹ the terror attending the crushing of the revolutionary irregulars of Ukraine and finally – the crowning horror of all that – the Russian Paris Commune, the Red Kronstadt which revolted in the name of the slogans of the October Revolution. ...

What are the hundreds of victims of Robespierre terror in comparison with the thousands of tortured and executed victims of the Che-Ka, which bears down not only upon its enemies from right and left but also upon innocent “hostages.”

We always fought against the revolting system of hostage taking; we always fought against capital punishment and the rampant spirit of lynch law.

The terror applied by the Bolsheviks toward Anarchists in the same measure as toward counter-revolutionists was not answered by us in kind, although we were entitled to it by the law of self-defense; we did not do it because we were guided by the interests of the revolution.

What brought forth this frenzied terror and the vile suppression of elementary civil rights? The situation created for the revolution by the international imperialism and inner counter-revolution? But government terror began prior to the open struggle with the imperialism of the Entente, before the inner counter-revolution had raised its head. If the terroristic policy was to defend the revolution, how is it that it fell with equal power upon enemies and friends? No, the Bolshevik terror was and is the weapon of party domination. Nothing but that.

In the name of this domination most heinous crimes are perpetrated; in its name are slaughtered not only those that are caught fighting against the power with arms in their hands, but also parties, groups, workers, unions and individuals who have the courage and boldness to think for themselves, to speak against the course

³⁷ Thiers, Louis Adolphe (1797-1877) and Gallifet, Gaston de (1830-1909): politician and general responsible for crushing the Paris Commune of 1871.

³⁸ By 1920, resistance to the Bolsheviks in the lower Volga region had become a peasant war which would last until 1922.

³⁹ A workers’ strike and soldiers’ mutiny against Bolshevik rule in Astrakhan in March 1919 was put down with artillery and machine guns. “Most executions were carried out at the Cheka headquarters. At some barges the authorities were simply drowning prisoners by throwing them overboard with a stone tied to their body.” Vladimir N. Brovkin, *Behind the front lines of the Civil War : political parties and social movements in Russia, 1918-1922*, p85.

of the ruling party, to preach ideas and tactics differing from the latter; in the name of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" a dictatorship of the Party was established over the proletariat.

The persecution of heterodox opinion began in 1918 in the name of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and led to the full annihilation not only of the right Socialist parties, groups, workers' unions, but also of the entire left movement.

And in proportion to their numbers the ones that were most strongly hit by those persecutions were the Anarchists, and that is notwithstanding their self-denying struggle against *Kornilov*, *Kaledin*, *Krasnov*, *Kolchak*, *Denikin*, *Yudenich*, *Wrangel*⁴⁰ and the Entente troops in the North, South, East and West.

Anarchists were executed right and left. Some, like the worker Khodounov⁴¹, were done away with for no cause at all, because of an "attempt to escape;" others, like Gordeyev⁴², a worker from the Izhevsk mills, for failing to submit to "workers' discipline;" and still others for "banditism," like Fanya Baron and the theoretician of the "associationist Anarchism" Lev Cherny (Turchaninov) whom the chekists promised to set free but, having overstepped the limits in torturing Cherny, they shot him in order to cover up their heinous deed.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Anarchists were never declared outside the law, their organizations, with the exceptions of two,⁴³ were broken up and their members imprisoned for no cause at all.

The campaign against Anarchism was at first waged under the slogan of "fighting against banditism," and that was in spite of the fact that all Anarchist organizations and groups opposed hold-ups of any sort as well as terroristic acts. And when provoked by the strangulating policy pursued by the Bolsheviks some Anarchists headed by the Left Social-Revolutionist Cherepanov did attempt to blow up the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party,⁴⁴ this act met the universal condemnation of all Anarchist organizations who publicly stated their opinion to that effect.

⁴⁰ Counter-revolutionary ('White') generals: Kornilov, Lavr Georgevich (1870-1918); Kaledin, Aleksei Maksimovich (1861-1918); Krasnov, Petr Nikolaevich (1869-1947); Kolchak, Aleksandr Vasilevich (1873-1920); Denikin, Anton Ivanovich (1872-1947); Yudenich, Nikolai Nikolaevich (1862-1933) and Wrangel, Petr Nikolaevich (1878-1928).

⁴¹ Khodounov, member of the Moscow Anarchist Federation and worker in telephone workshops. *Guillotine at Work* p388-9.

⁴² Gordeev, Nikolai Vasilevich (ca.1892-1922)

⁴³ The Kropotkin Museum and Golos Truda publishing house. Avrich, *Russian Anarchists* p237.

⁴⁴ See footnote 11, on Lev Cherny

Following the stage of fighting the Anarchists as "bandits," there came the campaign against them as "Makhnovites." Anarchists were persecuted as such, that is for being active in the movement; and, finally, we have arrived at the stage where even pro-Bolshevik Anarchists who have not taken any active part in the movement are persecuted on the ground of having fallen short of the hopes placed in them as effective agents of the Communist policy.

Some Anarchists were executed; others driven out of Soviet Russia. A great number of Anarchists were exiled to the famished provinces of the North, doomed to certain death as a result of starvation and diseases. And those that are in prisons, in addition to all those terrors, are kept in constant threat of execution.

Alarming news is reaching us of the fate of our comrades: A. Baron, Olga Taratuta, Rode⁴⁵ and others who have been kept in Communist prisons for more than two years; their lives are seriously endangered.

The Communists could not stage any trial of Anarchists as they did with the Social-Revolutionists; it is difficult to arraign Anarchists even on false indictments. Only a year ago the delegates of the Profintern convention demanded that the Communist party draw up charges against 62 Anarchists who were kept in various prisons of Soviet Russia. Such charges could not be formulated by Lenin, Trotsky or by the "head" of the Che-Ka - Dzerzhinsky. And because of that some Anarchists had to be released with the provision that they submit to being expelled from Soviet Russia. But outside of those exiled Anarchists there remained many

⁴⁵ Taratuta, Olga Ivanovna [Ruvinskaya, Elka Golda Elevna] (21.01.1876-8.02.1938) "Ekaterinoslav terrorist [...] involved in the bombing of Café Libman in Odessa in 1905. Released from Kiev's Lukianovskaia prison in March 1917, a tired and subdued woman in her late forties, she at first remained aloof from her former associates and confined herself to working for the Red Cross in Kiev. But in 1920, her ire aroused by the Cheka's relentless persecution of the anarchists, she returned to the fold, joining both the *Nabat* confederation and the Anarchist Black Cross, which Apollon Karelin had founded to assist anarchists jailed or exiled by the Communists." Avrich *Russian Anarchists* p207. "Olga Taratuta, beaten by her jailers in Butyrki, afflicted by scurvy in the Orel 'Polit-Isolator', and finally sent into Siberian exile, was suddenly paroled and allowed to return to Kiev." Her date of death confirms Avrich's suspicion that "she probably died in Siberia during Stalin's purge of 1935-1938." *Russian Anarchists* p236-7.

Rode, Rode-Chervinsky (Chervinsky), August Karlovich (ca.1870-approx. 1934) "I soon [after 1910] joined the Golos Truda Group in New York. Avgust Rode-Chervinsky was its outstanding member, a devoted anarcho-syndicalist. He was of German descent and had participated in the big railroad strike before the 1905 revolution and was wounded in the ear." Abraham Blecher, in Avrich *Anarchist Voices*, p351.

more in prisons, apart from those that had been arrested after this intercession took place.

The latest news coming from Russia troubles us very deeply: *the Bolsheviks decided to kill off the Anarchists in prison.*

The Bolsheviks began to revert to direct murder of Anarchists who are kept in prisons; they do it without even the formality of passing sentences, by their "notorious" Che-Ka boards. One attempt of that kind already took place: Comrade Baron who was kept in the prison of Orel, was shot at while lying in his prison bed. This fact was attested by a member of the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic party (now exiled from Soviet Russia who had been kept in the same cell with A. Baron).

The situation of the Anarchists in the Communist prisons is quite desperate and if the protests of the international proletariat and the latter's demands to put an end to the unrestrained terror will not save our comrades from the clutches of the frenzied beasts, – many of them will not escape a violent and premature death.

We ardently appeal to the international proletariat and its organizations to unite its efforts and put an end to the unbridled terror of the Russian Communist party.

This has to be done in the name of the trampled Rights of Man, in order to rehabilitate the idea of proletarian emancipation, in order to humanize living conditions in Russia. In this matter there can be no differences of opinion: The universal cause of humanity effaces factional differences, and that is why we appeal to our political friends as well as enemies, hoping that factional enmity will not prevent anyone from raising his voice in defense of the martyrs of the Communist torture chambers.

We are confident that the united protest of the international proletariat will give our comrades life and freedom.

With comradely greetings

The Foreign Bureau for the Organization of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation.

G. MAXIMOFF
MARK
YARTCHUK

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