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Philips Price and the Russian Revolution

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Summary of Thesis submitted for Ph.D. by Margaret Tatiana Rose  
on  
Philips Price and the Russian Revolution

Philips Price was Correspondent for the Manchester Guardian in Russia from 1914-1918. He was involved in the formation of the Union of Democratic Control, which opposed Britain's entry into the war, and one result of the research for this thesis has been an indication that he became its principal source of information about Russia. During 1914-16, when Price acted mainly as a War Correspondent, his political ideas became increasingly radical. When the March revolution occurred he quickly moved to Petrograd. There he observed and reported on the progressive failures of the Provisional governments, the rise of the soviet principle, and the increasing influence of Bolshevism. Immediately before the November revolution he made a 6-week journey in the Volga provinces which gave him a unique insight into public opinion outside the capital. He was in the Smolny Institute when the Bolsheviks took power and for the next four months supplied the Manchester Guardian with a running commentary on events in Russia of which the British censorship did not take much notice. From April 1918 onwards Price became increasingly convinced that only the Bolsheviks could maintain effective government in Russia and his despatches were correspondingly censored and eventually stopped. An account is given on the machinery of British censorship and the way in which it was used as an instrument of an anti-Bolshevik foreign policy. It is suggested that the C.P. Scott's personal opposition to that policy was powerfully reinforced by what he was learning from Price although he could not publish his material. In the autumn of 1918 Price became an active propagandist for the Bolsheviks. The extent of his activities in this field was only discovered during the research for this thesis, which ends with an attempt to assess the influence of Price's work, both published and unpublished, on dissenting opinion in Britain during and immediately after World War I.



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Tania Rose

## NOTE ON DATES AND TRANSLITERATION

The new-style dates have been used throughout, partly because Price adhered to them in dating his private letters and memoranda; and partly because his despatches, whatever the old-style date on which he sent them from Russia may have been, were naturally published in Britain on what were, in effect, new style dates even before the system was changed. He often datelined his despatches by the day of the week, rather than by the date, and in such instances it has generally been possible to attribute the equivalent of a new-style date to them, thus also indicating how long or how short a time elapsed before they were printed.

Transliteration of Russian words has proved a problem, since some of Price's own transliterations were not only idiosyncratic but also inconsistent. Moreover since virtually all material quoted from other sources has, by the nature of this thesis, been taken from what was printed about Russia in the English language during the period under review, the inconsistencies are necessarily compounded. It did not seem proper to change transliterations in already-published material. In the few cases in which reference is made to Russian material not yet translated into English, the British Library system of transliteration has been adopted.

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## Chapter 1. Early life, travel and politics

Morgan Philips Price, born in Gloucester on 29 January 1885, was the elder son of Margaret Philips and William Edwin Price. Only people who did not know him ever referred to him as Morgan; he was always called Phil. His surname was not double-barrelled but a family history. His mother's family came from Manchester where they had, in the century before her birth, amassed a considerable fortune making cotton tape and dealing in various merchandise.<sup>1</sup> His father's family, originally Welsh mountain farmers, became importers of timber into the inland port of Gloucester and founded the firm of Price, Walker & Company which was - and is - probably the oldest timber importing business in the country.<sup>2</sup> In the first half of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Manchester family of Philips are thought to have been descended from Flemish Protestant weavers who settled in Staffordshire in the late sixteenth century. In 1747 one branch of the family, the brothers John and Nathaniel, migrated to Manchester where they opened a warehouse and prospered exceedingly. Robert Philips, the son of Nathaniel and father of Mark and Robert, was born in the last year of the reign of George II and died in the early years of the reign of Victoria. He became a Unitarian as a form of protest against the "Church and King" party, and was mobbed for his known sympathies with the American and French revolutions. This did not prevent him from becoming extremely popular in later life. Robert Philips was offered a baronetcy by Melbourne but declined it. He was one of the group of merchants who put up the money with which to start the Manchester Guardian.

<sup>2</sup> The origins of the firm Price, Walker & Co. can be traced to 1736, when Morgan Price, son of a Welsh sheep farmer, came to Gloucester and speculated successfully by buying up a shipload of Norwegian timber which was in danger of being stranded by the Severn tides. The firm grew as a family concern under his son, grandson and great grandson William Philip Price. In association at different times in the nineteenth century with the families of Washbourne, Potter and Walker, the firm frequently changed its name but always contained that of a Price. It was heavily and profitably involved in the provision of timber for both the canal and the railway building booms, and became a major importer of timber from the Americas, the Baltic and Russia, being one of the first to land timber from Archangel (1827). It developed a profitable sideline and a good reputation for providing decent quarters for emigrants to America in its own ships when travelling unloaded. By the early years of the twentieth century Price, Walker & Co. were one of the



nineteenth century both families acquired landed estates. Both families shared the long tradition of Unitarianism in religion and more or less radical Liberalism in politics and their union by marriage epitomised the classical connection between these two elements in British political history. Margaret Price's uncle Mark Philips was one of the first two M.P.s to be elected for Manchester when the city was enfranchised in 1832.<sup>3</sup> Her much younger father, Robert Needham Philips, was M.P. for Bury almost without interruption from 1857.<sup>4</sup> Her sister Caroline married George Otto Trevelyan

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largest timber importing firms in the country, but the business never fully recovered from the first World War and after the second World War it was taken over, becoming part of Magnet and Southern. The operations at Gloucester are still run under its name, and in 1986, to mark its two and a half centuries, a history of the firm was produced. Hugh Conway Jones: Price, Walker & Co. (Gloucester 1986).

<sup>3</sup> MARK PHILIPS (1800-1873). Educated at Manchester New College York, he served his political apprenticeship in the late 1820s in the Reform and Anti-Corn-Law movements. He was returned as one of the first two M.P.s for Manchester after the Reform Act of 1832, defeating among others William Cobbett. Apart from continuing in the Anti-Corn Law movement in the House of Commons, he was not thereafter very active politically. He opposed all attempts to introduce factory legislation on classical laissez-faire grounds. In 1847 he retired from politics for health reasons, and moved to Warwickshire where he had inherited some land at Snitterfield from his father (who had bought it as a property qualification). There he built a gigantic house, Welcombe (now an hotel) and lived in a style to match it, becoming Deputy Lieutenant and then High Sheriff of Warwickshire. His support continued to be sought by aspiring Liberal candidates, however, and it was said of him that although he always dressed completely conventionally he somehow contrived to look like a gypsy. He was reputed to be the original upon whom the character Oswald Milbank in Disraeli's Coningsby was based.

<sup>4</sup> ROBERT NEEDHAM PHILIPS (1815-1890) was educated at the village school at Stand outside Manchester, then at Dr. Carpenter's Academy at Bristol, then at Rugby, at Manchester New College York, and at Glasgow University. He began work at the looms in his father's factory and his political education began by electioneering for his brother Mark. He was elected Liberal M.P. for Bury in 1857 and held the seat, with one interruption (when he withdrew) until 1885. He said even less in the House of Commons than his brother, but was well-known by his constituents to stand for progressive causes, notably for locally-regulated education and the extension of the franchise, in supporting which he was strongly influenced by the attitude of the Lancashire weavers to the American Civil War. He also supported the protection of Trade Union funds, the Nine Hours



while he was M.P. for Tynemouth in 1869.<sup>5</sup> The man she married, William Edwin Price, was M.P. for Tewkesbury at the time of her marriage in 1878.<sup>6</sup> His father, William Philip Price, was M.P. for

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Bill, Free Trade, and a wealth tax and he was strongly anti-Jingo. But although in favour of redress of grievances in Ireland he opposed Home Rule. Described variously as Independent, Liberal, Radical and Whig, he was reputed to prefer electioneering to sitting in the House of Commons.

<sup>5</sup> SIR GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN (1838-1928) Son of Sir Charles Trevelyan (1st baronet) and brother-in-law of Lord Macaulay, Trevelyan was first elected M.P. for Tynemouth in 1865. Initially a Palmerstonian Whig he untypically moved leftward in the course of his political career. In 1869 he married Caroline eldest daughter of Robert Needham Philips. He was Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1881-84 but in 1886 resigned from his next post (Secretary for Scotland) on the issue of Home Rule. However he quickly came round to Gladstone's point of view and from 1892-95 was back in the Government as Secretary for Scotland, this time with a seat in the Cabinet. He retired from politics in 1897 and devoted the rest of his long life to writing his four-volume history: The American Revolution.

<sup>6</sup> WILLIAM EDWIN PRICE (1841-1886) belonged to the first generation of Dissenters able to get into public schools (in his case Eton). After attending London University he went to Woolwich, secured a commission and for a few years served as Lieutenant in the 30th Light Infantry in Ireland and India. Realising that he was not suited to army life he returned home, as he thought, to the life of a country squire, and was surprised and pleased to find himself invited to stand for Tewkesbury at the age of 27. Although very close to his father, W.E. Price's political views were considerably to the left of W.P. Price. He wanted universal suffrage sooner rather than later, and envisaged government intervention to control credit, stimulate employment and mitigate want. He also foresaw the need to curb the powers of the House of Lords. His love of travel (he was also a good linguist) gave him a greater interest in foreign affairs than any other members of the Price and Philips family. He felt strongly that Disraeli was wrong on the Eastern Question and intensely disliked British imperialist and annexationist activities in South Africa. He supported every Army reform measure and also wanted to see a complete reform of local government. After the General Election of 1880, although he personally was unequivocally exonerated, he was unseated for corruption in a notoriously greedy constituency and although invited to stand again for several other safe Liberal constituencies was unable to do so for reasons of health. He died at the age of only 45.



Gloucester.<sup>7</sup> In fact, for five years (1868-73) the two fathers-in-law (who had actually been at school together at one of the dissenting Academies)<sup>8</sup> and the two sons-in-law sat on the back

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<sup>7</sup> WILLIAM PHILIP PRICE (1817-1891) was the great grandson of the founder of Price, Walker and Co. (see Chp.1 (2)), his father having achieved some local eminence as an architect and Mayor of Gloucester as well as a timber merchant. Like his son's future father-in-law Robert Needham Philips, he received some education in Bath at Dr. Lent Carpenter's school for Dissenters, (see Chp. 1 (8)) but he was essentially self-educated, and entered the family firm's counting house. He was invited to stand as Liberal Candidate for Gloucester at the age of 30 and was first elected M.P. in 1852, remaining one of the city's M.P.s until he was made a Railway Commissioner in 1873. His Liberalism was pragmatic and his adherence to his party conditional upon its appeal to his conscience and his common sense. He withheld his support from Palmerston on more than one occasion. Although a firm believer in the Victorian notion of progress, he was sceptical about the effect of the 1867 franchise reform unless accompanied by a strong secular public education programme. Although he accepted the force of Fenian argument he voted against Home Rule. By now a considerable landowner himself he always "voted for bread", as he put it, but thought Free Trade, though eminently desirable, was far from having been achieved. His railway career had begun in 1856 as one of the promoters of several small lines between South Wales and the Midlands (which were later taken over by the Great Western Railway). He was a Director of the Midland Railway for 21 years and from 1869-1873 its Chairman. On being appointed Railway Commissioner he severed all his railway and political connections and worked in that capacity until a few weeks before his death. A window was erected to his memory in Gloucester Cathedral, and it was said of him that he had the kindest heart, the wisest head and the ugliest face in Gloucestershire.

<sup>8</sup> The Dissenting Academies came into being primarily as the result of the Act of Uniformity (1660), the Five Mile Act (1665) and other Conformity legislation which made it impossible for non-conformists to teach in the grammar schools and for their children to be educated in them, or indeed in any other public school. By the time that William Philip Price and Robert Needham Philips went to Bristol to get some of their education at Dr. Carpenter's Academy the great days of the Dissenting Academies were nearly over as a result of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. The Rev. Lent Carpenter, a well-known Unitarian Divine, appears however to have taken some private pupils in his own house in the 1830s. Lent Carpenter's son wrote that "though the number of his pupils was limited yet, when the important posts to which many of them were subsequently called is born in mind, it is difficult to estimate the amount of good which he was able to diffuse in places and circles far removed from his own." Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Lent Carpenter LL.D. With Selections from his Correspondence. (Edited Russell Lent Carpenter. Bristol and London, 1842.) This was a subscription edition and William Philip Price put himself down for two copies, though Robert Needham Philips did not appear to have subscribed. The classic work on the subject of Dissenting Academies is still

benches at Westminster at the same time. As Morgan Philips Price wrote in a short unpublished autobiographical fragment <sup>9</sup> "I think it might safely be said that I was predisposed to a political life."

When Price was born his father had been obliged to retire from politics due to extreme ill health and he died of Bright's Disease before his second son, William Robin, was born in 1886. The two boys were brought up by their mother, who was a serious and open-minded woman; she was also politically active. The Price family home near Gloucester, Tibberton Court, was held in trust for the elder son and was only visited occasionally from the children's home in Gloucester until the grandparents died. But Margaret Price had inherited (from her Philips aunts) a property outside Chepstow, on cliffs overlooking the river Wye. There the two boys were allowed to run wild in the intervals of education and developed interests: birds, plants, rocks, dogs, which remained with them throughout their life. Both boys were educated at Harrow and Price's first book, Notes on the Vertebrate Fauna of Harrow was published by the Harrow School Scientific Society in 1903, when he was 18.

In October 1903 Price went to Cambridge, where he managed to persuade his tutor to let him work for an Honours degree, this not then being

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Irene Parker: The Dissenting Academies in England: Their Rise and Progress and Their Place Among the Educational Systems of the Country. (Cambridge 1914.)

<sup>9</sup> Price papers. The quotation is from the draft introduction to an autobiography that was never, as such, written. M.P. Price did write an account of his travels and political activities which he entitled Back Bench Traveller, and which was rejected by Allen and Unwin as being too long. It has, however, been freely drawn upon for the purpose of this thesis, and remains in the custody of his literary executor. The manuscript with one entire section (on Turkey) omitted and the rest severely pruned, finally emerged as My Three Revolutions in 1969.



thought - according to Price himself - a necessary exertion for a man in his social position.<sup>10</sup> He got a Third in Science and stayed on for a fourth year to get the University Diploma in Agriculture. During his four years at Cambridge other matters began to contend with field sports and science for his attention. Three days before his 20th birthday, on 26 January 1905, Price spoke in the Union for the first time, supporting the motion "that this House approve of the rise of the Independent Labour Party". In the unpublished first draft of what became his book My Three Revolutions Price owned to having felt "annoyance ... that a third party now seemed to be coming up which <sup>might</sup> queer the Liberal pitch".<sup>11</sup> But throughout his life he always seemed to like to hear the voices of dissent, and this was perhaps the first time he demonstrated what was to become a major characteristic.<sup>12</sup> At about this time also he met C. Ramalinga Reddy (later Sir Ramalinga Reddy, Chancellor of Andhra University) who was then an undergraduate at St. Johns.<sup>13</sup> A friendship began which lasted until Reddy's death in 1951. Through Reddy Price came into

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<sup>10</sup> Back Bench Traveller (Ms) p.120

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p.128.

<sup>12</sup> Price had the words alteram partem audi (hear the other side) scribbled on bits of paper in several drawers of his desk and one pinned to the noticeboard above it.

<sup>13</sup> SIR C. RAMALINGA REDDY (1880-1951) While an undergraduate at St. John's College, Cambridge, he became Vice-President of the Union in 1906 and never forgot that he was the first Indian to be elected to that office. He became Principal of the Maharajah's College, Mysore in 1916, Inspector General of Education for Mysore from 1918-21 and Vice Chancellor of Andhra University from 1926-30. Between 1921 and 1940 he was elected five times member of the All-India Advisory Board of Education, and in 1941 became a member of the All-India Board of Scientific and Industrial Research. Having been Secretary of the Cambridge University Liberal Club as an undergraduate, his next overtly political post was as Deputy Leader and organiser of the United Nationalist Party in 1924. But despite his youthful political energy, he did not continue to be politically active and his publications throughout his life consisted largely of collections of his speeches on education, political economy and democratic reform.

contact for the first time with members of the Fabian Society. In Reddy's interest he took part in his first campaign. Reddy was Vice-President of the Union in 1904 and according to custom and practice should automatically have been elected President in 1905. But he was passed over. Reddy's supporters, of whom Price was naturally one, and who equally naturally suspected that he had been passed over because of the colour of his skin, attempted to challenge the validity of the election, but without success. More than thirty years were to pass before the Union had an Indian President.<sup>14</sup> Despite this setback Price began to speak regularly in the Union and generally took whatever passed for the progressive line on the issue under debate, except in the case of female suffrage.

From 1895 onwards Margaret Price began to spend several months of the year at Tibberton Court, and by the time Price came down from Cambridge the family were spending most of their time there although there were still long visits to Pen Moel (the house outside Chepstow). In 1906, the year Price came of age, she took a small step which had a lasting influence on her elder son's life when she asked Sir Charles Dilke to tea. Dilke had been elected M.P. for the Forest of Dean in 1892 and Tibberton Court stood in that constituency.<sup>15</sup> Although Dilke was revered by the Forest miners he

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<sup>14</sup> SURENDRA MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM (1916-73) For a short account of the life of Kumaramangalam, see Dictionary of Labour Biography. Vol.5

<sup>15</sup> The constituency was created in 1884 out of the old West Gloucestershire division. Early in 1885, at a meeting chaired by Price's grandfather W.P. Price, it was agreed to establish a Liberal Association in the Forest. The first two M.P.s for the new division were the Liberals T. Blake and G.B. Samuelson; in 1891 Dilke was adopted as candidate. After the election of 1892 he was returned unopposed at every election until his death in 1911, and the Forest remained a safe Liberal seat until 1918 when it became and remained (except for 1931-35) a safe Labour seat until 1979. J.R. Howe. Unpublished M. Phil. thesis 'The Political History of the



still suffered a degree of ostracism in other quarters as the result of the Crawford case.<sup>16</sup> The constituency included a large rural as well as an industrial population, and he was not welcome in the houses of many of the Liberal county families. In 1906 his wife had recently died, and any hopes he might have entertained of a return to office under Campbell Bannerman had been disappointed.<sup>17</sup>

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Parliamentary Constituencies of Cheltenham, Gloucester and the Cirencester and Tewkesbury Division of Gloucestershire 1895-1914'. With an Appendix on the Forest of Dean. (P.248). The Gloucestershire Collection. Brunswick Road, Gloucester.

<sup>16</sup> On 12 February 1886 the Liberal M.P. Donald Crawford filed a petition for divorce, alleging adultery between his wife Virginia and Sir Charles Dilke. Because Mrs. Eustace Smith, Mrs. Crawford's mother, had earlier been Sir Charles' mistress, Dilke took his lawyers' advice to submit that there was no case to answer, since that meant he could not then be cross-examined in the witness box as to the earlier relationship. The case ended in a technical acquittal for Dilke and a decree *nisi* for Crawford. But a press campaign, begun as soon as news of the impending trial broke and whipped up after it by W.T. Stead, editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, did irreparable harm to Dilke's reputation, and was probably partly responsible for the loss of his Chelsea seat in the election of July 1886. In the circumstances, Dilke offered to assist in an intervention by the Queen's Proctor, in the hope of clearing his name. A new trial was ordered, but Dilke, as a witness rather than as a respondent, was not allowed to be represented by counsel. Both he and Mrs. Crawford were cross-examined and both admitted other acts of adultery. Although Crawford's decree *nisi* was upheld, Dilke was politically ruined. He lived to re-enter Parliament as M.P. for the Forest of Dean from 1892 until 1911, but with no realistic hope of achieving the high office which had earlier been predicted for him. Understandably, the first account of his life, published only seven years after his death, makes scanty reference to the trials: Stephen Gwynn and Gertrude M. Tuckwell, The Life of The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke (1918, two volumes). Roy Jenkins subsequently obtained access to much new material, and his biography, Sir Charles Dilke (1958) is aptly subtitled 'A Victorian Tragedy'.

<sup>17</sup> After the General Election of 1905, when the Liberals, now under Campbell-Bannerman, were returned to power, and during the period between December 1905 and February 1906, when the Prime Minister was constructing his Cabinet, some of Dilke's friends encouraged him to hope that he might be offered a place in the new government. No such offer came. Dilke had never really expected one, although aware that his wife (who died in 1904) had never given up hope that he would be able to return to the front benches. Roy Jenkins (Sir Charles Dilke pp. 409-414) pointed out that it must have been more satisfying to be a Radical spokesman on the back benches in Opposition than on the back benches of the party in power, and Dilke was able not to show any disappointment he may have felt.



It was at this point that Margaret Price, herself an active Liberal and member of the country house establishment which had continued to turn its back on Dilke, asked him to tea. Her younger son recalled the radiance of Dilke's expression as he crossed the drawing room to meet her with both hands outstretched. Her elder son now found a political hero. Dilke probably had a greater influence on Price than any other man he encountered in his life before 1917, although he was only to know him for four years.

From then on, by his own account, Price stayed frequently with Dilke at the Speech House Hotel<sup>18</sup> in the Forest when he came down on his

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<sup>18</sup>The earliest allusion to a Verderer's Court in the Forest of Dean is in a patent roll of 1216. After the Norman conquest English forests were increasingly claimed by kings from commoners for their own use. A system of courts was set up to protect royal forests from encroachment and to preserve the "vert and venison". The system applied to all royal forests not just the Forest of Dean. The first, or preliminary court in the system was known as a Court of Attachment or Speech Court. Here cases were heard by four Verderers, theoretically elected by freeholders in the County Court on receipt of a writ by the Sheriff, in practice usually large landowners from the surrounding areas. These courts originally sat every 40 days, their powers were extensive and their punishments savage. The Speech Court in the Forest of Dean gave its name to the building still known as the Speech House, (although the present building was built in 1676 on the site of an earlier one) and a Verderers' Court still sits there three or four times a year. Most of the cases that used to come to it (e.g. poaching) have long since been deflected to police courts, but it still deals with certain cases of encroachment. Until 1777 a Mine Law Court was also held at the Speech House, to settle disputes among the Free Miners of the Forest of Dean. It is not known exactly when the Speech House became an hotel, although it was obviously well-established when Dilke became M.P. for the Forest. The Court Room, otherwise the dining room of the hotel, is used for its original purpose whenever the Verderers' Court is in session. For further reading see Ralph Anstis Warren James and the Dean Forest Riots (Oxford 1986.) F.W. Bay Forest of Dean (1952.) Arthur O. Cooke Forest of Dean (1952.) Chris Fisher Custom, Work and Market Capitalism (1981). Cyril E. Hart The Verderers and Speech Court of the Forest of Dean (Gloucester 1950). John Rodgers The English Woodland (1941). Brian Waters The Forest of Dean (1951).



periodic visits to the constituency.<sup>19</sup> He also went to stay with Dilke at his home at Docket Eddy.<sup>20</sup> Price became a sub-agent for Dilke in a particularly rural and unpromising area of the constituency near his own home. A letter from Dilke dated 5 April 1909 asked him to be sure to arrive at the Speech House "before the other people do" so that they could talk in peace.<sup>21</sup> There is a fragment of an undated letter from Price to Dilke about meetings which the former had clearly either organised or chaired in his part of the constituency.<sup>22</sup> The letter obviously referred to the General Election of January 1910, since Dilke scrawled on the back of it: "The Daily News rightly guessed a fortnight ago that when Balfour 'damped his agitation against the land taxes and took up the drink' it supported my opinion as proving that he had forced into (at least pretending) surrender to sense."<sup>23</sup> Dilke even found time in the

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<sup>19</sup> Dilke habitually spent three periods every year in the Forest of Dean: one in the autumn, a month in the winter (except for a few years when Lady Dilke was not well enough), and the Whitsun Recess. He attended all 20 polling district meetings every year until 1900, also the annual meeting of the Liberal party and usually another big meeting addressed by the year's Honorary President of the party. He also always made a point of attending the annual Miners' Gala. He usually stayed at the Speech House Hotel, in the centre of the Forest, where the Panelled Room was reserved for his use, but he occasionally stayed at the Victoria Hotel at Newnham-on-Severn.

<sup>20</sup> Docket Eddy was the name of one of Dilke's riverside homes. His enthusiasm for rowing and sculling was legendary. In 1883 he purchased some land on the Thames at Pyrford, near Shepperton, and built a cottage there which was finished in 1885 and known as Pyrford Rough. Within a few years he had built another, far more substantial house, Docket Eddy, within walking distance of Pyrford Rough, and here he entertained his friends.

<sup>21</sup> Price papers

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Balfour disagreed with the diehards of his own party on the associated issues of the land value clauses of the 1909 Budget and Liberal plans to curb the powers of the House of Lords. When he was Prime Minister in 1904/5 he had shown an extraordinary personal interest in the 1904 Licensing Act, broadly designed to benefit publicans. Dilke's comment suggests that Balfour was using the latter interest to disguise his ambivalence about the real issues of the election.

middle of the campaign to tease Price on his views on Second Chambers, which he had expressed in a foreword to the reprint of an address on that subject given by his father in 1884. Price was circulating this as a contribution to the election campaign, and as a matter of course sent a copy to Dilke. Dilke wrote "I looked at the beginning and the end of your thing on Second Chambers and thought I had better not read between for you are a terrible Whig and I a hopeless Radical and I feel confirmed in my view that it is best not to read you when you cite Bodley". The letter ended: "you, unfortunately, are the master of the existing situation which will survive me and with which you will have more to do than yours very truly Charles Dilke."<sup>24</sup>

Price worked hard for Dilke in this election, not merely by lending his cars<sup>25</sup> but also, according to Dilke's own letter of thanks "in all sorts of ways."<sup>26</sup> There can be no doubt that Dilke liked Price and thought that he had a future in political life. While Price was out of the country for eleven months in 1910/11 (see below p. 14)

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<sup>24</sup> Dilke was being a little unfair. The main body of the "thing" was W.E. Price's purely historical account of the evolution of second chambers in Europe, America and the British Empire up to 1884. Price only cited Bodley in an Appendix which brought the account up to date. He also noted that Bodley (in his book France (1902)) had pointed out the difficulty of creating any democratic second chamber without first devising an electoral system designed to produce one. Price concluded that this difficulty narrowed the question down to whether the only practical solution was the restriction of the veto of the House of Lords. Dilke, as was well-known, favoured outright abolition. Price's copy of Bodley's book was a coming-of-age present from Ramalinga Reddy.

<sup>25</sup> Dilke's agent wrote to Price: "The splendid win for the Liberals was secured very largely by the service rendered by motors." (Price papers.) John Howe (see above F/N 15) noted that in this election "the Conservative motors had been an important factor, especially in bringing in the outvoters" and that the Conservatives "as usual had most motors" (pp. 224-6).

<sup>26</sup> Price papers.



Dilke wrote three times to his mother asking for news of him or thanking her for sending copies of his letters and diaries. "Of course I shall be delighted to do all I can to help him politically" he wrote in June 1910 "and I hope he understands this."<sup>27</sup>

Not quite a year earlier, in July 1909, a Gloucestershire neighbour Sir William Thistleton-Dyer had written almost prophetically to Price: "Glad to see you have definitely given up contesting the Tewkesbury Division. Keep your eye on the Forest of Dean."<sup>28</sup> Price had been invited to allow his name to go forward for consideration as prospective Liberal candidate for Tewkesbury in February 1909 but he declined the offer when it was made in July.<sup>29</sup> The Gloucester Journal, regretting the decision on 17 July, noted that "the reasons for Mr. Price's decision are not disclosed though they are said to be many and consequently it is hardly possible to challenge his action in the matter." It is unlikely that his reasons were due to political differences with the government. Price was already working for both Dilke and the Liberal candidate for Gloucester, Russell Rea at that time. Although he had spoken out against excessive expenditure on arms at a number of Liberal meetings

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<sup>27</sup> Price papers.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. SIR WILLIAM THISTLETON-DYER (1843-1928) The connection between the Price brothers and Thistleton-Dyer was almost certainly due to his eminence as a botanist. Robin Price (the younger Price brother) was a professional botanist until 1914 and again at the end of his life. Thistleton-Dyer was Director of Kew from 1875-1905. On retirement he went to live at Witcombe in Gloucestershire, where he spent the rest of his years as a country gentleman and J.P. There were however other points at which his life would have intersected with those of Price brothers for he was the representative of Oxford University on the Gloucestershire Education Committee from 1908-16 (while Philips Price was Liberal candidate for Gloucester), and he also held at various times in his life important scientific agricultural posts.

<sup>29</sup> Gloucester Journal 20.2.09

in the county in 1909, his attitude to the budget and his estimation of the seriousness of the constitutional crises in 1910 should have made it obvious that the Liberal government of the day had his general support.

The reason that Price declined the Tewkesbury candidature in 1909 is more likely to have been that he was not yet ready to devote himself to a political life. He was learning to manage his estates, which were then considerable, and also experimenting with various crop and afforestation schemes suggested to him by the School of Agriculture at Cambridge. He took a lively part in the activities of the Gloucestershire Root, Fruit and Grain Society. He was at that time going regularly each week into the Price Walker office in Gloucester to learn something about the timber business.<sup>30</sup> He hunted frequently with both the Ledbury and the Berkeley (his passion for fox-hunting was something he never lost). He had just been made a J.P.. He and his brother, both extremely good-looking, must have been two of the most eligible young men in Gloucestershire and they were invited out a great deal. Above all, Price had begun to travel.

If his mother was disappointed at his reluctance to begin a career in politics she had only herself to blame. She and her husband had been indefatigable travellers, often to places well away from the

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<sup>30</sup> Evidence of Price's political leanings even in this context came nearly 80 years later in a letter to the family from Mr. James Lee-Smith H.S. whose father had been a stoker at Price Walker & Co. during this period. Mr. Lee-Smith's mother told him that when Price learned that the stokers were dehydrated by their work he insisted that they should be provided with lime juice.



Victorian beaten track.<sup>31</sup> After the death of William Edwin Price his widow took her children all over Britain and the Continent in their school holidays. In 1906 she took them to Canada and down the St. Lawrence Seaway. Price then struck out on his own. He went to Norway, fishing and shooting with some of his sporting friends from Cambridge. In 1908 he and his brother went with J.H. Elwes, President of the Royal English Forestry Society (and also a family friend) to Denmark, Sweden, Finland and North Russia. Their main objective was to look at a number of unusual types of larch forest which were only to be found in these areas, but Price took the opportunity to visit Petrograd and learn something about the exporting end of the timber trade. He bought a bear cub (which eventually took up residence in an orchard in Tibberton) and also began to learn to speak Russian.

On Price's birthday in 1910 the Morning Post carried an announcement to the effect that preparations were in progress "for the despatch of an important British Expedition which is being organised privately to Western and North Western Mongolia, a region concerning which practically nothing has been written in the English language." The expedition consisted of three men: Douglas Carruthers, its leader

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<sup>31</sup> While still in the army in India W.E. Price spent one of his leaves visiting Japan in 1864 and another in the Himalayas. There are no records of where else he went before his marriage except for the diary he kept of a journey in Canada and the United States during the Parliamentary recess in the winter of 1869 when he was accompanied by Sir Michael Hicks Beach (later Lord St. Aldwyn). They crossed the continent from coast to coast in one of the first (his son estimated the 10th or 12th) transcontinental trains. In 1878 he took his wife on what must have been an unusual wedding tour in which they retraced his steps of nine years earlier and also branched off into New Mexico in the company of General Sherman. Margaret Price's photograph album records that they subsequently went together to Iceland (1881), Norway (1883) and Greece and Turkey (1884).

J.H. Miller and Philips Price.<sup>32</sup> The object was to explore the headwaters of the Yenesei River, getting there via Siberia. This country, then virtually a no-man's-land between the old Chinese and Russian Empires, was practically unknown to West Europeans at that time. From the Yenesei they moved on to Outer Mongolia and the Altai Mountains, where Price left the expedition to return via Chinese Turkestan to the Caucasus and European Russia. By now he could speak fluent Russian and his love affair with Russia had begun.

Price, who was the botanist and geologist of the expedition, was away from England for just over a year. On his way back he found a telegram waiting in Moscow which told him to hurry as his mother was dangerously ill. He was too late to speak to her again. She died a week after his return without having regained consciousness. At the same time he had to be told that Dilke had died the previous month. For a while he completely lost his bearings and, by his own account, went into a deep depression. He blamed himself for having been away

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<sup>32</sup> ALEXANDER DOUGLAS MITCHELL CARRUTHERS (1882-1962) explorer and naturalist. At a time when the only way to examine and identify specimens of the fauna of other countries was to kill and stuff them, Carruthers became an expert taxidermist and through this skill contributed largely to the store of knowledge about the animals of the areas he explored. He was also interested and something of an expert in climatology, and made a study of the effects of changes in climate on ancient civilizations. His main expeditions were (for the British Museum) to Syria (1904-1905), Ruwenzori and the Congo (1905-1906), Russian Turkestan and Bokhara (1907-1908), North West Arabia (1909), Mongolia and Central Asia (1910-1911) and Syria and Asia Minor (1913). He was also a map-maker, and spent most of the First World War at the War Office making maps of the Middle East. His books include Unknown Mongolia (1913), The Desert Route to India (1930), Arabian Adventure (1935), Northern Najd (1938) and Beyond the Caspian (1949). The entry for him in the Dictionary of National Biography was written by Price. (The other member of the Carruthers-Miller Expedition, J.H. Miller, was a big-game hunter. He died young and it has been impossible to obtain any further information about him.)



while his mother was ill and punished himself by refusing to cooperate with Carruthers in writing up his part of the expedition.<sup>33</sup> (A slight tendency to self-destructiveness was another trait that never left him.) Almost the only activity which he undertook at this time was an attempt to get recognition for the Docker's Union at Price Walker. This was only a qualified success despite the fact that Ben Tillet came to stay with him at Tibberton Court for the purpose. The person who now helped him most was Francis Hirst, the editor of the Economist.<sup>34</sup>

Price never mentioned when or how he first met Hirst; the most obvious point of contact would have been at Dilke's house at Docket Eddy, though there is no proof of this. But a letter from Hirst to Price in May 1909 in which he not only invited himself to stay at Tibberton Court but also suggested that Price might go with him to Stockholm later in the summer suggests that their acquaintance, if not of long standing, was already quite close.<sup>35</sup> In September 1909

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<sup>33</sup> Price finally gave his own account in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. 134 part 2, June 1968, in recognition of which he was made an Honorary Fellow of the R.G.S. He also wrote a paper with N. Simpson on the 'Flora of Mongolia' which was read to the Linnean Society on 17 April 1913 and published in the Society's journal Botany, Vol. XLI October 1913 pp. 385-456.

<sup>34</sup> FRANCIS WRIGLEY HIRST (1873-1953). After a distinguished career as a student at Oxford, Hirst was called to the Bar but soon turned to journalism as a career. He was editor of The Economist (1907-1916) and then founded his own journal Common Sense. He twice stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate, in 1910 and again in 1929, and never departed from his Liberal allegiance. After 1921 he devoted his life to travel and writing. His most notable books are probably his Life of Thomas Jefferson (1926), Early Life and Letters of John Morley (1927), and Gladstone as Financier and Economist (1931). His moral and intellectual support for the UDC was invaluable in 1914. Price was only one of many men whom he encouraged and inspired. See F.W. Hirst by his Friends (Oxford 1958). See also Chp. 2 F/N 89 for his own account of why he resigned the editorship of the Economist and founded Common Sense.

<sup>35</sup> Price papers.

Hirst must already have known that Price was planning to go on the Carruthers-Miller expedition for he wrote: "Sorry to hear about Siberia. Why these unnecessary risks? Do you want to join in the Polar scramble? Better try politics at home."<sup>36</sup> In November 1909 Hirst tried to tempt Price to stay at home with the bait of an unspecified "agricultural constituency with Liberal majority and a good chance of holding it and probably Whips Office finding most of the money".<sup>37</sup> (He had been offered the candidature himself but intended to turn it down.) A rare survivor of Price's own letters of this period is a copy of one he wrote to Hirst in December 1909 describing the election campaigns in Gloucester and the Forest. Price hoped the Economist was going to deal with the Second Chamber issue and "shed the light of your judgement on this dark morass of political chaos".<sup>38</sup> In Hirst's last letter to Price before he left for Siberia he chided him for "leaving the poor old country in such a crisis" but wished him luck and told him not to take unnecessary risks. "Write to me if you can about conditions in Russia and Siberia and other exploited or exploitable regions that you traverse"<sup>39</sup>. Some time after Price's return in 1911 Hirst reminded him of this proposal and asked him to write three articles for the Economist describing the prospects for development in Eastern Europe and Siberia. Price then wrote a whole book about Siberia<sup>40</sup>. Through Hirst he met the Webbs and began to read more widely. Finally towards the end of 1911 he made up his mind to accept the offer of the Liberal candidature for Gloucestershire, the sitting

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36 Price papers.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Siberia by M.P. Price, (1912).



Liberal member Russell Rea having lost the seat to the Conservatives in the elections of December 1910.

In the years 1912-13 Price began to develop rapidly along both of the lines which were to characterise his life: politics and travel.

Although now committed to politics by his acceptance of the Gloucester candidature he did not see - and never did see - why this commitment should prevent him from travelling as much and as widely as he could. On his way home from Mongolia he had stood on the northern side of Mount Ararat and longed to know what lay on the other side. In the autumn of 1912 he had his wish and went to Eastern Turkey, becoming an eyewitness to the last stages of the Balkan Wars<sup>41</sup> and making a considerable excursion into northern Persia before returning along the Black Sea Coast. At Khoi in Northern Persia he had his first encounter with Tsarist Imperialism in action when he was arrested by Cossack troops while taking photographs in the bazaar. To his amazement he found there was a large detachment of Russian soldiers encamped just outside the town and well inside the Persian border. He protested vigorously, in Russian, and was released but the Persian Governor of the Province, with whom he was staying, advised him to go away quietly. Price gave a number of lectures after his return, not only about his own

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<sup>41</sup> In October 1912 the Balkan League, consisting of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro, encouraged by Pan-Slav elements in Russia, attacked Turkey. By the end of November the Turks had been driven out of the whole of Europe except for Constantinople, Gallipoli, Adrianople (on the Bulgarian frontier), Scutari (on the frontier with Montenegro) and Janina (near the frontier between Albania and Greece). Despite an armistice in December 1912 hostilities continued until the Turks signed a treaty in London in May 1913 by which they relinquished all territory west of a line between Enos and Midia. The same treaty created the state of Albania to prevent Russia's protegee, Serbia, from getting access to the Mediterranean at the expense of Austria's protegee, Bulgaria.

experiences but also about the future of Persia, and an article by him on the subject was published in the Contemporary Review.<sup>42</sup> The following year the Manchester Guardian for the first time commissioned a series of articles from him before he set out on his next, and last pre-war, journey. This took him through the Balkans into Asiatic Turkey and then out again into Syria and Palestine. At Adrianople he stayed with the British Consul and there met Sir Henry Wilson, then Chief of Staff of the British Army, who had come to look at the battlefields of the Balkan Wars. Price recalled that Wilson's face fell when he was introduced as the Special Correspondent of the Manchester Guardian: a title he held then for the first time and was to hold intermittently for the next forty years. Four articles by him were printed between September 1912 and January 1914: on Thrace, Germany in Asia Minor, and Palestine and the new Jewish colonies. The Manchester Guardian also published a long report of a lecture on Turkish Armenia and Kurdistan which he gave to the Manchester Geographical Society on 10 March 1914.

These two journeys accounted for only about one fifth of his time between becoming Liberal candidate for Gloucester and the outbreak of war in 1914, but they laid the foundations of his career as a journalist. The rest of the time (apart from agriculture, the timber trade, writing, dancing and fox-hunting) he devoted to the cultivation of his constituency and the study of subjects which he thought should, or knew did, concern his constituents. In May 1914 he told the Gloucester Liberal Association that if they wondered why he had not been making so many speeches in the past year it was

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<sup>42</sup> Contemporary Review April 1913



because he had made instead some 3,000 personal visits in the working class quarters of the city, to find out what people were thinking<sup>43</sup>. In the three years of his active candidature, however, he made innumerable speeches both to specifically Liberal audiences in the constituency and also at open meetings in all the Gloucester wards. Of his own political creed at this time Price said later that it was "typical of many radicals on the left wing of the Liberal party: a curious mixture of Socialism in home affairs and a traditionalist, almost Whig attitude to foreign affairs"<sup>44</sup>. On home affairs, predictably he supported the 1909 Budget and used the land tax proposals in it as a base upon which to construct his own programme of land reform. In a paper which he read to the Young Liberals in 1914, after describing the main features of what he called contemporary feudalism on the land he outlined a programme which included a statutory minimum agricultural wage, a system of unemployment insurance to deal with any increase in the number of casual labourers who might thereby be put out of work; and a Land Court to deal with all conflicts of interests between landlords and tenants. He wanted cottages built with public money "to secure the social independence of the labouring class" and worked out a system akin to the modern rate support grant with which to finance such a building programme. He thought that, of all the land tax proposals in the 1909 Budget those dealing with site values were the most important because they would enable the nationalisation of land to take place gradually<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Gloucester Journal 30.5.15.

<sup>44</sup> Price Papers. Ms. 'Bank Bench Traveller' p. 414.

<sup>45</sup> Gloucester Journal 21.2.14.

In home affairs he was, like all other Liberals at that time, much exercised by two other subjects: trade union law and Home Rule. In his 1913 tour of the Gloucester wards he devoted an entire speech (in a ward full of railwaymen and their families) to trade union issues<sup>46</sup>. He had clearly been prompted to give the matter some thought as the result of the wave of strikes which had taken place nationally in the preceding two years. His own attempt to get the Dockers' Union recognised at Price Walker & Co. in 1911 had resulted in a voluntary agreement between management and labour. This had been a step in the right direction, he told his audience, but he wanted to see such agreements not only extended to other parts where conditions were far worse, as London, but also given the force of an Act of Parliament. He supported picketing but thought numbers of pickets should be controlled and that there was something to be said for official pickets wearing badges. Although he thought that in themselves strikes were "barbaric" he also said that it was "a public scandal" that working people could not get their grievances redressed by any other means, and that this was the fault of the State and not of the workers. Perhaps more surprisingly, and certainly more popularly with an audience still vigorously opposed to the recent Osborne judgement<sup>47</sup> he opposed contracting out, asking why Trades

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<sup>46</sup> Gloucester Journal 15.2.13.

<sup>47</sup> The Osborne Judgement, so called after W.V. Osborne, a branch secretary of the Railway Servants, who brought the case in the first instance, was upheld by the House of Lords in December 1909. Henceforth it was unlawful for trade unions to expend any money at all on returning members to Parliament or on any political objective whatever. For the background to the case, see H.A. Clegg et al. A History of British Trade Unions since 1889 Vol I 1889-1910. (Oxford 1964.) pp 416-8. The decision in the Osborne case was partly remedied in favour of the Unions by the Trade Union (Amendment) Act of 1913.



Union members should not have to abide by majority decisions as in any other democratic process?

On Home Rule his views became noticeably more radical between 1911 and 1914. In a speech to the Western Counties Liberal Federation in December 1911, when T.P. O'Connor was the main speaker Price, as the newly-chosen candidate for Gloucester was given the task of moving a resolution welcoming the government's pledge to introduce Home Rule in the next Session<sup>48</sup>. He devoted much of his short speech to a parallel between Ireland and Quebec where, he maintained, there was exemplary co-operation between a religious minority and a religious majority, all of which served to underline the truth<sup>of</sup> "one of the greatest Liberal maxims: that in order to create loyalty you must remove the causes of disloyalty." By March 1914 he was taking a much less anodyne line, and in a speech to the Gloucester Liberal Club devoted entirely to Home Rule<sup>49</sup> he spoke of the need to smash vested interests in Ulster before they could wreck the Parliament Act and restore the Lords' veto; and wondered "what would happen in mainland Britain if a poor man, outraged by sweated wages or driven to desperation by our unfair social system were to do one tenth of the things which well-fed gentlemen were on Ulster to do at the present time."

On foreign affairs Price never really said anything that differed in essence from what was contained in his address to the Young Liberals of Gloucester in March 1912<sup>50</sup>. The primary objects of foreign

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<sup>48</sup> Gloucester Journal 18.12.11.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid 21.3.14.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid 1.3.12.

policy were, as he saw them, to maintain peace; to safeguard the nation's commercial interests by means of the open door principle; to govern "the Asiatic subjects" of the Empire in such a way as to lead them towards self-government; and to continue the country's historic role of giving moral support to emerging nationalities and liberation movements. Doubtless his friendship with Ramalinga Reddy was to some extent responsible for the emphasis he gave to the third point. He positively welcomed Germany's relatively recent economic expansion and saw no threat in it at all. Germany had as much right to an open door as Britain; it was France who was erecting the walls. He was dismayed by how close Britain had come to war with Germany over the Agadir incident<sup>51</sup>. He deplored the fact that Britain was becoming increasingly "drawn into the vortex of Continental diplomacy". From this everything that followed was bad. Increasing international friction increased the burden of armaments which in turn "overweighted" the finances of the state and prevented money from being applied to measures of social reform which were urgently needed at home. In this connection he welcomed the internationalist stance of the labour movement, and hoped that "the power of labour may become stronger than the power of war."

If he developed his views upon any of these subjects it was in respect of Germany and the naval rivalry of Britain and Germany. In

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<sup>51</sup> In July 1911 the German gunboat Panther was sent to Agadir in a display of strength designed to deter French expansionism in Morocco and enhance German interests. Britain, fearing a German threat to her trade routes through the Mediterranean, issued a strong warning to Germany the chief effect of which was to increase international tension. The French on the other hand entered into negotiations with Germany and in November 1911 came to an accommodation whereby Germany recognised French rights in Morocco in exchange for the acquisition of two strips of land in the French Congo.



February 1913 Hirst came to Gloucester to speak to the Chamber of Commerce, and among the points he made was that the only proper use of a navy was as a strike weapon against the armed forces of any enemy, not to blockade civilian populations<sup>52</sup>. He also said that the German Navy Laws<sup>53</sup> had only been enacted because of Germany's vulnerability in the light of Britain's claim to the right of capture on the high seas. Price elaborated these ideas in a somewhat naive paper which he read to the Ninth National Peace Council at Leeds in June 1913. He argued that no wars should be allowed "to interfere with the economic network which 'the republic of commerce' had built up as the basis of civilisation". Belligerent nations would always, he maintained, be able to get their supplies somehow in the railway age, so "why not scratch the pawns of maritime commerce and allow the game to be played out between the armed naval and military forces on both sides." He appeared at that time to believe that any future war would be fought according to the rules of international law, built up over the past two hundred years, and all that was needed was a relatively minor modification of the rules<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Gloucester Journal 1.3.13.

<sup>53</sup> The appointment of Tirpitz as Navy Minister in 1897 marked a turning point in German naval arms policy which had behind it the support not merely of the Kaiser but also of powerful commercial and colonial interests. The formation by the British of a naval "flying squadron" in 1896 was seen to indicate that war with Britain was now not impossible. Tirpitz quite specifically wanted to create the kind of political power factor against the British which, he was convinced, a large navy could provide. A succession of Navy Laws passed in 1898, 1898, 1900, 1906 and 1908 drew up a naval building programme the object of which was to ensure that the German fleet could defeat any possible enemy. The size of the British fleet was from then on, therefore, inevitably the yardstick for the size of the German fleet. See Paul M. Kennedy: The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914 (1982); and also by the same author, 'The Development of German Naval Operational Plans against England 1896-1914', English Historical Review, Vol. 89, (1974) pp.48-76.

<sup>54</sup> The Immunity of Sea-borne Commerce from Capture by M. Philips Price. A paper read at the Ninth National Peace Congress, Leeds, 1913. Published as a pamphlet by the National Peace Council.

Thus Price, in the period immediately preceding the outbreak of war in August 1914 gave little advance warning in what he said in public of the line he was going to take on the war. But two small clues are to be found in his speeches as to the way in which he always - but observers rarely - managed to reconcile his then modest radicalism with his not inconsiderable wealth. In March 1912 in his presidential address to the Gloucester Young Liberals<sup>55</sup> told them that when his Tory friends asked him how he, with his interests, could be a Liberal he was often at a loss for a reply, not because he had no arguments but because he had so many he did not know which to use first. Two years later he told the same audience<sup>56</sup> that he was often asked "'How can you favour anything which either really or apparently affects your position as a landowner?' My reply is, that my duty is to regard this problem from the standpoint of the public interest first and my private interest second." He added that he felt sure that many other landowners felt exactly the same "but do not happen to have acquired the habits of looking upon relations between the individual and the state in the same light as I have."

Price surprised and shocked most of his constituents, nearly all of his county friends (by some of whom he was ostracised to the end of his long life) and even some members of his immediate family when, in August 1914, he strongly opposed British involvement in a European war. As he himself acknowledged, his general political outlook was only moderately radical and he had been by no means alone in his opposition to the arms race against Germany. Yet he suddenly found

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<sup>55</sup> Gloucester Journal 1.3.12.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid 21.2.14.



himself one of a very small group who opposed the war on political rather than religious grounds. The explanation is almost certainly to be found in the influence of his cousin Charles Trevelyan.<sup>57</sup>

Although Price proved over and over again in his life that he was not easily influenced, there were a handful of people who made exceptions to this generalisation about him. Among them were Reddy, Dilke, Hirst and Trevelyan.

Trevelyan's mother and Price's mother were sisters. His mother's brother-in-law, the historian and Liberal politician Sir George Otto Trevelyan appears to have appointed himself a proxy father to the Price brothers. Sir George's own three sons, Charles, George and

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<sup>57</sup> CHARLES PHILIPS TREVELYAN (1870-1958). Third baronet. His parents were the historian, George Otto Trevelyan, and Mary Caroline Philips, the sister of Price's mother. Trevelyan was educated at Harrow and Trinity College Cambridge. He was elected to Parliament as a Liberal for the Elland Division of Yorkshire in 1899 and retained that seat until 1918. Trevelyan was a politician who took an intense interest in education. He was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education from 1908-1914, and President of the Board of Education in the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929. He resigned from the Government twice: in 1914 because of Britain's entry in the European war, and in 1929 because of proposed cuts in Government expenditure on education. The other major preoccupation of his political life was the democratic control of foreign policy. He was one of the founders of the Union of Democratic Control in 1914, and fought for the causes it espoused with great courage in the House of Commons during the First World War. He lost his seat in 1918, but joined the Labour and Independent Labour Parties, and was elected Labour M.P. for the Central Division of Newcastle in 1922. His resignation in 1931 was soon followed by the General Election, when he lost his seat, and he did not stand again. But he lived for another quarter of a century, out of active politics but still a force to be reckoned with on the Left of the Labour party. Price wrote the entry for him in the Dictionary of National Biography. Trevelyan's biography was written by A.J.A. Morris: C.P. Trevelyan 1870-1958: Portrait of a Radical (Belfast 1977). There are frequent references to Trevelyan in Marvin Swartz: The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics during the First World War (Oxford 1971). The Trevelyan papers are kept at Newcastle University Library. Letters from M.P. Price to Charles Trevelyan will be identified throughout this thesis by the letter C.P.T., followed by the date on which they were written or their reference number.

Robert were like elder brothers to the Prices. They followed each other to the same schools and stayed in each others' homes in the school holidays. Charles Trevelyan had entered Parliament in 1899, when Price was still at Harrow. By the time Price was ready to commit himself to a life in politics (1911) Trevelyan was already a junior member of the government as Under-Secretary at the Board of Education. The two cousins had so much in common that it is hard to identify a particular moment or a particular issue when, in effect, they joined forces. Russia may have been one of the consolidating factors: Charles was disgusted by the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907.<sup>58</sup> Both men were unable to see that Labour posed a threat to the Liberal party, but saw Labour rather as a natural ally. The National Peace Council, of which Charles was a founder member, was certainly a common interest. Charles was fifteen years the elder of the two and Price looked up to him, but Charles did not look down on Price, rather he did everything he could to encourage him. It was

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<sup>58</sup> The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. Negotiations for this treaty occupied two years and were conducted chiefly by the Russian Foreign Minister Izvolsky and the British Ambassador Sir Arthur Nicolson. They were begun when Russia's credibility in Europe was at a low ebb, partly as the result of her defeat at the hands of Japan and partly because of 1905 Revolution. The Convention formalised what was, in effect, the status quo in the Near East: Persia was divided into zones of influence, with the Russians predominating in the north and the British in the south. Similar understandings were reached in respect of Afghanistan and Tibet. During the negotiations the possibility of Russian access to the Dardanelles was more than once floated, at that time more as an inducement to complete them than seriously. The Convention brought a new factor, a Russo British alignment, into West European affairs, and though not deliberately aimed against Germany was nonetheless seen by Germany as having that effect. It also outraged Liberal opinion in Britain. A full account of the negotiations is given by Rogers Platt Churchill in The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 (1939). They are mentioned in the memoirs of most European diplomats active in that area at that time, and described by Harold Nicolson in Sir Arthur Nicholson Bart., First Lord Carnock (1930) pp. 232-257. See also Firuz Kazemzadeh: Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914 : A Study of Imperialism. (Yale 1968.)



not till the summer of 1914 that their hitherto friendly relationship took on the aspect almost of a working partnership.

In the early summer of 1914 most observers recognised that a general war in Europe was probably inevitable, but on the available evidence it did not follow that Britain must be drawn into it. Price recalled that he was at a party in London when word came of the assassination at Sarajevo. "The news caused a lot of talk but little concern" he wrote later. "As I see it now I realise that we were not thinking so much as dreaming."<sup>59</sup> Trevelyan, however, was wide awake. At the beginning of August, with Norman Angell and others he formed a last-minute pressure group: The Neutrality Committee, to the funds of which Price subscribed. They issued a manifesto to the press which was largely ignored, and distributed half a million leaflets in London alone in the last two days before the outbreak of war. For Trevelyan propaganda was not enough, and on the eve of the declaration of war he resigned his post at the Board of Education on the grounds that he could not continue to be a member of a government which took his country into a war which he believed to be totally avoidable. For two days he kept quiet and then, on 6 August, went to a dinner given by Norman Angell and found Price among the guests. (Price appears to have got to know Angell at about the same time as he met Hirst and to have been a member of a group sometimes referred to as "Angell's young men".)<sup>60</sup> It was at this dinner that the ideas

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<sup>59</sup> Price Papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller'. p. 317.

<sup>60</sup> There can be little doubt that at this stage in his life Price had been strongly influenced by Norman Angell, whose book The Great Illusion was published in 1910. The belief that war could not happen because it made no sense contributed to the paralysis of opposition to war in July 1914, though, Angell himself took an active part in the formation of the U.D.C. (See Chp. 2, page 11). An illuminating account of this phenomenon is given by H. Weinroth:

which were to result in the formation of the Union of Democratic Control were first discussed and written down - supposedly on the back of an envelope - by Trevelyan himself<sup>61</sup>. Price was among those to whom Trevelyan sent the first draft manifesto for comment. Another was Hirst who, while he supported the objectives of the group personally, felt that as editor of the Economist he could not formally associate himself with it. Hirst criticised the draft in a number of ways and suggested that one thing that was badly needed as the foundation of any campaign to secure a fundamental change in the control of foreign policy was a book documenting the origins of the war<sup>62</sup>. It may have been this suggestion that accounts for the fact that by the middle of August 1914 Price was staying at an hotel in London and working day and night on the book that was to be published in November under the title The Diplomatic History of the War. He found time, however, to form a branch of the Union of Democratic Control in Gloucester and to get Trevelyan to come and address it<sup>63</sup>. He was present at the inaugural meeting of the U.D.C. in London on 17 November and was to become an elected - if absentee - member of the General Council from 1915 -1919.

On the eve of the declaration of war Price, who had subscribed to the Neutrality Committee, wrote a letter which was published in the local daily paper, the Gloucester Citizen, on 4 August. He enclosed a copy of the Committee's manifesto and asked the editor to publish it "because there may yet be time to save the situation". He pointed

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'Norman Angel and The Great Illusion: An Episode in pre-1914 Pacifism'. Historical Journal Vol. 17 (1974) pp 551-574.

<sup>61</sup> Newcastle University Library (C.P. Trevelyan papers) CPT 33.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid 73.159.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid Ex 107.



out that the manifesto was no "peace at any price" policy, because Britain's position might already have been "fatally compromised behind our backs and we may have to prepare for the worst." But, he went on,

"War with a Western Power like Germany, even under the justest circumstances, is a calamity. War against her to serve the interests of a hypothetical and illusory Power Balance in Europe is a crime against humanity... As one who knows Russia and the Russians I am keenly alive to this danger from the East, and realise all the more the necessity of keeping intact the civilisation of Western Europe, and of preventing the further degradation and misery of our population."

But he concluded that if war did break out

"we must see our Government through, however much we may think they have acted wrongly by involving us in this terrible affair."<sup>64</sup>

For Price, "seeing the Government through" entailed agreeing to act as a Russian interpreter for the Home Office, but the task was not onerous. "So far" he wrote to his brother on 18 August, "I have had nothing to do except to interview an old Russian peasant who was stranded on an impounded German steamer on the Thames"<sup>65</sup>. But his main preoccupation at this time was the preparation of the book. He realised that he must consider his position as Liberal candidate for Gloucester. Accordingly he wrote a long letter of 24 August to the President of the Gloucester Liberal Association, Mr. Ralph Fream<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Gloucester Citizen 4.8.14.

<sup>65</sup> Price papers.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p 423. The original of this letter has not been preserved. Ralph Fream, Chairman of the Gloucester Liberal Association in 1915, was a Gloucester solicitor. He was elected a Liberal Councillor for the Tidworth ward of Gloucester at every local government election from 1900 to 1911, but the Gloucester Liberal Association Annual Reports are not very informative about him, and although he outlived Price, the Gloucester papers carried no obituaries of him. Some idea of his interests can be gleaned from the topics of two public speeches which he made in 1909: 'Trade and Labour' and 'Tariffs and Labour'.

In it he reminded Fream that he had,

"for some two or three years past... been with a number of friends of mine both in and out of Parliament somewhat critical of and uneasy about the foreign policy of the Government."

They had continued to hope that the government would "steer clear of any serious European catastrophe" but now that war had come he would support the government in bringing it to a successful conclusion.

But this did not imply unconditional approval of Liberal statesmanship and he reserved the right "to speak out and criticise whenever I think the time has arisen." He told Fream of his involvement in the nascent U.D.C. and thought it more than probable that

"those of us who are either M.P.s or Liberal candidates might find ourselves in a difficult position at the next election... I should only be able to support the Government until I thought that the country was out of danger and then I should be bound to reserve a free hand to co-operate with any party or Group who would work for the objects which we have in view."

He asked Fream to read and discuss his letter with the "influential members" of the Gloucester party and to let him know what they thought. He would decide nothing in a hurry. But if his views did not meet with support

"among the rank and file of progressive people in the City then it is clear that it is my duty to reconsider my position as prospective Liberal candidate."

On 10 November Price wrote to his brother:

"My book is out and there is an ominous calm before the storm... I have had numberless congratulations upon it from Ramsay MacDonald, Charles Trevelyan, Norman Angell, Lord Bryce, Lord Beauchamp, Hirst and others, but I know that it will obtain no general recognition till this war is over<sup>67</sup>."



In this he was quite wrong. The book was studiously shunned by the Northcliffe press but more than 30 other newspapers and journals reviewed either the first or the second edition. It was hardly to be expected that the book would find much favour, but it was certainly not ignored and many even of the most critical reviews acknowledged that it was, in the words of the local Tory paper, the Gloucester Journal (4 November 1918) "a monument" to his "industry, research and ability".<sup>68</sup>

Possibly even before he finished writing the book and certainly before it came out Price had already decided upon his next step. He wanted to go to Russia for the Manchester Guardian. He had conceived the idea that with his knowledge of Russia and Russian he might be

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<sup>68</sup> Diplomatic History of the War (1914). The book took the form of an historical introduction followed by a diary of negotiations and events in the various capitals of Europe, the texts of official documents of the various governments, speeches in European parliaments, an account of the progress of military preparations, and a selection of quotations from the Press of all the belligerents. Although some reviewers questioned Price's impartiality, nobody questioned its value as a collection of documents until the spring of 1915, when the second edition came out. By then, other accounts of the origins of war had begun to appear, notably William Archer's History of the Thirteen Days (1915) in an Appendix to which Archer subjected Price's book to "detailed vivisection" according to the columnist 'Rob Roy' in Forward (28.10.16). Earlier (19.8.16) 'Rob Roy', a Glaswegian Fabian called Dr. Stirling Robertson (who according to the editor of Forward, Thomas Johnson, "kept the anti-Marxian front well abaze"), had written an unexpectedly hostile review of E.D. Morel's book Truth and the War (1916) in which he criticised Morel for having commended Price "without a word of caution to his readers". Morel came to Price's defence in a letter to the editor of Forward published on 23.9.16, in which he asked to be told what matters of fact stated by Price and used by him were incorrect. Price was, Morel wrote, "not above error" and he did not "go bail for every word he has written". But Morel thought him "one of the best informed of the younger men of today on international affairs in general and especially in regard to Russian affairs." 'Rob Roy' did not reply until 28.10.16, when he again attacked Morel for having given Price as a "primary historical authority" without having given any hint that he was a "suspected source" who had been discredited by William Archer.

able to play some part in dispelling the wishful thinking, which was so enthusiastically expressed in much of the British press, that Russia was somehow going to become more democratic purely as the result of being in alliance with Britain and France; and - more cynically - that she was going to save Western Europe by 'steamrolling' into Germany"<sup>69</sup>. In the early autumn, when visiting his aunt near Manchester, he called on Scott and was invited to lunch at Scott's home. "There we arranged something that was to become one of the turning points of my life."<sup>70</sup> Price was authorised to go to Russia for the winter and to stay longer if it seemed desirable. Scott told him that he might not be able to publish everything he sent "for reasons connected with the war. But at least he wanted to be informed."<sup>71</sup> Scott would however have been surprised by Price's choice of words in the last letter he wrote to his brother before leaving for Russia, since nothing in any of his surviving speeches or writings at this time anticipate such a marked movement to the Left.

"I must get in touch with the Social Democrats and other brothers of the faith and see what hope there is. I see there is fighting in the Caucasus. I shall go there as soon as possible, not half... After all fighting is all right for those barbarians whose second nature it is, but for Western Europeans --- Wait till the dawn of International Socialism. Adieu my dear Bob."<sup>72 73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller'. pp 429-30.

<sup>70</sup> M. Philips Price My Three Revolutions (1969) p.124.

<sup>71</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller'. pp. 429-30.

<sup>72</sup> Price papers.

<sup>73</sup> WILLIAM ROBERT PRICE (1886-1975). There is probably no more appropriate place than this in which to give some details of the life of M.P. Price's brother, always known as Robin. Educated at Harrow and Trinity, Robin Price was single-mindedly a botanist throughout his life. His only other field of study was humanism. In 1908 he accompanied his brother on the Henry Elwes expedition to look at larch forests in the Baltic area (see above p.14). In 1910 he went, again with Elwes, on a botanical expedition to China and Formosa (Taiwan), where a number of plants were named after him. The best known is probably Lilium Formosanum Var. Price. He then



worked at Kew until the outbreak of war. Severely handicapped throughout his life by a stammer, he joined the artillery as a private soldier because he feared he might not be able to utter words of command. His manuscript account of his wartime experiences as a highly intelligent and educated man serving in the ranks: 'Gunner on the Somme', is deposited at the Imperial War Museum. Between the wars he was a prominent member of the Cotswold Field Naturalists' Society' and he was one of the editors of the Flora of Gloucestershire, (Arbroath 1948). Late in life, as a widower, he travelled round the world, visiting Formosa among other places, where he was received with honour as a botanist. He returned to work at Kew in his '80s where he identified samples at the Herbarium until, reluctantly acknowledging that the ladders were getting too much for him, he began cataloguing part of Kew's immense collection of water colour paintings, some of which he was able to put on public display for the first time. This he did until a few weeks before his death. Letters from M.P. Price to his brother will be identified throughout this thesis by the letters W.R.P., followed by the date on which they were written.

## Chapter 2. War Correspondent

Price arrived in Russia on 13 December 1914. Apart from six weeks in Stockholm early in 1915, where he went to prepare the second edition of the Diplomatic History of the War, and short excursions in Persian and Turkish territory while on the Caucasus front, he was to remain in Russia for exactly four years. This was an accident of the war. Neither he nor Scott had it in mind that he should remain there so long. What emerges from his private correspondence during the winter and spring is that his decision to remain in Russia at that time had a lot to do with his attitude to the war itself. In his first letter from Russia to his brother (who, while completely agreeing with and supporting his attitude to the war had nonetheless enlisted within a few days) he said: "I fear we are severed by a psychological barrier which was artificially hurled between us on those first terrible days in August last" <sup>1</sup>. To his Uncle Charles Lee Williams (Tuffet) whose only son Owen had also enlisted he wrote "No doubt they are happy. But oh! what a cause!" <sup>2</sup> In nearly all his letters between January and March 1915 he talked of his "duty" as he now saw it. "Having used all my influence to prevent the war I must now help

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<sup>1</sup> W.R.P. 30.1.15 Price papers.

<sup>2</sup> CHARLES LEE LEE-WILLIAMS (1851-1935), Mus.Bach., Oxon, was organist of Gloucester Cathedral from 1882-1897. He retired ostensibly on grounds of ill health, but continued to travel extensively throughout the Commonwealth as an Examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal College and Royal Academy of Music for many years thereafter; an association with the Three Choirs' Festival brought him the friendship of Sir Edward Elgar. He married Alice Gwenillian, younger daughter of W.P. Price, enjoyed country pursuits and was much loved by his family-in-law. His loyalty to Philips Price showed that under a gentle and self-effacing manner lay considerable independence and strength of mind. Because he lived in a large house in a suburb of Gloucester called Tuffley, he was always known to his family as Tuffet. Letters from M.P. Price to Tuffet will be identified throughout this thesis by the letters C.L.W. followed by the date on which they were written.



to prepare for peace by informing myself of the developments both political and military throughout Europe and try to help and prepare opinion when the time comes."<sup>3</sup> And to Charles Trevelyan: "I feel rather a rascal to have run away and left you at this critical time, but I do feel that it is good to study the East European question on the spot." (Price's emphasis.)<sup>4</sup>

While in Stockholm he read the German press and tried to see the German point of view. "I am coming more and more to feel that not only are they no worse than we are, but that they have actually got more right on their side than any belligerent state."<sup>5</sup> He inclined to accept Germany's claim to neutral countries that she was fighting for the freedom of the seas. He wrote to Trevelyan on 3 March: "I wonder if we ought not to include in our 4 points of the U.D.C. a statement to the effect that seapower must be internationalised, right of capture abandoned, and food struck off contraband lists."<sup>6</sup> He also, from Stockholm, wrote again to Ralph Fream, Chairman of the Gloucester Liberal Association and this time he resigned his candidature. He then asked Tuffet to make sure that the Gloucester papers published his letter of resignation, adding: "It is obvious that my job for the next few years is writing, propaganda and education of the new public opinion which has got to grow in Europe... Europe is my battleground, not a provincial town in S. England."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> W.R.P. 30.1.15. Price papers.

<sup>4</sup> C.P.T. 21.1.15. Price papers.

<sup>5</sup> W.R.P. 3.3.15. Price papers.

<sup>6</sup> Price papers.

<sup>7</sup> On 8 July the Gloucester Citizen and on 10 July the weekly Gloucester Journal published the following letter from Price: "It is with profound regret that I ask the Gloucester Liberal Association to relieve me of the position of prospective Liberal Candidate. My

Even before he went to Stockholm, however, he had made a start as a war correspondent, and got himself to the Polish front. Sixty miles west of Warsaw the Russian lines were so close to the German that the soldiers could hear each other talking. With perhaps a touch of defiance he told his brother "I have been under fire already" <sup>8</sup>. He wrote three articles for the Manchester Guardian about this experience <sup>9</sup> and was responsible for much of the material in two more in the Economist<sup>10</sup>. He made a great point of getting the Russian soldiers to talk to him and his articles are full of passages in quotation marks. Of the Russian army at that time he wrote later

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relations with the Liberals of Gloucester have been of such a cordial and friendly nature that it is only from motives of absolute necessity that I feel compelled to retire, and I can assure them that I shall look back on the last three years which I have spent in their midst as one of the most profitable, as well as a the most pleasant experiences of my life. I however look forward at some future date to the recommencement of the work which has now been broken off, for I feel confident that the need for strong democratic control in public affairs, whether home or foreign, will be greater in the future to stem the tide of reaction and the overwhelming of European civilization." The Citizen did not comment, but the Gloucester Journal went on to report that "after explanation by the Chairman" the meeting of the Gloucester Liberal Association resolved unanimously "with extreme regret to accept the resignation". In a leading article the same day the editor declared that it would be "idle... to speculate as to Mr. Price's part in future activities to which he refers" and pointed out that but for the war Price would probably already have been the M.P. for Gloucester. "But nothing will bring back the pre-war conditions, and Mr. Price and the Liberals of Gloucester are equally able to face the new and grave problems which the future will bring in entire freedom from engagements which were entered into without any possible conception of the conditions of today."

<sup>8</sup> W.R.P. 30.1.15. Price papers.

<sup>9</sup> Manchester Guardian 3.1.15. Dated Warsaw January 1. 'The Russian Army at work' Signed M. Philips Price. 22.1.15. Dated 'From a point west of Warsaw, January 1', 'In Russian Trenches'. Signed M. Philips Price. 27.1.15. Dated Petrograd January 4. 'Russian Defences'. Signed M. Philips Price.

(Where datelines are self explanatory they will not be placed in inverted commas. Where they are obscure or unusual they will be placed in inverted commas and an attempt made to identify the actual date on which the despatch was sent.)

<sup>10</sup> Economist 6.2.15 and 6.3.15



that it was "slow and cumbrous" but "somehow it worked" even if "more that half of the army consisted of soldiers supplying the rest."<sup>11</sup> But at the time he doubted "whether one can look to the Russian army to do more than continue to hold up large forces of German troops in the eastern theatre. Any advance into German territory is not to be contemplated for the present at any rate."<sup>12</sup> After his return from Stockholm to "dear old Russia, where everything is forbidden and yet you can do everything"<sup>13</sup> he immediately arranged to go to the Galician front, travelling via Kiev to Lemberg (Lvov), which had been captured from the Austrians only a few months earlier. Everywhere he went he saw the grim effects of Russification upon the local populations: Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Jews and Poles. "Once I lived in Europe, now I am in Asia" he remembered an Austrophil Pole saying to him many years later<sup>14</sup>. He also recalled that he wrote to Scott about this but that the Manchester Guardian did not make use of the information<sup>15</sup>, although the Economist later published a full account of the state of Galicia over his name<sup>16</sup>. It seems likely that his reports were beginning to attract attention, because at about this time he was asked to <sup>write</sup> some articles for America by the Associated Press<sup>17</sup>. But the Manchester Guardian did publish two out of four pieces he sent them describing the Russian retreat from Lemberg, in which he was caught, and the firing of the Russian oilfields at

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<sup>11</sup> Price Papers, Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p.438.

<sup>12</sup> Manchester Guardian 27.1.15. See F/N 9.

<sup>13</sup> W.R.P. 30.1.15. Price papers

<sup>14</sup> Price papers, Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p.443

<sup>15</sup> Price papers, Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p.442. See also F/N 36.

<sup>16</sup> Economist 12.6.15.

<sup>17</sup> A.M.P. 22.3.15. Price papers. Associated Press do not keep archive material longer than 30 years, and it has therefore been impossible to discover what, if anything, Price wrote for them.

Borislav, which he saw from a distance<sup>18</sup>. "These adventures in Galicia" he wrote to Scott privately "convince me that the Tsar's regime has not only not changed for the better, but also that as a military power the Russian Empire is clearly declining."<sup>19</sup>

Price's first article for the Manchester Guardian after his arrival had been uncharacteristically euphoric. There was, he found "a new spirit abroad in the land... there are no internal politics in Russia today."<sup>20</sup> But thanks to a number of letters of introduction from Professor Bernard Pares (<sup>21</sup>), he was able to secure interviews with Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister<sup>22</sup>, the Kadet Leader

<sup>18</sup> Manchester Guardian

9.6.15. Datelined 'In the Carpathian foothills'. 'On the Battlefield of Galicia'. Signed M. Philips Price

22.7.15. Datelined Lemberg, June. 'The Burning of the Oil Wells of Galicia'. Signed 'From a Correspondent'.

<sup>19</sup> Price papers, Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p.444

<sup>20</sup> Manchester Guardian

7.1.15. Datelined Petrograd December 21. 'Russia and the War'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>21</sup> SIR BERNARD PARES (1867-1949) first went to Russia in 1898, after which Russia and the Russian language became his principal study. He was Reader in Russian History at Liverpool University from 1906-1908 and then Professor of Russian Studies. From 1914-1917 he was attached to the Russian Army and in 1917 became a special adviser to Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Petrograd. After the Revolution he returned to Britain and became one of the most influential of the Russia specialists in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. From 1919-1936 he was Professor of Russian Language, Literature and History at the University of London and from 1922-1939 Director of the School of Slavonic (subsequently Slavonic and East European) Studies. He was co-editor of the Slavonic Review and author of many books, notably the History of Russia (1926) and The Fall of the Russian Monarchy (1939). He also produced My Russian Memoirs (1931), A Wandering Student (1938) and a highly esteemed translation of Krylov's Fables (1942). He visited Russia between the wars and although formally retired in 1939 lectured on Russia for the Foreign Office throughout the second World War. Dictionary of National Biography; Slavonic Review Vol 28-29 (1949) pp. 28-38: appreciations of Pares by R. Seton-Watson, G.R. Noyes and W.J. Rose.

<sup>22</sup> SERGEI DMITRIEVICH SAZONOV (1861-1927). Born of a wealthy family, Sazonov joined the Tsarist Foreign Service in 1883 and served overseas until 1909, when he became Deputy Foreign Minister under Izvolsky, and Foreign Minister in the following year. He played an



Miliukov<sup>23</sup>, the Octobrist leader Guchkov<sup>24</sup> and the writer Peter Struve<sup>25</sup>. In between his excursions to the front Price began to

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important role in preventing the escalation of the First Balkan War but was less successful in the case of the second. Strongly pro-Serb in the run-up to the First World War, he was for over half a century credited with the formulation of a 13-point programme of war aims approved by the Tsar, which included the partition of Turkey and Russian control of the Straits and Constantinople. A liberal monarchist in domestic politics, he was dismissed by the Tsar for supporting Polish autonomy. After the Bolshevik Revolution he became adviser on foreign affairs to Denikin and Foreign Minister to Kolchak. He died in Paris. His partial autobiography, Fateful Years, 1919-1916, was published in London in 1928. The most recent work on his life has been done in a larger context by C. Jay Smith Jr: The Russian Struggle for Power 1914-1917 (New York 1956) and Andrew Rossos: Russia and the Balkans (Toronto 1951).

<sup>23</sup> PAUL MILIUKOV (1859-1943), historian turned politician, became involved in politics via the Union of Liberation, and because of his liberal sympathies was obliged to spend most of his early life abroad. He returned to Russia in 1905 and devoted the rest of his political life to the increasingly anachronistic cause of trying to create some form of parliamentary democracy on West European lines in Russia. He was a founder member of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets) in 1905, and elected to the Duma in 1907. In the Fourth Duma (1912-1917) Miliukov moved increasingly to the Right in his desire not to frighten away the moderates while still retaining some oppositional momentum. In 1915 he became unofficial leader of the Progressive Bloc in the Duma, and on 1 November 1916 his "stupidity or treason" speech resulted in the dismissal of the incompetent and reactionary Prime Minister, Stürmer. It also made Miliukov appear briefly to be voice of the reform movement in Russia. He saw the March Revolution as a victory for the Duma and a vindication of his tactics. His term of office as Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Provisional Government was however short-lived, and in December 1917 he threw in his lot with the Counter-Revolution. See below Chp. 3 p. 80 F/N 15. A full account of his life is given by Thomas Riha: Paul Miliukov in Russian Politics (Notre Dame 1969), and in his article 'Miliukov and the Progressive Bloc in 1915: a Study in Last Chance Politics', Journal of Modern History Vol 31 (1960) pp. 16-24.

<sup>24</sup> ALEXANDER GUCHKOV (1862-1936) came of a merchant family and was a founding member of the Octobrist Group in November 1905, becoming a member of the Third Duma in 1907. Active in the Russian Red Cross ever since the Russo-Japanese war (when he was captured by the Japanese) he was Chairman of it when Price interviewed him. He later also became Chairman of the Central War Industries Committee. Well before 1917 he had lost all hope that the Duma could become an effective instrument of reform. Though not personally anti-monarchist, he was involved in a plot to kidnap the Tsar and form a new government under the Tsarevich. The March Revolution occurred first. He was briefly a member of the First Provisional Government, as Minister for War, but resigned with Miliukov, later joined Denikin, and eventually went into exile in Berlin and Paris. He left no memoir and no full-length biography has yet been attempted, but an



appreciate the political situation rather better. He was not amused by Sazonov's reaction when Price told him, in reply to Sazonov's question, that he believed a large section of public opinion in Britain had been against participation in a European war until Belgium was invaded. Sazonov had laughed, and said: "Is that all you entered the war for? I was convinced that war was inevitable long before it broke out because I saw that we should never have peace in Europe till Germany's attempt to dominate Turkey was broken."<sup>26</sup> Price wrote a private letter to Scott about these interviews but nothing appeared in the Manchester Guardian<sup>27</sup>. On the other hand the Economist produced an article about an interview with a "high official" using very much the same words as those Price had used in his letters home at this time<sup>28</sup>. It was an understood thing between him and his correspondents that they should send copies of his letters to one another, and the distribution list of course included Hirst, who appears at first to have made more use of them than did Scott. Nearly all his letters (apart from those to Scott)

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informative monograph was written by William Gleason: 'Alexander Guchkov and the end of the Russian Empire', Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 73, part 3, 1983.

<sup>25</sup> PETER STRUVE (1870-1944), economist and writer. One of the "legal Marxist" ideologues of the Social Democratic party, he wrote the Manifesto for their first party congress in 1889, but by 1900 had already broken away and by the time Price met him, Struve had moved far to the Right. After a brief spell as a Kadet deputy in the Second Duma he confined himself increasingly to theorising until the outbreak of war. In 1915 he became Chairman of the Committee for the Restriction of Enemy Supplies and Trade (KOS) in which post he worked closely with its British counterpart, the Ministry of Blockade. After March 1917 he served briefly under Miliukov in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but in December 1917 threw in his lot with the Volunteer Army. In 1920 he entered upon a life of exile and emigre politics. His biography is in two volumes. Richard Pipes: Struve: Liberal on the Left, 1870-1905 and Struve: Liberal on the Right, 1905-1944, published by Harvard University Press, 1970 and 1980 respectively.

<sup>26</sup> Price papers, Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p. 434.

<sup>27</sup> Price papers, Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p.436.

<sup>28</sup> Economist 6.2.15.



were addressed in the first instance either to Trevelyan, to Tuffet, to his brother or to his most supportive aunt, Anna Maria Philips<sup>29</sup>.

When Price returned to Petrograd from the Carpathian front in May 1915 he noticed that "people here are beginning to sicken of the war, but the Government here is so powerful and the people so disorganised and without will that I don't think there will be any movement for peace now that Count Witte is dead."<sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> He came away from another interview with Sazonov with the impression that "he did not

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<sup>29</sup> ANNA MARIA PHILIPS (1857-1946). The daughter of Robert Needham Philips by his second marriage, Anna Maria Philips never married. She was her father's companion and hostess until his death in 1890, after which she quietly embarked on a long life of public service, her chief interests being schools and hospitals. She was a member of the Lancashire Education Committee from its foundation in 1903, represented Manchester University on the Committee of the Stand Grammar School for Boys, and was closely involved in the building at Stand of a Grammar School for Girls. She was a member of the Board of the Manchester Northern Hospital for nearly 40 years. Her five nephews (the three Trevelyan and two Price brothers) and their many children provided her with a large family, and she took a careful interest in the lives and fortunes of each member of it. Although in failing health she appeared to have clung to life in January 1946 just long enough to hear what Price had to tell her about Russia when he went to see her immediately after returning from his first visit there since 1918. She died a few hours after he left her house. Letters from M.P. Price to Anna Philips will be identified throughout this thesis by the letters A.M.P. followed by the date on which they were written.

<sup>30</sup> A.M.P. 27.5.15. Price papers.

<sup>31</sup> COUNT SERGEI YUL'EVICH WITTE (1849-1915). An able minister under Alexander III, Witte presided, as Minister of Railways and then of Finance over a period of unprecedented economic expansion in Russia and was largely responsible for the huge scale of foreign investment, especially by France, in the Russian economy. His reputation as a peacemaker, to which Price obviously referred, was presumably based on the fact that he had been the chief architect of the Treaty of Portsmouth which ended the Russo-Japanese War in August 1905. He had, moreover, vigorously denounced the drift to war with Germany in 1914. Known to have drafted most of the October Manifesto of 1905, he was probably regarded more outside Russia as a reformer than he actually was. He died suddenly in March 1915. His Reminiscences were published in Paris and London in 1921. See also Howard D. Mehlinger and John M. Thompson: Count Witte and Tsarist Government in the 1905 Revolution. (Indiana University Press 1972.)

look forward with any great enthusiasm to a very serious change in the internal politics of Russia".<sup>32</sup> On 6 June he wrote to Trevelyan: "I am really beginning to think that unless the situation changes there may be an upheaval. The events of the last few days have made me begin to think."<sup>33</sup> He was having to think not only about the situation on which he was reporting, but about his own situation.

Price had been getting indications of his unpopularity in Gloucester from his uncle, Tuffet, who was doing his best to keep an eye on Price's finances and the welfare of his staff at Tibberton Court. Tuffet was a kindly and open-minded man but dominated by his wife Alice, the sister of Price's father. She was a highly patriotic woman who ran a hospital in Gloucester and bitterly disapproved of her nephew's politics and activities. Price was in constant correspondence with Tuffet but did not keep his letters. It is therefore possible only to infer what Tuffet was saying from Price's reactions. Tuffet may well have exaggerated the degree of local hostility to Price, given the awkward situation in which he was placed within the family. But he certainly managed to give Price the impression that Gloucester was up in arms against him. In a letter to his aunt Anna on 27 May 1915 Price told her about Tuffet's warnings, concluding that what they amounted to was: "Political career ruined. Social ostracism in City and country. Possible personal violence on self and property... Needless to say it does not increase my desire to hurry home, especially as I now have opportunities of visiting the third theatre of Eastern warfare in the

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32 A.M.P. 27.5.15. Price papers.

33 C.P.T. 6.6.15. Price papers.



Caucasus". He wrote to his brother: "You are in some ways in a happier position, for if you return safely you are for the rest of your life an honoured and respected man; while I shall be looked on as a leper because I told my countrymen the truth when they wanted lies."<sup>34</sup> <sup>35</sup> In the summer of 1915, therefore, Price was inclined to stay in Russia as long as he could with a view to writing a book about Anglo-Russian relations. But he still saw himself as a war correspondent. The Russian authorities were, however, now making it almost impossible for correspondents to get to the Russian Western front and the Russian censor would not pass articles on political questions. Price had been shocked by what he had seen of Russification and anti-Semitism in the Russian-occupied parts of Galicia but could report nothing to his paper. "Rather than bury my conscience in Europe I decided to betake myself to Asia."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> W.R.P. 29.5.15. Price papers.

<sup>35</sup> A study of the two Gloucester papers for the period January - September 1915 has elicited nothing whatever to substantiate Tuffet's apparently alarmist messages. As noted in F/N 7 above, Price's decision to resign the Liberal candidature was not even reported until 7 July. During the spring of 1915 generally jingoistic letters were beginning to appear in the papers, mainly in the Citizen, and there were constant reports of recruiting drives, but never a word against Price. This is the more surprising because two local regiments had already incurred heavy losses: The Gloucesters at Ypres in May (where according to a letter by one survivor printed in the Citizen they were "mown down like rabbits"), and the Gloucestershire Hussars at the Dardanelles. But nobody appears to have wanted to vilify Price for not having been among them. One possible explanation is that he was probably quite widely known to be acting as a war correspondent in Russia; events on the Russian front were receiving extensive coverage in the local press throughout that period, and if anyone thought about Price at all, it would not have been as one avoiding danger. It would seem, therefore, that what Tuffet was telling him was a combination of pillow talk and a sense of animosity that was undoubtedly growing against Price in Gloucestershire county society, and which to a greater or lesser extent dogged him throughout his life.

<sup>36</sup> In a memorandum to Charles Trevelyan dated 18 August 1917 Price recalled that he had seen how "in the region of Stanislaus and Lalice the house of every Jew was deliberately burned. I used to see the Jews with my own eyes being led away in droves with chains clanking on them to an unknown fate but one not difficult to guess".

Moreover, as he later wrote, there were no other correspondents from the Western Allies on the Caucasus front "and this was very much my country"<sup>37</sup>.

In 1911 on his way back from Mongolia and again in 1912 Price had ridden in and out of the border areas between Russia, Persia and Turkey. He was therefore better placed than most Western war correspondents to appreciate the strategic importance of the Caucasus front. After observing two seasons' campaigning there in 1915/16 he was to become convinced that if this theatre had been taken seriously by the Entente powers, Germany could have been encircled and defeated long before November 1918<sup>38</sup>.

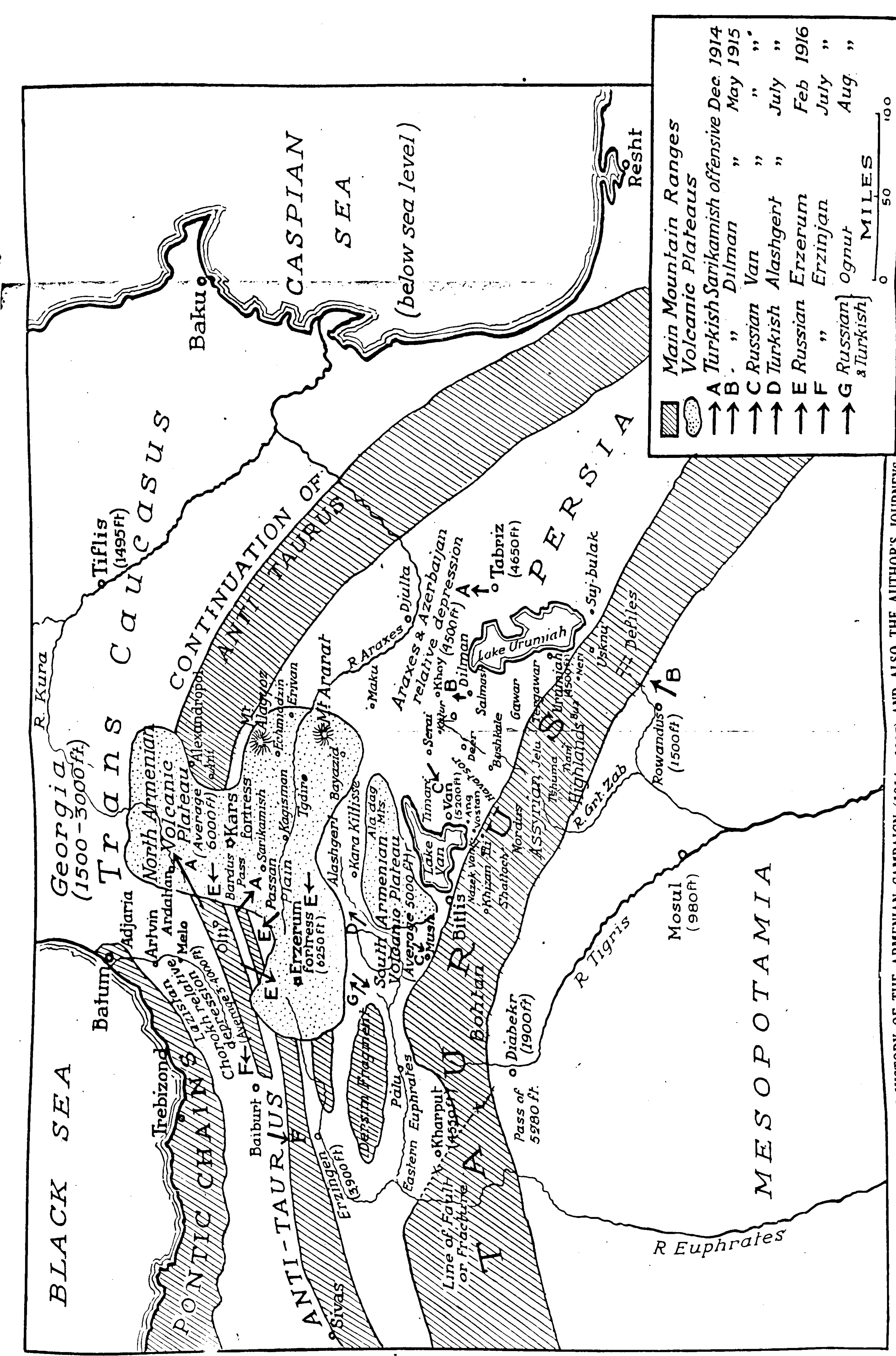
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(Newcastle University Library, C.P. Trevelyan Papers 69.) The quotation in the text is from the author's preface to his book War and Revolution in Asiatic Russia (1918). In what is probably the first account in the English language of these events, Daniel W. Graf described how the whole area west of a line from Petrograd to Smolensk came under military rule as a result of the emergency regulations put into effect in July 1914. This was marked not only by arbitrariness and confusion but also by unprecedented atrocities against the civilian population, notably (the army being one of the strongholds of anti-semitism in Russia at that time) atrocities committed against the Jews. Graf went on to note that the policies of the military in this area and at this time did much to alienate public opinion from the Russian Government, particularly among intellectuals. He also pointed out that the Grand Duke Nicholas, then still Commander in Chief had, contrary to both prevailing and persistent mythology, done his best to control the behaviour of his subordinate generals. Indeed, Graf argued, it was his reputation for liberalism in Poland that got him sacked and relegated to the Caucasus. Daniel W. Graf: 'Military Rule Behind the Russian Front 1914-1917: the Political Ramifications'. Jahrbucher für Geschichte Ost Europas (1974) (Franz Steiner Verlag, Gmb. H. Wiesbaden). See also a collection of papers apparently put together by David Soskice for the Jewish Conjoint Foreign Committee and marked MOST SECRET. Stow Hill papers, House of Lords. 052/1.

<sup>37</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p. 454.

<sup>38</sup> Lloyd George devoted virtually the whole of Chapters X-XVII of his War Memoirs to attacking the Allied generals for insisting on trying to win the war in the West when it could, in his view, have been won for much less cost and in a far shorter time in the East. He devoted a further excoriating Chapter (XXIX) to 'The Mesopotamia Muddle'. But there is not one word in any of these chapters which suggests that he saw the strategic potential of a link-up between the





	Main Mountain Ranges
	Volcanic Plateaus
	A Turkish Sarikamish offensive Dec. 1914
	B " Dilman " May 1915
	C Russian Van " " "
	D Turkish Alashgert " July "
	E Russian Erzerum Feb 1916
	F " Erzinjan July "
	G Russian } Ognut Aug "
	& Turkish }



PHYSICAL MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN CAMPAIGN (1914—1917) AND ALSO THE AUTHOR'S JOURNEYS.



The key to the control of the area was the high volcanic plateau between the Black Sea and the Caspian which dominated the natural valley lines of communication between the three countries, and on which stood, opposing one another, the Russian fort of Kars and the Turkish fort of Erzerum. When Turkey entered the war on 31 October 1914, Russian troops from Kars briefly advanced in Turkish territory, but at that time the Russian High Command was more interested in the Polish and Galician fronts against Germany and Austria. For Turkey, on the other hand, the Caucasus front was then the main interest. The Turks counter-attacked and by 28 December 1914 had surrounded Kars, from where they were within two days' march of Tiflis. But on 2 January 1915 the Russian drove them back. The Turks now set their sights on the Persian provinces of Azerbaijan, hoping to outflank the Russians on the east instead. In April 1915 they occupied the Urumiah plateau and on 1 May were outside Dilman, just north west of Lake Urumiah, greatly outnumbering the Russian defenders. There was no siege, however, because having got there the Turks ran out of

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British army in Mesopotamia and the Russian army in the Caucasus, although those on the ground in these areas clearly did, and continued to do so even after the March Revolution. Lloyd George saw the alternative strategy entirely in terms of an advance into the Balkans from Salonika. As late as August 1917 the plenipotentiary in London of the Provisional Government, Nabokov, tried to interest Milner in co-operation between the Russian and British forces in Asia Minor. Milner replied that there was no possibility of a combined offensive as Britain had been forced to withdraw forces from "idleness" in Salonika and the situation in Mesopotamia had been "seriously compromised". Secret Diplomatic Documents and Treaties Vol. I, published in Petrograd, January 1918, by the Bureau of International Propaganda. (Xerox in DLB Coll. University of Hull.) The interrelationship of the two theatres is discussed by W.E.D. Allen and Paul Muratov in Chapter 33 of Caucasian Battlefields. A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border 1828-1921 (Cambridge 1953). See also Ronald G. Suny The Baku Commune 1917-18: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution in Asiatic Russia (1918) pp. 64-68.



ammunition. Moreover here had been a serious revolt in their rear by the Armenian population of the Turkish town of Van. The Turks retired to Bitlis, west of Lake Van, and the Russians advanced and they relieved the Armenians at Van. Fighting raged back and forth in the area south east of the Black Sea throughout the summer of 1915, but by the end of the season the Russian had not only cleared the Turks out of north west Persia but also occupied the whole of the south eastern Armenian plateau. The Turks, whenever they retreated, devastated any Armenian village in their path and massacred the indigenous populations, whether Christian or Muslim.

This was the situation when Price arrived in the Caucasus theatre. He was to remain there, with a few trips back to Tiflis and one to Kharkov, almost until the March revolution nearly two years later, although in the second year on that front he spent more time on war relief than on war reportage.

The fighting in the Caucasus theatre was interrelated with the British campaigns against the Turks both at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia, whether the politicians saw it that way or not. There seems to be no disagreement that the Dardanelles expedition among other consequences had the effect of preventing more Turkish troops from being deployed against Russia in the Caucasus, at a time when the latter was under desperate pressure on the Polish and Galician fronts. The British defeat at Gallipoli thus not only released Turkish troops to add to the pressure in Mesopotamia, but also gave rise to fears, at the Russian Military Headquarters (Stavka), that Turkish troops might now appear on the Polish front. On the other

hand, by early 1916 the Russians in the Caucasus theatre were buoyant. On the east their forces under General Baratov had defeated Turco-German troops in Persia and were established at Kirmanshah, only 120 miles from what is now the border with Iraq. Although the French were against any diversions in this area and the Grand Duke Nicholas (Commander in Chief in the Caucasus) was lukewarm towards the idea of Anglo-Russian co-operation in Mesopotamia because he thought the British lacked strategic sense in that theatre, General Baratov was given permission, in the spring of 1916, to create a diversion in northern Mesopotamia in the hope of preventing the surrender of British troops besieged at Kut. Unfortunately he could not get far enough in time to prevent that, but his advance tempted the Turks into yet another diversion into Persia. This in turn provided a breathing space for the British during which they were able to prepare for their eventual march on Baghdad. Meanwhile on the west Caucasus front, the Russians under General Udenich occupied Erzerum in February 1916, and the conquest of the rest of the Black Sea Coast to a point west of Trebizond followed in April. Thus Anglo-Russian co-operation, though neither planned nor systematically executed, was in fact quite effective in preventing the Drang nach Osten.

Price had arrived in Tiflis on 24 June 1915 with letters of introduction to the Grand Duke Nicholas. In the first week of July he set out for the Turkish front via Tabriz, where the Russian military headquarters were then situated, to obtain the necessary passes. From there, "equipped like war correspondents used to be"



with two horses, a servant and a tent, he set out towards Urumiah<sup>39</sup>. The Turks had already retreated from the most easterly point of their advance at Dilman on the north west tip of the Lake, but on his way Price encountered thousands of terrified Armenian and Assyrian refugees still flying into Persia. At Urumiah he met and stayed with an American medical missionary, Dr. Packard<sup>40</sup>, and went with him into territory controlled by the Khurds, who were making the most of the opportunity provided by the war to pursue their own interests: territory and plunder. Dr. Packard, who was trusted by everybody, had undertaken to try to secure the release of some Assyrian Christians (Nestorians) who were being held prisoners by the Khurds, and at the same time to try to persuade the Khurds to accept a Russian offer of an amnesty.

In October 1915, having been delayed by a serious accident<sup>41</sup>, Price set out for Van and there found an old acquaintance, now Colonel of

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<sup>39</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p. 454.

<sup>40</sup> Dr. Henry P. Packard ran the American Presbyterian Mission Hospital at Urumia, Azerbaijan, from at least 1902 until at least 1916. It has proved impossible to obtain any further biographical information about Dr. Packard, but Price, who met him in August 1915, gave a very full account of him and his work at that time in his War and Revolution, pp. 99-102 and 110-121. Price described him as "six feet tall with the eye of an eagle and the courage of a lion", a man who was "intimately acquainted with every tribal chief of the Khurds and can go among the fiercest and most intractable of them, such is his moral hold over these men and the confidence which they place in a man who is not engaged in political intrigue". Price described some of his exploits and went with him on several expeditions. The Quaker Alfred Backhouse described one of Dr. Packard's more dramatic (and successful) humanitarian actions in The Friend of 4 August 1916. Letters from Mrs. Packard to Price's aunt, which give some insight into the life of the Packards at that time, are among the Price papers.

<sup>41</sup> Price was returning to the Mission in an open carriage when the horse took fright and bolted. Thinking he might be able to stop it he jumped out but was knocked out and remained unconscious for three days. His hearing, never good, was affected for the rest of his life.

the 6th Armenian Volunteer Battalion. He went with them in November towards Bitlis in an expedition to drive the Turks out of a position which threatened the Russian left flank at Van. For this purpose he was attached to the Red Cross Unit which went with the battalion. Winter had fallen by the time their object had been accomplished and the direct passes back to the Caucasus were closed by snow. Price was obliged to return to the Caucasus as he had come: via Persia. At Khoi, where he had been arrested by the Russians in 1912 (see above p. 18) he spent a few days recovering from the rigours of the expedition, but was back in Tiflis for a few days early in January 1916. From there he made a short excursion to Kars, but wrote again from Tiflis to his family that he intended to remain there for a while and write up his material on the Caucasus front before visiting Petrograd to study the political situation. After that he planned to return to the front. He was on the point of leaving for the capital when word came that the fall of the Turkish fort of Erzerum was considered imminent. He at once applied to go there, and was the only Western European among a party of Russian journalists who were the first to arrive at Erzerum after its capture. He then returned to Tiflis, but little more than a month later was at the front again, this time at the point where the Russians reached the Black Sea. He arrived in Trebizond in a troop transport, again only a few days after the Russians had taken the city.

Although for the rest of 1916 Price devoted himself almost entirely to relief work among the refugees in the area, he often found hospitality for the night in Russian encampments in the newly-occupied areas. He still kept in touch with developments on the



Caucasus front and continued to write about it, but he no longer followed the Russian army about.

When in October 1915 Price had first encountered the scale of the population displacement in the Caucasus and the devastation caused by the war, he sent a message back to Shipley, the British Consul in Tabriz, who in turn telegraphed the Archbishop of Canterbury. In fact the first move to establish a Lord Mayor's Fund for the relief of the Armenian and other refugees had already taken place at a meeting at the Mansion House on 5 October. By June 1916 the Fund had collected £53,000. Relief from this quarter inevitably took time to arrive, and in spite of the effort of Russian and American missions in the area, Price noted, when he passed through it again some weeks later that the condition of the refugees had noticeably deteriorated and their numbers had increased despite a continuous loss from disease. By now there were some 250,000 Armenian and other refugees in the Caucasus and Persia<sup>42</sup>. Price wrote a number of reports for the Lord Mayor's Fund. He became increasingly concerned about the

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<sup>42</sup> A report by Price on the plight of Armenian refugees at this time is included in The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents presented by Viscount Bryce to Viscount Grey of Fallodon (1916). There are no archives for the Lord Mayor's Fund for Armenian Relief, as the archives of any Relief Fund are considered the personal property of the incumbent Lord Mayor on any given occasion. Price also wrote about what he found to Charles Trevelyan. "...after the retreat of Enver Pasha from the Kars province in January 1915 band warfare had broken out on a large scale. Armenian and Greek bands, led by agents of the Black Hundreds fell upon the Moslem population. I found all the Tartar villages of the Ardahan and Sarikamish regions in ruins and of the 180,000 Moslem inhabitants that there were before the war only 30% remained. In north-west Persia also along the south shores of Lake Urumiah all the Persian and Khurdish villages were destroyed and the people homeless and starving. The Cossacks had passed by here during the previous winter. In the Black Sea region and district of Artvin of the 60,000 native Moslems only 7,000 remained in the winter of 1916." (Newcastle University Library. C.P. Trevelyan papers 69.)

less publicised plight of Moslem refugees in Lazistan, which he saw for himself when following the Russian army in the Black Sea area. In April or May 1916 he and one of his Russian journalist colleagues, Zdanevitch<sup>43</sup>, issued a joint appeal on their behalf: Price to the Lord Mayor's Fund and Zdanevitch to the Russian press. When he returned to Tiflis in the early summer of 1916 he found that the Fund had by now sent out a mission led by the Quaker, Alfred Backhouse, with the Rev. Harold Buxton in charge of administration. There was nothing to connect Price's appeals with their appearance, but in view of his obvious interest in and knowledge of the area, they asked him to co-operate with them. The objects of the Lord Mayor's Fund had

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<sup>43</sup> ILYA ZDANEVITCH (ILIAZD) (1894-1975). Born into an intellectual and artistic family in Tiflis, Zdanevitch formally studied law at St. Petersburg but from an early age was, in fact, a practising artist in almost every medium. At the age of 17 he was not only "converted" (his own word) to futurism but also discovered the now world-famous Georgian primitive painter Pirosmeni. In pre-revolutionary Moscow he was one of the leading advocates and publicists of the avant garde in the arts. He was not called up at the outbreak of war, but began to work as the correspondent in the Caucasus of the newspaper Reich, which is how he came to meet Price. As war correspondents they often travelled together on the Caucasus front, and in 1916 collaborated in the raising of funds for and administration of famine relief in Lazistan. During this period Iliazd not only proved himself to be an able and enterprising mountaineer but also developed an abiding interest in early Byzantine Christian architecture, on which subject he was to become a world authority. For a time he played a central role in the immediate post-revolutionary flowering of futurist art in the Soviet Union. Recognising before long that these days were numbered he moved to Paris in 1921. He soon became friends with Picasso, involved himself in the Dadaist movement, and thenceforth was at the centre of most of the aesthetic arguments of the next 20 years. His artistic talents led him into every conceivable form of expression. He was a prolific writer, his works embracing drama, poetry and prose in both Russian and French; a brilliant engraver; under Picasso's influence he became fascinated by ceramics; he designed clothes for Chanel. He died suddenly in his 82nd year. Regrettably his Lettres à Morgan Philips Price, written in Russian in 1929, and giving an account of his life since 1917, remain unpublished. But he kept in touch with Price and visited him in England twice, once in 1930 and again in 1953 (on the last occasion designing a bookplate for Price's 3-year-old granddaughter). This note is based on a chronology prepared by his widow, Helene Iliazd, for an exhibition of his work at Quebec in 1984.



deliberately not been confined to the relief of Armenians only and it was available for distribution to all communities in distress as the result of the war in the Caucasus. Price felt special concern for the Lazistan Moslems who, though not systematically massacred like the Armenians had nonetheless lost their homes and their means of livelihood. He was an obvious choice as an agent, since he already knew the country. At the end of May 1916 he set out from Khars with a representative of the Moslem Benevolent Society to open a store at Karamse and to arrange for the registration of refugees. Throughout June and July he travelled more than 500 miles, mainly on horseback but sometimes on foot, throughout Lazistan, identifying the needs of the population, many of whom he found sheltering in caves or among the ruins of their villages and vineyards.

Price return<sup>ed</sup> to Tiflis again in mid-August. By now goods and funds brought by a whole range of relief organisations had arrived in the Caucasus; one of the organisations concerned was the Red Crescent Society, which took a special interest in the Moslem refugees. Price was now asked to distribute 50,000 roubles worth of aid from the Lord Mayor's Fund and the Red Crescent, to which he added £2,000 of his own money. In the course of October he bought 300 packets of clothing and 6000 poods of maize. On 7 November he set out for Batum again accompanied by a representative of the Moslem Benevolent Society. From Batum he sent half the maize to Morgul by wagon; from there it could go no further on wheels and the local people carried it into the mountains on their backs. The other half of the maize and all the clothing had now arrived at Artvin; this was loaded on to mules and he personally took the baggage train along precipitous

mountain tracks to Melo, an area inhabited, as he put it, by ghosts and skeletons. The tracks were often so twisting and narrow that all the mules had to be unloaded and reloaded in turn to enable them to get around the corners. He returned to Artvin to arrange for further supplies to be got into this area and then went to the bazaar at Kutais to order a further 10,000 yards of cloth for despatch to Lazistan. He returned to Tiflis in January 1917 intending to write but until the March revolution he continued to be deeply involved in relief work. There was a plan, favoured by the Quakers, to set up small spinning and weaving industries in the Caucasus as the most effective form of self-help that could be devised for those Armenian and Assyrian refugees who could not be repatriated, and Price would have been involved in organising these had not the revolution intervened.

Price's writings from the Caucasus in 1915-16 fall into three groups: his letters home; his diary, which also formed the basis of his book War and Revolution in Asiatic Russia; and his articles for the Manchester Guardian. As might be expected, his letters home are the most uninhibited of his writings and give far more graphic accounts than anything that was published of the terrain, the cold, the hunger, the fear and the excitement. On the eve of the action with the Armenian volunteers he described for Tuffet the sombre mood in the camp: "either we succeed, in which case the Armenians massacre every prisoner they take, or else they (the Turks) succeed, in which case they massacre us to a man."<sup>44</sup> He had a curiously ambivalent attitude towards the fighting on this front. Before leaving Tiflis

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<sup>44</sup> C.L.W. 14.11.15. Price papers.



in July 1915 he had written: "The fighting on this front is much more sporting. It is scouting behind rocks, guerilla warfare in the mountains needing skill in horsemanship and marksmanship."<sup>45</sup> He got so carried away in the action with the Armenian Volunteers that although a non-combatant he accompanied the Armenian cavalry for a time in their unsuccessful pursuit of the retreating Turks, describing it in his diary almost as if it had been a foxhunt<sup>46</sup>. But he later wrote to his uncle: "I am pleased to think that though I have been in several fights in Armenia... I have never lifted my hand in violence or fired a rifle or a revolver, but have done what little I could to bring in wounded and give help to refugees and starving people."<sup>47</sup> He did not attempt to hide his satisfaction at finding himself to be the only West European correspondent on this front in a letter to his aunt: "Oh what vastly interesting events will take place in the East this year. I am mightily glad I am here and all alone in my glory, not another war correspondent except Russians."<sup>48</sup>

Price wrote an account of his travels and experiences in this theatre between August and December 1915 in the form of a diary which he despatched in three parts to his aunt in January 1916, and which she had typed for circulation. Unfortunately one part of it was lost, but 11,000 words remain in the Price papers. he drew heavily on this material for his book, but that was not to be written for another year.

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<sup>45</sup> C.L.W. 5.7.15. Price papers.

<sup>46</sup> Price papers.

<sup>47</sup> C.L.W. 16.1.16. Price papers.

<sup>48</sup> A.M.P. 7.5.16. Price papers.

The first article by Price about the Caucasus front to appear in the Manchester Guardian concerned the Battle of Dilman, which had taken place four months earlier, but of which he was able to obtain the first eye-witness accounts to appear in Western Europe<sup>49</sup>. This came out on 27 October 1915 and was followed on the next day with a piece by him on Khurdish incursions into Persia which had begun even before Turkey entered the war, apparently instigated by the Turks, and creating a reign of terror in north west Persia<sup>50</sup>. Two weeks later the paper published an article describing his expeditions into Khurdish territory with Dr. Packard<sup>51</sup>. The next to appear (21 January 1916) described the Armenian massacres in the aftermath of the 1915 campaign<sup>52</sup>. Price told his aunt that he had sent off a number of articles in January but did not specify in his letter what they were about<sup>53</sup>. There is no indication that these were the articles which subsequently appeared, or whether parts of several were combined in Manchester to make a different whole. One of them at least would appear to have been a descriptive piece written in December, which was published on 28 February, about the action near Lake Van<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Manchester Guardian 27.10.16. Datelined 'With the Russians in NW Persia, September'. 'The Story of the Battle of Dilman'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid 28.10.16. Datelined Urumiah September. 'War and Massacre in Northern Persia'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid 11.11.16. Datelined Urumiah September. 'A Khurdish Amnesty'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid 21.1.16. Datelined Tiflis 26 December. 'The Armenian Remnant'. Signed 'A Correspondent'. The dateline is erroneous since Price was in Persia on 26 December 1915, but there can be no doubt that he wrote the article.

<sup>53</sup> A.M.P. 18.1.16. Price papers.

<sup>54</sup> Manchester Guardian 28.2.16. Datelined 'With the Russians in the region of Van, December'. 'Forward with the Grand Duke'. Signed M. Philips Price.



When news arrived in Tiflis early in February 1916 of the fall of Erzerum Price sent a telegram about it to Manchester, at the expense of which Scott later demurred. A letter would have done, he wrote to Price, since the front was a distant one and no other West European paper had a correspondent on it<sup>55</sup>. However Price's extravagance enabled the Manchester Guardian to print a short report of the event on 21 February, only five days after it occurred. A piece on the general military situation, written in December 1915 but not hitherto published, now proved to have stood the test of time. Printed on 24 February it underlined the importance to the Turks of Erzerum and the interrelationship of the campaigns in the Caucasus and Mesopotamia<sup>56</sup>. After reaching Erzerum Price wrote a series of articles: one about the fort itself<sup>57</sup>, another about Udenich's campaign to capture it<sup>58</sup>, two about the subsequent capture of Trebizond<sup>59</sup> <sup>60</sup> and a long and thoughtful piece which came out under the title 'The Advance of the Russians in Armenia and

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<sup>55</sup> Price sent three telegrams (at his own expense) about the fall of Erzerum, and was rewarded, on his return to Tiflis, by a telegram from Cross Street saying "Do not telegraph". According to David Ayerst: Guardian - Biography of a Newspaper Footnote, p.404, this was because, since Price was the only English-speaking correspondent there, "the news would keep". Price himself sent an apologetic letter to Scott on 8 March 1916 explaining that he had thought the Manchester Guardian would have been pleased to be the first British or American newspaper to be able to publish details of the capture of the fort. (Price papers.)

<sup>56</sup> Manchester Guardian 24.2.16. Dated 'With the Russian Army in the Region of Van, December 12 1915'. 'The Campaign in Asia'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid 7.4.16. Dated Erzerum 7.3.16. 'Erzerum Visited'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid 24.4.16. Dated 'With the Russian army in the Caucasus 7.3.16'. 'First Story of the Fall of Erzerum'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid 1.5.16. Dated Trebizond 25.4.16. 'Turkish Losses about Trebizond'. Signed 'Our Correspondent'.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid 23.5.16. Dated 'With the Russian Black Sea Fleet, 29.4.16'. 'At Trebizond'. Signed M. Philips Price.

Persia'<sup>61</sup>. In it Price attempted to do justice to the achievements of the Russian armies in the Caucasus and pointed out that these had secured for the Allied "not only almost complete control of Central Asia but also the chance of successfully terminating the war was far as concerns the political problems of the East, which were originally one of the main causes of the war."

In the course of his relief work Price met a number of high-ranking Russian officers of the army of occupation or in the field. His next article to be printed, on 8 July 1916, contained appreciations of the Grand Duke Nicholas (both as a relatively progressive Viceroy and as Commander in Chief), and of two of his field commanders, Generals Udenich and Prezhvalski. Both these men had an unparalleled knowledge of the Caucasus, both lived and dressed as simply as their men, and both epitomised for Price the spirit of the Caucasus Army<sup>62</sup>. He later wrote an appreciation of General Peshkov, whose duty it was to administer an area the inhabitants of which were "all more or less in a state of antagonism and mutual suspicion with one another."<sup>63</sup> Towards the end of July 1916 the Russians captured Erzingen, advancing inland along the depression between the Taurus and the Anti-Taurus mountains in the area south of the Black Sea. Price, although temporarily back in Tiflis at this time, wrote a long piece about this development which the Manchester Guardian printed on 12 September and accompanied with a special map. In it he pointed

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<sup>61</sup> Manchester Guardian 6.5.16. Dated 'With the Russians, 6.4.16'. 'The Advance of the Russians in Armenia and Persia'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid 8.7.16. Dated 'With the Russian army in the Caucasus, June'. 'Russia's Leaders in the Caucasus'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid 13.9.16. Dated Tiflis 7.8.16. 'Russia's Conquest in Armenia'. Signed M. Philips Price.



out how much more the fighting in the Caucasus depended upon geography and indeed on geology than the campaigns in Western Europe. He described in some detail the achievements of the Russian engineers in this hitherto roadless region, where the Turks, relying on mules and camels only, had more than once been forced to turn back or abandon their gains for lack of ammunition. The Russians, on the other hand, had built 140 miles of roads in four months in 1916, built bridges over all the principal rivers of the Chorokh basin and established ammunition dumps at every road junction<sup>64</sup>.

During the Turkish counter-attack in the summer of 1916 Price was almost wholly preoccupied with relief work, but he wrote two articles for the Manchester Guardian about the campaign during brief visits to Tiflis. In the first he argued that the Russians were everywhere retreating to prepared positions, and that diplomatic, financial and military assistance by the Allies to Persia during the previous year had reduced the danger from Germano-Turkish intrigues in that country and even induced a spirit of co-operation among the Persians<sup>65</sup>.

Later he evaluated the situation rather differently, and wrote another article in which he concluded that the evacuation of Erzingen by the Turks had been only a preliminary to a big counter-offensive designed to draw the Russians deeply into the valley of the Western Euphrates and distract them in Persia while throwing the main weight of their attack into the area around Lake Van. He attributed the

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<sup>64</sup> Manchester Guardian 12.9.16. Dated 'With the Russian army in the Caucasus 7.8.16'. 'Armenian Campaign'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid 18.9.16. Dated 'With the Russian army on the Caucasus Front 14.8.16'. 'Caucasus Front: Counter-Attack of the Turks'. Signed M. Philips Price.

failure of the Turkish strategy in part to General Udenich's tactics, but also

"to the newly arrived British motor-car detachment... this is the first time that such things have been seen on the plateau of Armenia and it is a noteworthy fact that they should have been introduced by Englishmen."<sup>66</sup> <sup>67</sup>

When Price first went to the Caucasus in the summer of 1915 he was still undecided about returning to England, although he was already becoming increasingly averse to the idea. He knew he would not enlist, he knew what would happen to him if he did not<sup>68</sup>, and he knew also that he did not want to return to the old squirearchical

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<sup>66</sup> Manchester Guardian 13.10.16  
Datelined Tiflis 16.9.16. 'Turk Counter-Attack'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>67</sup> Oliver Stillingfleet Locker Lampson (1880-1954) was Conservative M.P. for North Huntingdon when war broke out in 1914. As was then still possible, he formed and largely financed his own armoured car squadron, then part of the R.N.A.S., one of a number originally intended for "aeroplane support", which then meant reconnaissance and the rescue of pilots who had been shot down. When armoured cars were about to be superceded by tanks in 1915 and their personnel transferred to Army command, Locker Lampson managed to get his squadron left under the Admiralty, and personally engineered an invitation to take it to Russia as part of an inter-allied courtesy exchange of units. Rather to his surprise the Admiralty added two more squadrons, making a division of 4 officers, 455 men, 37 armoured cars and full supporting armament and ancillary equipment, all of which he commanded. They arrived too late to be of any use to the Russians on the Western front and were sent to the Caucasus, arriving at Erzerum in August 1916. The unit was in action, supposedly against the Turks but mainly against the Khurds, on the Mush plain in August 1916 and was then transferred to the Roumanian front. It saw action in Dobruja early in 1917 and was involved in the Brusilov offensive - and retreat - in the summer of 1917. After the November Revolution the unit was returned to Britain, transferred to Army command and sent to Mesopotamia. Remnants of it were later incorporated in another expedition which still tends to be regarded as a one-man band: Dunsterforce. (See Ch. 8 F/N 23). An account of Locker Lampson's unit was written by Bryan Perrett and Anthony Lloyd: The Czar's British Legion (London 1981). See also Who Was Who and the Times obituary, 9 October 1954.

<sup>68</sup> A Bill to introduce universal compulsory military service was introduced on 2 May 1916 and received the Royal Assent on 25 May. On 6 June Price wrote to Trevelyan "I am just the man they will pounce on. But I will undergo anything, including loss of liberty, property and even life rather than take part in this crime." Price papers.



life. When he learned that his butler was considering enlisting he wrote and told him why he personally opposed the war:

"England and Germany could have peace tomorrow on honourable terms if the ruling classes in both countries wish it."

But if he felt he must go, Price told him, his pay would be supplemented so that his wife would not go short<sup>69</sup>. At the same time he wrote to his uncle:

"What a curse it is that one's ancestors have saddled one with all the snobbish and expensive institutions of bygone and corrupt mediaeval society."<sup>70</sup>

By the spring of 1916 he had moved further still to the left and was beginning to use the language of the Left. He wrote to Trevelyan:

"I renounce landocracy and the right to rob my fellow men. I can't give my lands away to the state or divide them among the peasants as I ought to do because the will of my grandfather forbids this, so all I can do is wait till, as I hope and pray, some terrible economic catastrophe will overwhelm Western Europe and bring the whole system of landed estates crashing to the ground."<sup>71</sup>

In the same week he wrote to his uncle:

"The social system which creates privileged classes, and particularly the landowning class, is responsible for all the miseries of mankind and is directly responsible for the war."<sup>72</sup>

And he told his aunt that he had come to see that war was inevitable

"because capitalist ruling and military castes would always divide men into warring groups."<sup>73</sup>

When Price resigned the Liberal candidature for Gloucester Trevelyan had not, apparently, approved. Price had written and told him that

69 Price papers, letter to Walker, 26.6.15.

70 C.L.W. 25.6.15. Price papers.

71 C.P.T. 30.3.16. Price papers.

72 C.L.W. 27.3.16. Price papers.

73 A.M.P. 18.1.16. Price papers.

he could now support only one party, and that was the U.D.C.

"The Liberal party died on August 4 1914. It was buried in the middle of May by an undertaker called the Coalition. Its son the U.D.C. (still a minor) inherits the property but it is doubtful if he will be able to live on the family estate for many years as heavy Death Duties will have to be paid."<sup>74</sup>

The U.D.C. was "the only organ of truth in England" he later wrote to his aunt, "but it is like a minute piece of straw in a desert hurricane."<sup>75</sup> Throughout his period in Russia Price sent instructions every few months to his uncle to send sums ranging from £200- £500 to the U.D.C. The nature of his relationship with the U.D.C. will be considered in more detail in Chapter 11.

In contrast to the hardening of his political ideas, Price during his time in the Caucasus also developed a strong streak of fatalism, or passivity, as he often called it. He recognised the changes in himself and the paradox which they presented, and tended to attribute his predicament to the fact that he had had so much space and time in which to think, and to the nature of the country in which he had been travelling. It is difficult to think of better reasons. Though his letters home were full of requests for books he could neither have received them while with the Russian army nor carried them about with him. He obviously did not see newspapers regularly and could read his letters from England only when he returned to Tiflis. Although he had been much with soldiers he was also often alone; and while on the one hand the sights of war and increasing familiarity with its victims may have radicalised him politically, the landscape in which he moved exerted an opposing pull away from the realities of life.

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<sup>74</sup> C.P.T. 5.7.15. Price papers.

<sup>75</sup> A.M.P. 18.1.16. Price papers.



He did carry one book with him: The Light of Asia<sup>76</sup> given to him by his brother; he told him in a letter that he read it every day, as a Bible, and memorised passages from it<sup>77</sup>. When in Tiflis and under the influence of his Russian friends he discovered Byron and Wilde for the first time, and through them came to value the idea of "an inner life, that England utterly failed to teach me"<sup>78</sup>. "The days of solitary riding in mountain plateaus [sic] and deserts have caused me to look on life and all its wickedness now passively" he wrote to his brother, adding that he had abandoned all thought of a political career and now "sought salvation within myself in Asia."<sup>79</sup>

He had come to doubt "if it would be possible or even desirable to take any steps in England to actively combat evil" he wrote to his aunt. He shared many ideals with his cousin, but whereas Trevelyan expressed them in action, according to Western traditions, he now felt more inclined towards contemplation in the Eastern tradition. Having been brought up in the one and having now experienced the other, Price described himself to his aunt as a "mongrel" and could not decide which was right. He thought Trevelyan "beyond measure

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<sup>76</sup> The Light of Asia or The Great Renunciation (Mahabhinishkramana) being the Life and Teaching of Gautama Prince of India and Founder of Buddhism as told in verse by an Indian Buddhist. Sir Edwin Arnold, M.A., K.C.I.E., C.S.I. (Copyright Edition Leipzig, Tauchnitz 1891). This book was first published in 1879 and went through 60 editions in England and 80 in America. Described by 'T.S.' in the Dictionary of National Biography as "the Buddhist legend presented in the Tennysonian manner", the book is an imaginary translation of the story as told by an imaginary Buddhist votary of Prince Gautama. Arnold was a student of oriental cultures and a considerable linguist, who managed to combine a vast literary output with being leader writer of the Daily Telegraph for 28 years. He supposedly influenced the paper's editorial line on the Eastern question, being very pro-Turk.

<sup>77</sup> W.R.P. 21.1.16. Price papers.

<sup>78</sup> C.P.T. 27.9.16. Price papers.

<sup>79</sup> W.R.P. 21.1.16. Price papers.

heroic" and was clearly uneasy about his own passivity<sup>80</sup>. In a letter to Trevelyan in March 1916 he wondered if he had overreacted to the criticisms of him which had - perhaps over-assiduously - been relayed to him from Gloucestershire by Tuffet in the previous spring. Was there, he wondered "a tender spot in my character that for some unknown reason flinches under the terrible ordeal of persecution" or was it simply that he had become overawed with "the vastness of the forces of nature and the relative impotence of man". Yet "all the fundamental stonework in me says 'go into the world and preach the truth - you know it - and defy the consequences'"<sup>81</sup>. In another letter to Trevelyan the following September he contrasted the tolerant attitude of the Russian courts to conscientious objectors with that taken by the "Shallows" of the British tribunals and acknowledged that this was another reason why he was drawn to Russia<sup>82</sup>. He was clear about one thing. "I have nothing in common with my countrymen and cannot take part in what they are doing... I intend to spend the rest of the war on this front with occasional returns to Russia to keep in touch with the internal situation."<sup>83</sup> A few months later he was talking of remaining in Russia "indefinitely" and of trying to get a permanent job as a correspondent in Petrograd "for the Manchester Guardian or any other respectable paper not in the venomous Northcliffe gang"<sup>84</sup>.

Price was, in fact, already doing work for other papers besides the Manchester Guardian, including two Russian papers, Yuzhni Krai and

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80 A.M.P. 28.3.16. Price papers.

81 C.P.T. 30.3.16. Price papers.

82 C.P.T. 27.9.16. Price papers.

83 C.L.W. 16.1.16. Price papers.

84 A.M.P. 26.5.16. Price papers.



Kavkas<sup>85</sup>. But his main additional work was that which he did for the Economist. As early as June 1915 he had told Tuffet that the Economist appeared to regard him as their permanent representative in Russia<sup>86</sup>. In the two years 1915-16 twenty-four pieces appeared in the Economist which can reasonably be attributed to him. Either they took the form of signed letters to the editor; or they were written from or about a place at which he was known to be at the time of writing; or the words are quite definitely taken from one of his letters, copies of which were sent as a matter of routine to Hirst. By the end of 1916 he was sending material about once every two weeks to the Economist. "It is no small work, I can tell you" he wrote to his aunt, "to read every day some ten or twelve Russian papers and journals and extract all the news for an article."<sup>87</sup> Most of his contributions read like extracts, but in the autumn of 1916 he wrote a major series of five articles: three on Russian trade and trade policy, one on Russia's war finance and a fifth on income tax, high prices and agriculture<sup>88</sup>. These were fairly obviously intended for Hirst; after Hirst's departure from the Economist Price wrote only two more pieces for the journal, both datelined Tiflis January 1917. On the other hand material was attributable to him in the same way as

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<sup>85</sup> Yuzhni Krai (literally Southern Border). The Bibliography of Periodicals of Russia 1901-1916 (Leningrad 1960) lists this as a Kharkov paper dealing in political, economic and literary matters, founded in 1880. Price's friendship with Professor Sobolev (see below F/N 98) probably accounts for his connection with this paper. Kavkas: a political/literary daily paper founded in 1901, published in Tiflis. Again, the connection with Price is obvious, Tiflis being his base for much of 1915 and all of 1916.

<sup>86</sup> C.L.W. 25.6.15. Price papers.

<sup>87</sup> A.M.P. 1.2.17. Price papers.

<sup>88</sup> Economist 16.9.16 'The Trade of the Russian Empire I'. Anon. 23.9.16 'The Trade of the Russian Empire II'. Anon. 7.10.16 Signed letter datelined Kharkov 16.8.16, headed 'The Trade Policy of Russia'. 21.10.16 'Russia's War Finance'. Datelined 'From our Correspondent', Kharkov, 25.8.16. 21.10.16 'Russia: Income Tax, High Prices, Agriculture'. Datelined 'Our Correspondent, Kharkov'.

it had been in the case of the Economist began to appear in Hirst's new journal, Common Sense, the first number of which appeared on 7 October 1916<sup>89</sup>. This contained a piece on the economic situation in Russia from "a correspondent who has been travelling in Russia". Two more articles appeared in Common Sense in 1916, one on money values in Persia<sup>90</sup> and another on famine prices in Russia<sup>91</sup>, and Price continued to contribute to it thereafter in much the same way as he had done to the Economist until all his correspondence was stopped by the censor in 1918.

Price's last four articles for the Manchester Guardian in 1916 also dealt with issues underlying or associated with the war rather than directly with military affairs. One described the evolution of the Armenian nationalist movement and showed how the activities of the Armenian Volunteers from Turkish Armenia had, to some extent, brought

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<sup>89</sup> The Economist, during the period of Hirst's editorship, was still a family concern, owned by the daughters of its first editor and founder, James Wilson. Hirst, who had set out to regain the wider perspectives over public affairs which had marked Bagehot's editorship, took up an attitude to the war which was very different from that of most other British publications at that time. He found himself at odds, before very long, with two of the Trustees of the Economist, "young starred 'patriots'" as he described them in a letter to Scott on 16 August 1916 (John Rylands Library 334/1102). He told Scott that although his "dear old ladies" had implored him to stay he found his position impossible. In a Valedictory in the Economist of 8 July 1916 he wrote: "Since the war began the function of an editor who believes that truth and patriotism ought somehow to be reconciled has been difficult and even hazardous". He identified as his two great fears "the bankrupt condition of several great nations" and the threat posed by censorship to Parliament and the press. On the first page of the first number (7 October 1916) of the journal which he now founded, Common Sense, he struck the keynote of its policy by calling on Parliament and the public "to keep their heads and study the facts" and concluded: "To fight on until the right terms can be secured is a policy which few Englishmen would disallow. To fight on after the right terms can be secured for the sake of... 'a knock-out' can hardly be called a policy at all."

<sup>90</sup> Common Sense 25.10.16.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid 9.12.16.



about the terrible retribution which the Turks were inflicting upon the Armenian populations<sup>92</sup>. His next dealt with the Anglo-Russo-Persian Convention of 23 July 1916 which attempted to ensure that Persia would maintain a position of friendly neutrality towards the Allies<sup>93</sup>. The third concerned the political situation in Russia where, Price noted, the expansion of war industry had increased the power of the industrial and commercial classes to a point at which he thought it would not be surprising "if a great reconstitution of the Government were now to take place" but that the support of the army against the bureaucracy made it unlikely that there would be "a coup d'état such as cut the knot of Russian domestic politics many times in the past"<sup>94</sup>. Printed on 25 November, the article was undated and there is no way of knowing when Price wrote it. It seems likely, however, that he was being quite accurately prophetic, since it was preceded by a note from the editor explaining that it had been written before news arrived of the fall of Stürmer<sup>95</sup>. The last article Price wrote in 1916 was not actually meant for publication at all but as a private briefing for Scott who nonetheless published it. In it Price said that the economic crisis in Russia was now so great,

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<sup>92</sup> Manchester Guardian 16.11.16 No datelined. 'Turk and Armenian: A Chapter of Secret History'. Signed 'From Our Correspondent in the Caucasus'.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid 12.12.16. Datelined 'Our Correspondent in the Caucasus 12.11.16'. 'England, Russia and Persia: A New Situation'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid 25.11.16. No dateline. 'The Political Struggle in Russia'. Signed 'A Correspondent'.

<sup>95</sup> BORIS VLADIMIROVICH STÜRMER (1848-1917). One of the most hated figures in Tsarist political circles, he became a member of the State Council in 1904 and Minister of Internal Affairs in 1907. Through Rasputin's influence he became chairman of the State Council in 1916. Strongly pro-German and opposed to Russia's alliance with the Western powers, he was sacked after a brief spell as Minister of Foreign Affairs in November 1916, and least partly in response to Miliukov's notorious speech in the Duma with its refrain: "Is it stupidity or is it treason?". Arrested by the Provisional Government, he died in prison.

the "steady deterioration in the capacity of the country to distribute its masses of accumulated produce" so marked, that it had become "increasingly clear to all Russians that a serious danger will arise unless the people are taken into the confidence of the Government"<sup>96</sup>. The article was blacked out by the Russian censor in those copies of the Manchester Guardian that got through to Russia, and Price was extremely surprised to find it had been published at all when he read it, as he was later to read other articles he had written, in the British Embassy at Petrograd where uncensored copies were available, presumably brought in the diplomatic bag<sup>97</sup>.

Price appeared to have a natural flair for journalism and for perceiving what was newsworthy and what was not. He was forward-looking and immensely industrious. He was also lucky in his friends. Probably his best insights into the likely course of political developments in Russia came through his personal associations. Quite by chance, in Mongolia in 1910, he had met Professor Mikhail Nikolaevitch Sobolev, who held the chair of Political Economics at the University of Kharkov<sup>98</sup>. The two men corresponded frequently

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<sup>96</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p.449.

<sup>97</sup> Manchester Guardian 6.1.17. Dated Tiflis 5.2.17. 'The Economic Crisis in Russia'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>98</sup> MIKHAIL NIKOLAEVICH SOBOLEV. Born in 1869, he graduated in the law faculty of Moscow University but, to judge by his published work, soon turned to economics. He taught political economy at the Aleksanderskoe Commercial Institute in Moscow from 1892-96 and in 1899 was made Professor of Political Economy and Statistics at the University of Tomsk. In his unpublished autobiography Price wrote that he met Sobolev during his journey to or from Mongolia in 1910/11, but not where or how: it could have been at Tomsk on his way out. In his book Siberia (1912) Price referred to the "privilege of consulting Professor Mikhail Sobolev" and quoted fairly extensively from Sobolev's book Russo-Mongolian Trade. At some point between 1910/11 and 1915 Sobolev obviously got a chair at the University of Kharkov. There is no entry for him in any of the main Soviet Encyclopaedias and no indication of the date of his death has been found. His last two dated works appeared in 1915: History of



between 1911 and 1915. In July 1915 Price stayed with Sobolev on his way to the Caucasus. during the summer of 1916 he stayed with him again for several weeks, when he worked in the University Library, getting among other things material for the Economist articles (see above p. 65) and being taken about the area outside Kharkov by Sobolev or one of his colleagues at the university. Price also had friends in Tiflis, where he made his base in 1915 and 1916, some of whom he had also known for several years. He was intrigued to find, when he first returned there in 1915, that they were all now talking nothing but Socialism and Henry George, one of whose books (Price did not say which) had recently been translated into Georgian. During one of his flying visits in 1916 he wrote to tell Trevelyan how much the letters he had sent from England on the political situation there had been appreciated by his friends in Tiflis, and that he had translated some of them for some of the Russian newspapers, though without divulging the author's name.<sup>99</sup>

In addition to his articles for newspapers and periodicals, Price naturally continued to write letters home during 1916. Some of them amounted to memoranda on the political situation and some were clearly intended to be purely briefing papers. These would almost certainly have been addressed to Trevelyan in the first instance. It is quite clear - because Price kept carbons of some of these - that Trevelyan had them retyped for circulation. A carbon copy of one dated 30 March 1916 was found among the Ponsonby papers. It is of

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the Russian German Trade Agreement and The Principles of Trade Policy in Connection with Protectionism. His earlier books include one on Russian tariff policy in the second half of the nineteenth century (1911), one on the commercial geography of Russia (1900) and one on Siberia (1905).

<sup>99</sup> C.P.T. 20.1.16. Price papers.

particular interest because, being written so early in the year it dealt almost entirely with political events in 1915, during most of which time Price had been on the Caucasus front. He had clearly, therefore, done a great deal of homework when he was back in Tiflis in March 1916. In it he described the rising discontent with the conduct of the war in 1915, the dismissal of the War Minister, the prorogation of the Duma, and the attitudes of the main political parties to the war. He emphasised particularly the formation of the Progressive Bloc but point<sup>ed</sup> out that although the parties which supported it were all liberal in internal affairs they were, "on all foreign questions most Chauvinist of any party in Russia... great believers in war to the last gasp as a means of saving Russia internally." He also called them "modern representatives of the old Slavophile school" and added that "all the thinking men of Russia are in sympathy with these parties". In the same paper he noted that the Russian Social Democrats were as divided about the war as the Socialists of Germany and England, and reported that one of them, whom he knew (but did not identify) had recently made a very courageous anti-war speech in the duma "which was not reported but which I heard about"<sup>100</sup>. He went on to describe the deteriorating economic situation and the war-weariness of the people, and criticised the Progressive Bloc for utilising this discontent not to agitate for peace but to try to bring about merely fiscal reforms. He concluded "the days of the old regime are numbered but "whether the chauvinism of the Progressive Bloc is likely to be better than the reactionary stagnation of the Court Party seems to me doubtful... Meanwhile the

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<sup>100</sup> The five Bolshevist members of the Duma, described by Pares as "men of no particular prominence" were all sent to Siberia in the spring of 1915 for circulating anti-war literature, sent in by Lenin. (Bernard Pares: The Fall of the Russian Monarchy, 1939) p.333.



silent masses suffer and hardly a murmur breaks the sound of the tramp of Siberian peasant youths going off to kill and be killed by Arabian and Turkish shepherds."<sup>101</sup>

His pessimism about the political outlook continued into the summer and autumn. Shortly before he went to Kharkov in August 1916 he wrote to his aunt that the internal situation was everywhere deteriorating, and that he saw "no great opening for political progress as a result of all this... the Russian people are too disorganised to procure any reform by political means and the war is weakening their powers of organisation daily."<sup>102</sup> While staying at Kharkov, Price later recalled that his academic friends had warned him that Russia would not, in their opinion, be able to carry on the war without more supplies from the Western Allies and even if they got them, the transport system might not be able to distribute them<sup>103</sup>. He wrote to Trevelyan that agricultural production in the area around Kharkov had been remarkably effective that summer, but that friends who had been in the central and northern provinces were telling another story. Even so, Price concluded, "I doubt a conflagration." In the same letter he noted how much British prestige had suffered, while he was away in Lazistan, as the result of the treatment of the Irish after the Easter rising. He referred to the "painful impression" created by the execution of Casement and the disillusionment with Britain of Russian intellectuals. It would, he thought, set them "seeking out new paths for Russia's political development, leaving the blind alleys of Western Europe behind."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Bodleian Library. Ponsoby papers.

<sup>102</sup> A.M.P. 5.12.16. Price papers.

<sup>103</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p. 499.

<sup>104</sup> C.P.T. 27.9.16. Price papers.

Then, in the months between September 1916, when he wrote those words, and December 1916, Price clearly became aware of developments which might prove them to be, as a prediction, less pessimistic than they appeared. Shortly before Christmas 1916, in a postcard written to his aunt from the Persian border he wrote: "Most important events are happening in the internal situation of Russia about which I cannot write. As soon as I can I must go to Petrograd. I have delayed hitherto because in the towns of European Russia one is threatened with starvation." The words "no sugar, no meat, often no bread" were heavily blacked out by the Russian censor but remained legible<sup>105</sup>. In his last letter before the revolution, again written to his aunt, and written within weeks of its outbreak, he said: "I should not be surprised if 1917 may not see the dawn of reason in the minds of men, stimulated by that most valuable of all psychological tonics - hunger." <sup>106</sup>

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105 A.M.P. 16.12.16. Price papers.

106 A.M.P. 1.2.17. Price papers.



## Chapter 3. The March Revolution

For the first three months of 1917 Price remained in Tiflis, working on the book that was published in 1918 under the title War and Revolution in Asiatic Russia. He also wrote two long articles for the Economist and one for Common Sense but nothing, apparently, for the Manchester Guardian. The Common Sense article<sup>1</sup> enlarged on the "chauvinism of the progressives" which he had deplored in his letter to his aunt and who, as he put it in his article "hoped to attain command of the ship of state by swimming in the tide of war." This chauvinism, Price wrote, was justified in some minds with a touch of Slavic mysticism which attempted to cast Russia in the pre-destined role of protector of small nationalities. The Economist articles were less overtly political<sup>2</sup>. The first dealt with the decline in food production and the gap between supply and demand in coal and metals caused by the demand for munitions. This in turn accounted for the unrepaired rolling stock and railway lines which were disrupting the distribution of food throughout Russia. The second article dealt with the fall of the rouble on foreign exchange markets and the five-fold increase in paper money since the beginning of the war. Price outlined various remedies which were being proposed by various economists, one of whom was his friend Professor Sobolev.

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<sup>1</sup> Common Sense 17.3.17. Dated Tiflis 4.1.17. 'The Russian Progressists and Trade Policy'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>2</sup> Economist 31.3.17. Dated Tiflis 15.1.17. 'Russia, Scarcity and Labour, the Sugar Crop, Iron and Steel, Coal, Imports of Raw Materials'; and 7.4.17, dated Tiflis 15.1.17. Untitled. Both unsigned.

These articles said nothing new and gave little away, but on 3 February, within days of despatching them to London, he wrote to his aunt:

"..the air is full of weird and uncanny rumours..before the year is over I expect something is pretty sure to take place more or less exciting."<sup>3</sup>

To Tuffet he said: "discontent is everywhere stalking the country, outspoken and frank."<sup>4</sup> In an undated memorandum to Charles Trevelyan about this period which appeared as an article in the July U.D.C.<sup>5</sup> he said: "...by Christmas people began to speak openly about revolution and in the Caucasus, where I was, the Socialist and revolutionary societies began to organise for a general strike. The Government, on the other hand, commenced exiling and arresting on a larger scale than hitherto. Several friends of mine during January and February (1917) disappeared suddenly and I found they had been arrested by 'administrative order'." Nonetheless in the only surviving personal response to the March revolution - a postcard to his aunt<sup>6</sup> - he wrote "I knew this was coming sooner or later but did not think it would come so quickly". Three years later he began his book My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution<sup>7</sup> with the words: "The March Revolution came like a thief in the night."

In Tiflis there had been rumours of strikes on the railway between Tiflis and Batum early in March 1917 and even of disorders in Petrograd, but nothing to prepare people for the scale of the impending changes. News of the Tsar's abdication reached Tiflis on

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<sup>3</sup> A.M.P. 1.2.17. Price papers.

<sup>4</sup> C.L.W. 1.2.17. Price papers.

<sup>5</sup> Price papers.

<sup>6</sup> A.M.P. 13.3.17. Price papers.

<sup>7</sup> M. Philips Price: My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution (1921).



Friday 16 March 1917 and Price, who could obviously only describe what he saw, sent off a short report (probably cabled, since it was less than 100 words long) to the Manchester Guardian. It was printed on 20 March under the heading Enthusiasm in Asiatic Russia, in the column adjoining Lloyd George's statement in the House of Commons which announced that a Provisional government had been formed in Russia with the express intention of carrying on the war with increased vigour. In the meantime there took place one of the more bizarre episodes in Price's journalistic life. On Sunday 18 March there was a great gathering of representatives of all the peoples of the Caucasus just outside Tiflis, which Price attended. When he returned to his lodgings he found himself summoned to see the Grand Nicholas, the Tsar's uncle, formerly Viceroy of Caucasus and newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the entire Russian army. The account of this virtually exclusive interview (three Russian journalists were also present) which he sent to the Manchester Guardian apparently appeared in one edition of the paper and disappeared from all subsequent editions. To the end of his life Price remained positive that he had seen his account in print in the News Room of the Anglo-Russian Commission in Petrograd a few weeks later, but he never managed to find another copy. Nor is it in any of the bound or microfilm editions of the Manchester Guardian which are available. (The suppression of the story is almost certainly the first instance in which one of Price's articles was affected by a 'D' notice and would have been directly attributable to British intrigues around the figure of the Grand Duke (See Appendix I).) Fortunately Price wrote a second account of the interview only a few weeks later which he included in his first memorandum on the revolution for

Charles Trevelyan, and this appeared in the July edition of U.D.C.

It began by describing the effect of the abdication in Tiflis:

"As soon as the news came through that Petrograd was in the hands of the mob, instantly the working classes and students in Tiflis arrested the police, while the middle class and intellectual elements formed a committee of public safety...Next day feeling became more tense and fear was expressed in Tiflis that the Grand Duke Nicholas was trying to start a counter revolution."

On the afternoon of 18 March Price "received a letter from the military censor saying briefly that the Grand Duke Nicholas would receive me at 3 o'clock for the purpose of giving me a communication for the Manchester Guardian." Price went on:

"I was received by Prince Orlov, the Grand Duke's secretary, who was looking very worried, and he led me into the large hall, where I saw the Grand Duke Nicholas walking up and down with his head down. He look pale and thin, his hands were shaking, and when he began to speak his voice was so faint that I could scarcely hear what he was saying. He had evidently been living through a great deal those previous three days. He then said to me in Russian: 'I have asked you to come to make you the following statement' and then he read from a bit of paper what I took down and telegraphed off that evening to the Manchester Guardian. He said that he considered it necessary to recognise the new order of things in Russia as the sole salvation of the country, and that as Commander-in-Chief of the Army he would allow no reaction of any kind, for the new state must be founded on a sure basis. I then thanked him for his communication, congratulated him on his appointment, and left. It was thus clear that whatever his intentions may have been on the Friday and Saturday, he had decided by Sunday that the revolution must be recognised as successful. Hence, no doubt, the reason why he called me to make that statement."

Price's next despatches to the Manchester Guardian were sent off on 19 and 20 March but not printed until 27 March.<sup>8</sup> They were both very brief accounts of reaction in the Caucasus to the news of the formation of the Provisional government. Manchester Guardian readers

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<sup>8</sup> Manchester Guardian. 27.3.17. Datelined Tiflis 19.3.17. 'The Asiatic Provinces'. Signed 'From Our Correspondent'.



had to wait for another month before getting a full description of the great popular gathering which took place on the morning of the day Price was sent for by the Grand Duke. <sup>9</sup>

Immediately after writing up his interview with the Grand Duke Price began, as he put it in a letter to his aunt on 13 March 1917 "running about the Caucasus... attending revolutionary meetings." On his way to Moscow at the end of the month he wrote two articles about his experiences, datelined 31 March, Rostov-on-Don. In one of these he described as a heartening by-product of the revolution the abatement of separatist feeling in both Armenia and Georgia: he was also impressed by the energies released and the inventiveness shown by local populations in designing and electing their own forms of representative assembly. In the other he described in some detail how the revolution had taken place in Kars, where a secret committee of the army had taken over the fortress while the town had elected its own governing body. The original of this article has disappeared but it was printed, probably in full in the Manchester Guardian on 8 May 1917 <sup>10</sup>. In an unpublished article written on the same day Price described how his train had passed through Cossack territories. He noted how the Cossacks, too, had set up revolutionary committees: "We have not forgotten the mistakes we made in 1905". Wherever the train stopped Price saw platforms crowded with soldiers hoping for a lift ("They seemed to be

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<sup>9</sup> Manchester Guardian 27.4.17. Datelined Tiflis 19.3.17. 'How the Revolution Came to the Caucasus'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 8.5.17. Datelined Rostov-on-Don 31.3.17. 'The Revolution in Asiatic Russia'. Signed M. Philips Price. The title of the article was taken from the other which Price wrote on the same day but of which only one paragraph was used, incorporated into the text of the one that was printed. The original in its complete form is with the Price papers.

travelling in all directions"). In each station he saw "the office of the Alliance of Soldiers' Deputies, a sort of military trades union which like a mushroom has suddenly sprung up in the night in response to that great Russian tendency for communal councils", and he observed that "internal reconstruction, not foreign war, was the topic of the day."

Price arrived in Moscow in the early hours of the morning, some time in the first week of April 1917. The first thing he noticed was the absence of police from the streets. A few hours later he was equally struck by the number of street meetings and demonstrations which were taking place. "A great event was still being celebrated and no one seemed to be able to settle down."<sup>11</sup> In his first article from Moscow for the Manchester Guardian (also unpublished) he wrote that his "first idea was to get in touch with the opinion among the Moscow merchants and to find out how they were reacting towards the revolution." Given that Price had not set foot in Moscow for nearly two years and can have had few contacts as yet, this was not as strange an impulse as might at first appear, and he therefore called on the head of one of the great textile manufacturing houses whom he had known "for some years": presumably since his first visit to Russia in 1908. The results of the interview, as he wrote them up, were curious. The head of the family, Price recorded, welcomed the revolution but thought that Russia was in great danger: from "Jesuits, Germans and Jews". The sons had "dropped Jesuits out of the trio of bugbears" and gave the revolution a qualified welcome on the basis that it was in any case inevitable. Both generations

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<sup>11</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller', p. 510.



wanted a republic, and both agreed that the breakdown of transport was the most serious of the crises faced by the new government.

Price ended this article by warning, as early as the first week of April 1917, of the danger from "partisans of the late government" who were already "spread about all over the country." <sup>12</sup>

Shortly after his interview with the merchants Price must have succeeded in contacting the Social Democrats in Moscow because in a letter to Trevelyan written on 11 April he referred to the fact that he had already wired to him asking for Socialist literature from England, for which, the Social Democrats had told him, they were "starved". On the same day as he wrote the letter, Price also wrote the long memorandum to Trevelyan (noted above) which was to appear as a front page article in the July edition of the U.D.C. (and see below p.82). At some point around this time Price made a quick visit to Petrograd, from where he sent a short message which appeared in the Manchester Guardian on 7 April. It was perhaps symbolic, for a first impression, of the new order: soldiers, he reported, no longer saluted their officers in the streets, as they still did in Moscow. A longer piece from Petrograd, printed on 11 April, reported that the

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<sup>12</sup> The unpublished article 'Moscow and the Revolution', subtitled 'Attitude of the Commercial Classes' was datelined Moscow 6.4.17. For further reading on the Moscow merchants, whose role in pre-revolutionary politics was rather more significant than might be deduced from the interview Price described in his article, see Ruth Amende Roosa and James D. White: 'Russian Industrialists and State Socialism 1906-1917' Soviet Studies Vol. 22 (1972) pp. 395-408 and Vol. 24 (1973) pp. 414-425; see also Lewis H. Siegelbaum: 'Moscow Industrialists and the War Industries Committees during World War I', Russian History Vol. 6 (1978) pp. 64-83. For a full account of this phenomenon, see Ruth Amende Roosa's unpublished PhD. thesis (Columbia 1967): 'The Association of Industry and Trade 1906-1914: An Examination of the Economic Views of Organized Industrialists in Pre-Revolutionary Russia'.

views of the Foreign Minister, Miliukov had been in effect disowned by the Provisional government.

Learning late on the night of 22 April that Miliukov had been visiting Moscow and was already in his railway carriage, about to return to Petrograd, Price rushed to the station and was granted an interview. When Price asked him how the question of Constantinople was affected by the Provisional government's recent declaration in favour of the principle of free trade through the Straits, Miliukov answered that free trade in itself was acceptable, but that Russia would have to "insist" on the right to close the Straits to foreign warships, "and that is not possible unless she possesses the Straits and fortifies them". Price's account of this interview appeared in London on 26 April<sup>13</sup> and was telegraphed back to Russia the next day. This time Miliukov's views were formally repudiated by the Petrograd Soviet. Price felt that the interview had not a little to do with Miliukov's subsequent resignation which he reported on 21 May<sup>14</sup>. "I never thought" he wrote later "that when I went into the railway carriage late that night in Moscow I should be the cause of the fall of the Russian Foreign Minister." He added, more modestly, "I can see ... that he would have gone sooner or later, but ... I must have hastened the process."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Manchester Guardian 26.4.17. Dated 'Moscow Sunday'. 'Russian Control of the Straits'. Signed 'From Our Correspondent'.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid 21.5.17. Dated Petrograd, Saturday. 'Free Russia's Peace Formula'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>15</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' pp. 514-515. Although the Provisional Government had issued a statement disavowing annexationist war aims as early as 27 March 1917, Miliukov had continued to go his own way and, just before giving his interview to Price had, on 18 April, sent a Note to the Allied Governments implying that there would be no changes in the network of secret treaty undertakings between the Allies. The interview with Price appears to have taken place on 22 April when street demonstrations



Three more short pieces by Price appeared, one on 28 April from Moscow and two, on 30 April and 3 May, from Petrograd. Again he dwelt on the differences in atmosphere between Moscow and Petrograd. Speakers at street meetings in Moscow were calling for peace with Germany, but not a separate peace. In Petrograd the soldiers were not asking for peace at all. Moreover they all insisted "that the revolution was made by the army". Indeed, in Petrograd "the soldiers are growling against Lenin, the refugee whose return was facilitated by the German Government". This was the first reference Price had made to Lenin.

Until the spring of 1917 Price was not often reporting "news". Nearly all his despatches from the Caucasus had been sent by post. Now he began to use the telegraph more often. But for a variety of reasons the dating of his messages became increasingly imprecise. Sometimes he datelined them merely by the day of the week, and if they were held up by the Censor they might be several weeks old before they were printed without anybody being aware of it. The change to the new style dating may have caused confusion, although Price himself always used the new style in his letters and this helps to identify where he was at a given moment if he happened to write a letter. Another problem was that the titles under which he sent articles or despatches were subject to editorial changes in Britain.

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against Miliukov were already taking place in Petrograd, and the Provisional Government had issued another statement affirming its solidarity with the Soviet on the subject of war aims. When, shortly afterwards, the Soviet agreed to enter the first Coalition Government, Miliukov resigned. The incident is mentioned by William G. Rosenberg: Liberals in the Russian Revolution (Princeton 1974) pp. 94-133 'The April Crisis', in F/N 28 p. 102. See also Rex Wade: The Russian Search for Peace, February-October 1917, (Stamford, 1969) Ch. 2.

Yet another was the editorial amalgamation of parts of several telegrams into one article, sometimes in a different order from that in which they were sent. The only absolute certainty is the date on which they appeared in the Manchester Guardian. However if they are looked at only in order in which they appeared, they give an inadequate picture of the way in which Price's mind was working. It is only if they are analysed in terms of their subject that it is possible to see his growing awareness of the national and international dimensions of what he was reporting.

(i) Political developments

Price had seen very little of Russia outside the Caucasus for nearly two years. His memorandum on the situation, written for Trevelyan in Moscow on 11 April and printed in U.D.C. in July, when he had been less than two weeks in European Russia, must have been based as much on his reading of newspapers and conversations with Georgian socialists and people met on trains, as anything he had yet seen for himself. From this memorandum it is obvious that he was already clear in his own mind that it had been "the urban proletariat and the peasant that have made the revolution" (whatever the army may have thought). The so-called progressives had, he thought, been "in some ways more reactionary and dangerous to peace than the old corrupt cliques round the Emperor." He thought it no wonder that the Provisional government formed by "this capitalist-professorial group" were distrusted by the Petrograd Soviet. He now realised that the land-hungry peasants had gone to war determined to settle accounts with their landlords when they got home. The army had become "a real popular peasant institution, as much interested in using its power



for the settlement of the internal problems of Russia as in prosecuting the war with Germany". If his account appears to be full of inconsistencies, so, surely, was the situation he was describing. The Cossacks had come to see, he reported, that their interests were identical with those of the peasants and industrial workers. The elected body of these three elements, the Petrograd Soviet, "is at the moment the real ruler of Russia". After describing how the revolution had come to the Caucasus and recounting his interview with the Grand Nicholas (quoted above) Price went on to identify what had clearly impressed him most about the Petrograd Soviet's programme: the formula of peace without annexations or indemnities. This he described as "the most splendid thing for the civilisation of the world. They are ready to prosecute the war energetically but only, as they tell me, to defend their new-won freedom, and as soon as they can come to an arrangement with the German Socialists to upset the ruling class in Germany and establish an international settlement in Eastern Europe and Western Asia they will force peace." The Allies would, Price wrote, have to reconsider the situation; the effect of "this wonderful revolution" was bound to influence "the working class proletariat even of reactionary England". Price concluded the long memorandum by pointing out that the army, "being a peasant army, is intensely interested in the land". But Russia had been "seething with social and political discontent" and anybody except the Times correspondent, said Price, could have told the British public long ago that Russia could not stand the strain of a great war for long.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> U.D.C. July 1917.

Towards the end of April Price secured an interview with the Minister of Agriculture in the Provisional government, Shingarev 17, and upon the interview he based an article on the food situation and the land question. After outlining Shingarev's account of the measures by which he proposed to avert famine, Price went on to report that after the interview he had gone to a number of soldiers' meetings on the land question in the environs of Moscow. He concluded that the capitalist middle classes and the urban proletariat were now both bidding for the support of the peasants. "The latter offer them the Imperial and private owners' land for nothing, but under the influence of Marxist Socialism wish to concentrate all land ownership in the State, making the peasants perpetual tenants." The former had a more moderate plan for creating a land reserve to be handed over to rural communes or Zemstvos and let out at fair rents. Price did not offer an opinion as to which formula was the most likely to appeal to the peasant soldiers.<sup>18</sup>

In June Price wrote a long article for the Manchester Guardian in which for the first time he attempted to analyse the elements of the situation in Russia for a wider public than he could have hoped to reach in his April memorandum to Trevelyan. It concluded with a passage on the recognition by the Provisional government of greater or lesser degrees of autonomy in Finland, Poland, the Ukraine, the

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<sup>17</sup> ANDREI IVANOVICH SHINGAREV 1869-1918. A Kadet member of the Second, Third and Fourth Dumas, Shingarev was the author of the Kadet programme for agricultural reform and became Minister of Agriculture in the first Provisional Government and Minister of Finance in the second. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly, arrested on charges of anti-Soviet activity, and murdered in prison on 20 January 1918.

<sup>18</sup> Manchester Guardian 1.6.17. Dated Moscow 23.4.17. 'Free Russia's Internal Problems'. Signed M. Philips Price.



Caucasus, Russian Turkestan and Siberia, but the article was misleadingly entitled Russia and the Rights of Nationalities. It was not printed until 4 August, by which time there was little in it of news value. Price began by identifying and describing the main protagonists before and after the revolution, much as he had done in his April memorandum. But by June he was able to bring the picture up to date. The Provisional government had used Miliukov's 'war to victory' policy as an excuse for postponing land redistribution. The Soviet's 'peace without annexations' policy should be seen in this context as a means by which the international proletariat could aspire to take government out of the hands of capitalist war-making classes. The Maximalists and Minimalists, as the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were still commonly known were agreed on this objective and differed only on questions of tactics and timing. The right of self-determination had been added to the peace formula because it had been recognised as "a factor to be reckoned with in world politics".

The distribution of Price's articles in the Manchester Guardian throughout the spring and summer of 1917 became increasingly erratic and requires explanation. Apart from brief news items in March and April, only eleven articles by Price, written between March and September were printed, and in two of them he was virtually acting as a messenger boy. To some extent this was probably due to the fact that for part of the period in question he was not the only correspondent in Russia working for the Manchester Guardian. Price himself later attributed the presence in Russia of the other

correspondents, Michael Farbman<sup>19</sup> and David Soskice<sup>20</sup>, to Scott's lack of confidence in his objectivity. He thought that Soskice, at least, had been sent to rectify his supposed partiality for the Bolsheviks. This was, of course, hindsight, for Price as yet had exhibited no particular partiality for the Bolsheviks. What actually

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<sup>19</sup> MICHAEL FARBMAN, born in Russia in 1880, had been a publisher and author of a history of Italian Renaissance architecture before coming to England as the correspondent of one of the Petrograd newspapers. His political orientation before 1917 must be deduced from the fact that he seized upon the March Revolution as a pretext to offer his services to Scott. He sent back a number of distinguished despatches to the Manchester Guardian in the spring of 1918 before returning to England in May, this time as correspondent in England for Novaya Zhizn. He was also a frequent and well-informed contributor to both The Nation and the Herald on Russian affairs for the rest of the war. He returned to Russia for the Manchester Guardian in 1920 and 1921. He also founded the Europa Year Book series in 1926, which continues to this day, being an annual survey of European politics, art and literature. Farbman wrote several books on Russia in the early 1920s, including Bolshevism in Retreat (1923) and After Lenin. The New Phase in Russia (1924). The last of his books of which there is any record was The Five Year Plan, published in New York in 1931, which suggests that he may have moved to America. The National Union of Journalists have no information about him.

<sup>20</sup> DAVID VLADIMIROVICH SOSKICE (born Soskis), 1866-1941. A Ukranian Jew, he became a Socialist Revolutionary while still a schoolboy, and graduated in law at Odessa in 1889 despite police harrassment through his student days. He then spent three years in various prisons before leaving Russia in 1893. He lived briefly in Switzerland and settled in England in 1898. He joined the foreign organisation of the S.R.s in London in 1901 and soon became active with the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom; he also joined in the work of the British Parliamentary Russia Committee. His journalistic career was helped by his friendship with Brailsford, and he began to write on Russian affairs for the Daily News and on English affairs for Nasha Zhizn and Pravda. After 1905 he returned to Russia as correspondent for the British Tribune (1905-1908); he then represented the Daily Chronicle (1913 and 1915) and the Manchester Guardian (1917). While in Russia in 1917 he became Kerensky's Secretary and after Kerensky's flight Soskice continued to be his ardent advocate, a strong opponent of the Bolsheviks and proponent of intervention. Nonetheless by 1920 he recognised that "the hour for overthrowing Bolshevism by force... had passed. Today the only choice that remains is to join a battle of ideas". David Soskice's papers are deposited with the Stow Hill papers at the House of Lords. See especially Boxes DS 1 (5) and (6) and DS 6 (24). See also Barry Hollingsworth: 'David Soskice in Russia in 1917' European Studies Review Vol. 6 (1976) pp. 73-98 and 'The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom: English Liberals and Russian Socialists, 1890-1917' Oxford Slavonic Papers, New Series, 1970, pp. 45-64, and 'The British Memorial to the Russian Duma 1906', Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 53 (1975) pp. 539-557.



happened, and what Price apparently never knew, was that both Farbman and Soskice had written to Scott quite independently, and asked him to facilitate visits to Russia which each desired to make for his own reasons, by appointing them Special Correspondents. Scott, with only one man covering both a continent and a revolution, not surprisingly agreed to do so <sup>21</sup>. In his letter to Farbman of 6 April 1917 Scott specifically asked him, while in Petrograd, to act "in close co-operation with our correspondent Mr. Philips Price and merely to supplement what he is sending us." <sup>22</sup> Seven weeks later in his letter appointing Soskice, Scott made no such stipulation, although his London editor, James Bone, asked him to get in touch with Price on arrival. Price left no record of meeting Farbman, but Farbman was a guest at his wedding in Berlin two years later and obviously they had become friends. Price frequently referred to Soskice however, in

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<sup>21</sup> Although Price sent in a good deal of material in the spring of 1917, he was not, from Scott's point of view, a reliable source of information. As his status as the Manchester Guardian's representative in Russia was never clearly defined for long at a time, Price appears to have felt free to decide where he should go and what he should write about. On the one occasion before the March Revolution that he sent a despatch by telegram (the fall of Erzerum) he had been reproved for extravagance. It seems a little unfair, therefore, that having appointed Soskice as a telegraphic correspondent both Scott, W.P. Crozier, the News Editor, and James Bone, the London Editor, saw fit to appeal to Soskice for news because Price sent only written despatches. James Bone referred to Price in a letter of 29 May as "our correspondent in the Caucasus" who was now "sending messages from Petrograd" in a way which made them sound like greetings telegrams. On 6 August Crozier cabled to Soskice: "Please keep us informed by telegraph of all important developments and our views of policy Price only sending letters". Later on the tone of Scott's cables to Soskice became quite frantic: 25 September: "Kindly continue to act as long as you can where is Price"; 5 October: "Can you give us Price's address wire reply"; 12 October: "Can you give us Price's address or any kind of information about him". (Stow Hill papers, House of Lords, DS 1 Box 4). It seems incredible that Price had not told Scott that he was intending to go on his projected journey <sup>down the Volga</sup>, but not entirely out of character.

<sup>22</sup> The John Rylands University Library, Manchester. Scott papers A/F3/1 and A/575/2.

such careful terms that it is difficult to avoid the impression that his feelings had been hurt by the appointment. They agreed to divide the work between them, Soskice taking "the activities of Government and the official circles" and Price confining himself, as he put it, to the activities of the Soviet and events in the provinces<sup>23</sup>.

Soskice's first article appeared in the Manchester Guardian on 27 June and between then and the November revolution a total of 17 pieces by him were printed.<sup>24</sup>

The arrangement was not without its compensations for Price, and the first result of this division of labour can be seen in Price's coverage of the Kronstadt Commune and Finnish politics. Price was interested by rumours of anarchy in the Baltic Fleet and guessing rightly that the Fleet was likely to play a significant role in the development of the revolution, visited the naval bases at Kronstadt in mid-June and Helsingfors (Helsinki) in early July. A brief account of the first visit appeared in the Manchester Guardian on 18 June, in which he reported "everything in good order and the rumours of serious disorder unfounded". He also noted that the sailors were taking the same line as the soldiers he had talked to: they would fight to defend the revolution but they would not take the offensive. A very much longer account of the Kronstadt Commune appeared on 17 July and was reprinted in the New York Tribune on 7 August. In this Price went to some pains to play down the allegations of the extremism of the sailors which were being widely circulated in the

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<sup>23</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' pp. 535-553.

<sup>24</sup> The articles signed by Soskice during this period were mainly concerned with the July offensive, the July Days, Finland (where, despite their division of labour agreement, Soskice also went at this time), the Moscow Conference, Stockholm, Kerensky and Kornilov.



West. His visit to Finland resulted in an equally soothing report on the Council of Sailors of the Baltic Fleet at Helsingfors<sup>25</sup>, and two much longer articles on the political situation in Finland. In the first<sup>26</sup> he reported an interview with the Finnish Prime Minister, M. Tokoi<sup>27</sup> who represented himself as having been reassured by the emergence of the Soviet as the real power in Russia. In the second article<sup>28</sup> Price described the situation in more detail. The Finns were resenting the amount of money which they were being asked to contribute to the Provisional government's exchequer, and distrusted it for not having granted full and immediate autonomy to Finland, though they were willing to wait for the Peace Conference

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<sup>25</sup> Manchester Guardian 10.7.17. Dated Helsingfors Saturday. 'A Baltic Council'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 23.7.17. Dated Petrograd Saturday. 'Autonomous Finland'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>27</sup> OLOF TOKOI (1873-1963), the first Social Democrat in the world to become prime minister by the parliamentary process. He was first elected to the Finnish Diet in 1908, became Speaker in 1913 and in 1916 head of a coalition government based on a popular though not a parliamentary majority. An ardent advocate of Finnish Independence, his government refused a loan to the Provisional Government in July 1917 on the grounds that it might be used in an Imperialist war. Soon afterwards Kerensky dissolved the Diet and in the new elections the Social Democrats lost their popular majority. In December 1917 the new Finnish government declared its independence from Russia. Tokoi continued to use his influence to encourage his right-wing successor (Svinhufvud) to secure recognition for Finnish independence from the Bolsheviks. He became Minister of Food in the first Finnish Revolutionary government in January 1918 but was driven into exile with the victory of the Finnish Whites under Mannerheim in the ensuing civil war. He died in exile in America. The major recent work in English on Finnish history of this period is Anthony F. Upton, The Finnish Revolution 1917-1918 (Minnesota 1980). David Kirby has contributed a series of illuminating articles: 'Stockholm-Petrograd-Berlin. International Social Democracy and Finnish Independence 1917' (Slavonic and East European Review 54 (1974) pp.63-84; and 'The Finnish Social Democratic Party and the Bolsheviks', Journal of Contemporary History, (i) Vol. 7 (1972) pp. 181-198; (ii) Vol. 11 (1976) pp. 99-113. Kirby is also the author of Finland in the Twentieth Century (1979) and Finland and Russia, 1808-1920: From Autonomy to Independence. A Selection of Documents (1975). Olof Tokoi's autobiography for this period, Sisu (New York, 1957), contains useful details.

<sup>28</sup> Manchester Guardian 31.8.17. Dated Helsingfors July. 'Finland and the Russian Revolution'. Signed M. Philips Price.

eventually to confirm their international status. Price also reported that some of the Russian sailors on the council of the Baltic Fleet were disappointed in the lukewarm attitude of their Finnish comrades. He noted "the immense psychological gulf which separates the warm-hearted Russian revolutionary from the cold, unimaginative Finn. I felt that the wave of the Russia Revolution in its north westward passage had struck a rock and was surging round it without creating any visible impression."

What Price learned in his many conversations with sailors and soldiers in the course of the spring of 1917 proved relevant when, during the early summer he was approached, as were many other British correspondents in Petrograd, by an official from the Anglo-Russian Commission, a propaganda bureau run in close touch with the British Embassy.<sup>29</sup> Price was asked to write articles encouraging the Russians to renew their offensive against the Central Powers. He declined to do so on the grounds that everything he had been hearing had convinced him that the armed forces would simply refuse to wage an offensive war unless the Allies accepted the peace formula of no annexations and no indemnities, which was by now widely supported,

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<sup>29</sup> The senior staff of the Anglo-Russian Commission included the novelist Hugh Walpole and Harold Williams, correspondent in Russia of the Daily Chronicle. The Commission, or Bureau as it was also known, produced 1,000 broadsheets a day for circulation to soldiers and workers and ran a special cable service for the Russian press. It also used speakers and films to make pro-Entente propaganda. Its reading room contained copies of every British newspaper and periodical. Despite the fact that Cecil thought very little of propaganda, the staff of the Bureau was increased shortly before the November Revolution. (INF 4/1B). Arthur Ransome gave his own version of the Bureau in The Autobiography of Arthur Ransome (Ed. Rupert Hart Davis, 1976) pp. 189-190 and 194.



and also repudiated the secret treaties made by the Tsarist government<sup>30</sup>.

For the rest of the summer of 1917 with few exception Price did not attempt to keep the Manchester Guardian supplied with day to day news. Instead he wrote long descriptive articles about major developments. Thus he attended the first All-Russian Council of Peasants Deputies in May and sent a long account of it which did not appear in print until 7 August, with no editorial note and the words "last week I attended the Conference" still embedded in the text<sup>31</sup>. The article described the origins of the Peasants Congress movement and gave a graphic account of the proceedings. Price pointed out that the dominant political influence among the peasants was still that of the Social Revolutionary party. Lenin's thesis that there was an identity of interest between the urban and rural proletariats was firmly rejected by the conference. It was on this occasion that Price first saw and heard Lenin, whom he described as "the famous Marxist Maximalist" who "held his audience well drawing frequent applause from them, but as soon as he had finished from one end of the hall to the other speakers got up and began to pull his arguments to pieces".

The next major conference to take place was the First All-Russian Congress of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies, which Price attended at the beginning of June when he returned briefly to Petrograd between his visits to Kronstadt and Helsingfors. By this time Soskice must

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<sup>30</sup> M. Philips Price. My Three Revolutions (1969) pp. 59-60.

<sup>31</sup> Manchester Guardian 7.8.17. Datelined 'From Our Petrograd Correspondent'. 'A Peasant Parliament'. Signed M. Philips Price.

have been established in Petrograd and Price may have thought that according to their agreement Soskice would cover this conference for the Manchester Guardian. In the event the only accounts of the Congress to appear in that paper were contained in a handful of agency messages. For whatever reason, Price's account of the Congress was not sent to the Manchester Guardian but to Common Sense, where it appeared in six columns on 4 August, datelined June 26. The account was described on the front page as "wonderfully moving" and used as a peg on which to hang a leading article presumably by Hirst, on the danger of famine occurring in Russia. Price's description of the Congress is by far the most detailed that he ever wrote about it, and may well be one of the fullest to have been published in English anywhere. He quoted extensively from it himself in his book My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution (pp. 42-48). The piece contained many verbatim reports of key passages from the main speeches and conveys a strong sense both of the previous history of the Russian Left and of the historic nature of the occasion. In a memorable section Price dealt with an epic encounter between Lenin and Kerensky, when Lenin taunted Kerensky with the ineffectiveness of the Provisional government and offered to take power himself. After rebutting Lenin's arguments Kerensky concluded with the words (in Price's account):

"'Out of the fiery chaos that you wish to make will rise, like a Phoenix, a dictator.' He paused and walked slowly across the platform towards the corner where the group surrounding Lenin sat. Not a sound was heard in the great hall and we waited spellbound for the next sentence. 'I will not be the dictator that you are trying to make'; and so saying he turned his back scornfully upon Lenin."

Price wrote one more detailed account of a conference during this summer of conferences. This was an account of the first



democratically elected Ecclesiastic Council of the Orthodox Church, which had met in the last week of August 1917, and to which delegates had been chosen from every parish in Russia by adult suffrage. Price observed with interest and described the emergence of a predictable split between the progressive bloc of parish priests and laymen, and the old Church hierarchy. He concluded that the problems of disendowment and compensation for Church lands confiscated by the peasants would depend upon the church "re-establishing that moral prestige which it has lost owing to its contact with the Tsar's government". By the time this article appeared - 27 October - the subject must have seemed of rather academic interest.

Before dealing with the series of articles which Price next wrote, all of which were about the economic situation in Russia, mention may be made of two occasions when he was used to convey messages.

Towards the end of August he was asked by Tseretelli, then still President of the Petrograd Soviet, to send a telegram to Trevelyan in London welcoming "the action of British comrades, led by Henderson, in their struggle for Stockholm" and denying that there was any disagreement between the Soviet and the Provisional government about the desirability of holding a conference of all the European Socialist parties<sup>32</sup>. This was printed in the Manchester Guardian

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<sup>32</sup> In May 1917 two peace initiatives more or less coincided. One came from the 'northern neutrals' who wanted a conference at Stockholm of the socialist parties of all the belligerents to attempt to formulate a common peace policy. The other came from the Petrograd Soviet, which wanted a discussion of its own formula: no annexations or indemnities and the right of national self-determination, which had been adopted by the second Provisional Government as the price of the Soviet's support for a summer offensive. The British Labour Party wanted to send its own delegation to Russia to discuss these proposals but Lloyd George was first off the mark and despatched Arthur Henderson, then a member of the War Cabinet, to Russia to assess the situation. Judging from the

on 25 August and in U.D.C. in September, by which time the issue of Stockholm was no longer news. A few days later, when observing the

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views he was expressing to the French Socialist Albert Thomas at that time, Lloyd George was personally inclining to support the idea of the conference. Henderson returned in July convinced that the conference would take place and that abstention from it by the Entente socialists would be a grave mistake. Having persuaded his colleagues on the Labour Party Executive to convene a special conference of the party for 10 August, Henderson went to Paris with two other M.P.s, MacDonald and Wardle, to formulate a common front with the French majority socialists: they would participate if the conference was consultative but not mandatory. On his return to London Henderson was first summoned to a meeting of the War Cabinet and then kept waiting outside while his colleagues discussed his actions and their attitude. When finally admitted he challenged them in vain to demand his resignation. The Labour party conference was duly held on 10 August and voted 3-1 in favour of sending a delegation to Stockholm. After an interview the same evening with the Prime Minister Henderson resigned from the Cabinet, which had already, in any case, decided to refuse passports to any British delegation for the purpose of attending a conference at Stockholm.

Much was subsequently made by Lloyd George of Henderson's alleged failure to tell the Labour Party of a telegram from the Provisional Government (sent at the prompting of the Russian Charge d'Affaires in London, Nabokov) expressing its own lack of interest in Stockholm. Henderson's biographer believed that there were two telegrams, one of which Henderson had already seen and referred to in his speech, and another, spurious, one, which he did not see. It would appear that the telegram which Price forwarded from Tseretelli to Trevelyan may have been intended to repair the damage caused by the reported rift between the Soviet and the Provisional Government. As eventually printed in the Manchester Guardian it was undated and there is no way of knowing when it was sent. It is, however, unlikely that Tseretelli would have bothered to send it when the issue was already dead and buried, and it is reasonable to presume that the telegram was deliberately held up by the Press Bureau until it had become irrelevant.

A good short account of the Stockholm Conference which did not take place is given in British Labour and the Russian Revolution by Stephen Richards Graubard, (Harvard 1956) pp. 22-35. Mary Agnes Hamilton dealt with the subject fully in her biography Arthur Henderson, (1938) pp. 12-162. Lloyd George's version is given in his War Memoirs, Vol. IV Chapter 58, pp. 1881-1924. A full dress debate on the subject took place in the House of Commons on 13 August 1917 and can be found in Hansard. David Kirby, in an article in the Historical Journal 25 (1982) Vol.3 pp. 709-716, 'International Socialism and the Question of Peace in the Stockholm Conference of 1917', gives an account of the divisions within the European Socialist parties which would, in all probability, have rendered any conference between them futile at that time. See also Julius Braunthal History of the International, Vol. II 1914-1943 pp. 65-95.



Moscow Conference<sup>33</sup>, presumably without the intention of writing about it for this was certainly in Soskice's field, Price was handed by Soskice a message from Kerensky. Soskice was by then also acting as Kerensky's Secretary, and may have had reservations about asking the paper to print it himself. At all events, Price passed it on and it was printed on 1 September. Kerensky wanted it to be known that the purpose of the Conference was to enable the Provisional government "to get acquainted with the opinions and needs of the country, and by letting the assembled representatives of all classes, ranks and races know the truth about the crisis through which Russia is passing, to bring before the whole nation the necessity of union for the defence and its liberties. We are able confidently to state that our objects have been to a large extent attained."

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<sup>33</sup> In his Reminiscences (pp. 69-79) Price gave what must be one of the only eye-witness accounts in the English language of the Moscow Conference. In My Three Revolutions (pp 62-65) he described it in less detail but with, perhaps, a longer perspective. In his earlier book, he had defined the Conference, called by Kerensky for 25 August 1917 as "a State Conference of all 'live elements in the country'" but did not attribute the quotation: they might well have been Kerensky's own words. In the later book he wrote that it was "the last attempt to save Russia from internal disruption. It was all in the line of Russian history and tradition. In the past, during great crises, conferences like this had generally met to try to solve the problem of how to hold the vast country of Russia together, to find a ruler when an old one had failed, or set up an oligarchy of military leaders to carry on at least temporarily. These conferences were known as 'Zemsky Sobors' or Councils of the Nation." This Conference lasted three days, at the end of which it was clear that, unlike those summoned by Ivan the Terrible or Boris Godunov, it had achieved nothing.

(ii) Economic Situation

Price had been in Finland during the July days<sup>34</sup> which, again, were covered in the Manchester Guardian only by agency reports. But after his return to Petrograd he sent in a short account of the formation of the Second Provisional government on 8 July 1917, in which he laid greater emphasis on the worsening economic situation that he did on the "recent tragic events in Petrograd": his way of describing the July days. In one of his now increasingly rare letters home he related: "I missed the rebellion here last week, or at least only came in for the tail end of it. Things are pretty bad here, both in the rear and at the front. I don't see how Russia can hold out beyond the autumn. The army is breaking up and the country is threatened with famine... It is essential that people should realise in England the desperate straits in Russia"<sup>35</sup>. In the summer of 1917, therefore, Price appears to have concentrated his reporting entirely upon the economic situation. Four articles by him on this subject were published between July and September, one in the

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<sup>34</sup> At the time and for many years afterwards, the period of unrest known as the "July Days" in the summer of 1917 was widely regarded as a premature, unsuccessful Bolshevik coup d'etat. More recent historians tend to recognise that the events of these days were the outcome, ill-organised almost to the point of spontaneity, of frustration with the lack of clear direction or leadership in the months following the March Revolution. Insofar as any identifiable groupings lay behind the unrest, they were anarchists and Bolshevised military units. The Kronstadt sailors who came to take part in the demonstrations were little more than catspaws. Bolshevik political leaders were for the most part against them, although not strongly enough to prevent them from taking place. The July days are graphically described by Alexander Rabinowitch in Prelude to the Revolution: The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July 1917 Uprising (Indiana 1968). A good short account is given by Marc Ferro in October 1917 (pp. 19-35 in the English translation by Norman Stone, 1980). See also David Mandel: The Petrograd Workers and the Fall of the Old Regime: from the February Revolution to the July Days (New York 1988) and Israel Getzler: Kronstadt 1917-1921: The Fate of Soviet Democracy (Cambridge 1983).

<sup>35</sup> A.M.P. 25.7.17. Price papers.



Manchester Guardian and three in Common Sense. The first, written for the former and quoted from in the latter on 4 August, appeared on 27 July. Although not datelined, to judge from its content it cannot have been much delayed between the writing and publication. In the very first paragraph Price asserted that "the spectre of famine is already stalking over the great Russian plain" and he quoted from a recent speech by the Minister of Agriculture, Shingarev, who reported that in the northern provinces peasants were beginning to kill themselves and their children "to escape from the pangs of hunger". He recapitulated some of the basic information on food production which he had derived from his earlier interview with Shingarev and went on to analyse yet again the underlying financial crisis: the "mad dance of the paper milliards". He discussed the role of speculators in withholding raw materials and the self-defeating wage rises which the workers had demanded immediately after the revolution; and concluded with his own list of "stern measures... needed to prevent a catastrophe": minimum wages, fixed prices, and state control over and reinvestment in war industries. On 12 August Price wrote a piece more than 4,000 words long from Petrograd which was printed by Common Sense in three parts on September 8, 15 and 22. In the first he described again the factors which had brought Russia, immersed simultaneously in both a war and a revolution, "within measurable distance of being starved to death" while the Western Allies tried to persuade her to "throw over her social reforms ... and die in the last ditch for the annexation of Constantinople." The second part described and explained the "wild yearning for land" of the Russian peasant but pointed out that redistribution would not necessarily "turn Russia into a country of

peasant proprietors." The Russian peasant, said Price, "remains true to his communism... land is the property only of the people; there can only be property in the products of labour on the land." The real danger for the future lay in a decline in productivity. In the third part Price described the unpreparedness of Russia's middle and manufacturing classes for war, and how their response to war had been profiteering and speculation. It was not surprising that after the 1917 March revolution the workers were "determined to get some of their own back". Price quoted statistics which had "come to light" showing that in the Moscow area since the beginning of the war the percentage rise in profits had been 171%. meanwhile the wages of workers in the same area had risen by 15% and the cost of living by 79.5%. The result of the demand for wage increases had so far simply been to increase the amount of paper money in circulation. "Hard necessity" wrote Price in August 1917 "quite apart from the political aspect of the question" was forcing the State to "enter upon a plan of 'sequestration' of industry". The first signs of a new order had been the creation of a Regional Supply Committee covering sixteen provinces, and made up from delegates from Soviets and the old Alliance of Zemstvos and Cities, with the task of guaranteeing the supply of raw materials to manufacturing industries, the right to requisition manufactured goods for distribution and sale, and duty of creating conciliation boards to settle questions of wages and hours in the areas over which its writ ran. "Of course this is a long way from nationalisation of industry, but the above development points all in this direction."



(iii) International Implications

As already noted, Price wrote little on any subject for the Manchester Guardian in the summer of 1917 and confined himself largely to economic affairs in what he wrote for Common Sense. He did, however, on 17 and 18 August write three long memoranda for Trevelyan, largely concerned with aspects of the Russian revolution with international significance<sup>36</sup>. These were probably intended as briefing papers for his friends in the U.D.C. and not for publication in its journal (and indeed they were not so used), but they were all given titles and seem to fall into a kind of sequence. In what appears to be the first, Price discussed the question of responsibility for war damage. He pointed out that if scapegoats were to be found it was Russian mobilisation that had precipitated the outbreak of war, but "the Russian revolutionary democrat" laid the blame "equally at the door of Hohenzollerns, Romanovs and Hapsburgs without distinction". Nor was there anything to choose between the combatants when it came to the persecution of minorities. He went on to compare what he had seen of both German and Russian persecutions in Poland and Turkish and Russian persecutions in Armenia in 1915 and 1916. The new Russia, said Price, saw no hope of getting reparations for past wrongs except by "an international commission financed by the treasuries of all the belligerent powers". The second memorandum noted the extraordinary speed with which class consciousness had developed in Russia since 1905, despite subsequent repression. "The writer has been informed from a trustworthy revolutionary source that a revolution was planned for the autumn of 1914 to break out at three points, Petrograd, Helsingfors and

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<sup>36</sup> Price papers.

Kronstadt". The Tsarist government had got to know about the plan and reckoned that a foreign war was the only way to prevent it from being carried out. The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was a godsend to the government. But the overthrow of the Tsarist regime early in 1917 was only "a prelude to a much greater and more bitter struggle". Price went on to describe and account for the lack of nationalist feeling among the masses in Russia. This was due to the late development of capitalism, which only began to flourish "on the ruins of the mediaeval village" after the abolition of serfdom. The amorphous half-peasant half-urban masses had no point of contact with the capitalist class above it and easily developed into "a proletariat with a strong class consciousness that knew no bounds of nationality". Unfortunately, although Imperialist ideas were quite foreign to the Russian nature, the Russian workers were very weak in national institutions. "The problem before the revolution now therefore is the organisation of the masses and the creation of durable political organs through which the ideas of the revolution can be translated in actuality." The third memorandum developed the theme of "peace without annexations and indemnities". Although the Great Russians (that is, the Russians of the central plains and northern forests) had very little national feeling as understood in the West, this was not true of the border states: Poland, Finland, the Baltic States, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Siberia. A third element therefore had to be added to the peace formula: the right of every nationality to settle its own destiny by self-determination, by which was meant referendum. The process had already begun, pending confirmation by the Constituent Assembly, in most of the border states that he had named.



## Chapter 4. 'Through the Russian Provinces'

On 4 September 1917 Price sent postcards from Moscow to his aunt and his uncle in both of which he said that he would be leaving for Novgorod that night on his way to Kazan on the Volga, and would probably be away for three weeks. He also mentioned that the bread ration in Moscow was down to 1/2lb. a day and there was "no meat anywhere". He was to be away, in fact, for more than seven weeks, returning to Petrograd only just before the November revolution. Whether or not he had intended to be away from the capital for so long, his instinct to go looking for information and the wealth of it that he found himself accumulating made it almost inevitable that he would go on travelling for as long as he could. In the course of his travels he wrote nine articles, the first three posted from Samara on 22 September, and the last written at Yaroslavl on 24 October. They were published in the Manchester Guardian between 27 November and 8 December out of chronological order, as a series to which the editor gave the collective title 'Through the Russian Provinces'. Some of them may not even have reached England until after the news of the November revolution had arrived. Indeed some of Price's own despatches about the revolution were published before most of the articles in the series. Taken together, they form an account unique in the English language of the impact of the March revolution on the Volga provinces, and in some of the northern Cossack territories and the Khirgiz steppes, from where he was also able to learn something at close second hand about developments in Turkestan. These articles will be dealt with in the order in which they were written, insofar

as it is ascertainable, and not in the order in which they were published.

In his unpublished autobiography Price later wrote "One can feel the pulse of Russia best by going to the heartland of the country...I was extraordinarily fortunate because as yet civil war had not broken out and communications were still more or less intact. Moreover there was no restriction of travel, because no-one in the country had sufficient authority to prevent anyone else from doing what he wanted."<sup>1</sup> Armed with letters of introduction from the Petrograd Soviet and the Central Committee of the Socialist Revolutionary Party (S.R.s) Price made his way down the Volga to Samara, which he made his first base. From there he set out by train for Orenburg, where "an azure blue sky overhead and an atmosphere of crystal told me that I was approaching the threshold of Asia" and where he found "Moscow wares and picture palaces in one street" and "carpet bazaars and camel caravans" in the next<sup>2</sup>. From Orenburg, where he was lucky enough to be invited to attend the first gathering of the Orenburg Cossacks for a hundred and fifty years he set out "armed with a map and a tea kettle"<sup>3</sup> and in a peasant cart with a driver and two horses headed eastwards. He stopped at a trading centre on the edge of the Akhmolinsk province east of which the Turgai steppes stretch 2,000 versts to the Chinese frontier. This was the furthest point of his journey. He then retraced his steps to Samara, and went by boat northwards to Kazan, a two-day journey. He particularly wanted to see how the Volga Tartars, the descendents of the Golden Horde, had

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<sup>1</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p. 551.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p.564.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid p. 571.



been affected by the revolution. From Kazan he returned, again by boat, to Nijni Novgorod.

In what appears to be the first of the series<sup>4</sup> Price gave a detailed account of the way in which the March revolution had taken root in the villages of the Volga provinces. He described the Councils of Peasants Deputies: the circumstances of their formation, the way they were elected, how they operated and to what extent their authority was enforceable. He noted the growth of the Co-operative Movement among the peasants and the hostility with which it was regarded by the forces of reaction: retailers who feared their competition, small landed proprietors who felt threatened by schemes for land redistribution, and members of the Kadet party. The Councils had however Price estimated, gained the allegiance of 99% of the politically conscious peasantry, of all the soldiers in provincial garrison towns, and a few intellectuals. The prevailing ideology was, he found, Socialist Revolutionary, not Marxist, (By which he meant Bolshevik). But the S.R.s who inspired the Councils of Peasants Deputies and the Social Democrats who inspired the urban Soviets were "united in their determination once and for all to abolish landlordism and the rights of property...It is certain that whatever else may happen the Russian landlord will become a thing of the past."

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<sup>4</sup> Manchester Guardian 4.12.17. Datedlined Samara. 'The Peasants and their Land Programme'. Signed M. Philips Price.

The next article<sup>5</sup> described the work done by Chernov during his tenure as Minister of Agriculture<sup>6</sup> to prepare the way for land redistribution, and the opposition to him from the Kadets and allied interests. So effective had this opposition been that in the lower Volga provinces the peasants had been driven to take the law into their own hands and had drawn up a "temporary land socialisation scheme", thus becoming, as Price put, "the rural counterpart to the Maximalists". The peasants had presented the Provisional government with a fait accompli secure in the knowledge "that the armed forces of the country, which are their own sons, will be on their side". Price went on to describe how the land had been divided: "The change at first sight seems merely a matter of book keeping, but it is fraught with tremendous social and economic consequences." There was, however a danger that communal landholding would become a fixed practise at village level only, in which case the S.R. idea of establishing a national land reserve would fall. This led Price to the main reason which he thought underlay the tendency to local autonomy in land settlement schemes: the fear of immigration by peasants from areas where land was less plentiful. Another, secondary, reason was the breakdown in food distribution caused by

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid 5.12.17 Dated lined Samara. 'How the Peasants Are Taking Over the Land'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>6</sup> VIKTOR MIKHAILOVICH CHERNOV (1873-1952). A prominent Socialist Revolutionary theoretician, Chernov spent much of his life before 1917 in exile, involved in emigré politics. In April 1917 he returned to Russia and in May became Minister of Agriculture, a post in which he was condemned to be ineffective because of his party's commitment to leave any definitive decision on agrarian policy to the Constituent Assembly, of which he was elected President for its brief duration. Between 1918 and 1920 he continued to play an active part in S.R. politics but emigrated in 1920. For further reading, see O.H. Radkey, The Sickle under the Hammer: The Russian Socialist Revolutionaries in the Early Months of Soviet Rule (New York 1963) and M. Perrie: The Agrarian Policy of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party: from its Origins Through the Revolution of 1905-7 (Cambridge 1977).



war, so that "each area is interested in holding its supplies, preventing exports and running its own food and land policies." This question, Price concluded, assumed a more general character "and is connected with the great struggle between the classes which is now beginning to overstep the boundaries of race and nationality."

Price's third article from Samara<sup>7</sup> was written in a lighter vein and described a visit to a village, accompanied by a member of the local Council of Peasants' Deputies, to observe a meeting of the village Soviet. They were to discuss a report on decisions taken at the last meeting of the Samara Soviet and to endorse them or not as they chose. Recalling the occasion Price wrote later: "The Samara Soviet's word was not yet law. The village Soviet was still a happy one this Sunday afternoon. The process of splitting into classes had not yet come."<sup>8</sup> In his article Price described the proceedings as picturesque, if not exactly businesslike. Before leaving the area Price went alone next day to visit the local landlord, who was getting ready to depart for good to Crimea while his last remaining cow chewed up the ferns in his conservatory. No one in the village had wanted any changes, said the unhappy man, until "people came from the town and stirred it all up. Those stupid Kadets ought to have stopped this rabble long ago in the first days of the Revolution." Price also went to a nearby monastery in which the monks, suddenly finding that they were "the monastic proletariat" had turned out their "bourgeois" Abbot and were working their land in an amicable arrangement with the local peasants.

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<sup>7</sup> Manchester Guardian 6.12.17. Dated lined Samara. 'The Revolution and Its Effects on Rural Life'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>8</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller'. pp. 559-560.

Before writing his next article Price had moved on to Cossack territory<sup>9</sup>. Here he judged that the relationship between "the revolutionary masses" in the area, workers and peasants on the one hand, the Cossacks on the other, had deteriorated since March. Price interviewed the elected chief or Ataman of the Orenburg Cossacks and asked if he could account for this. The answer he got made it clear that the Cossacks, too, were afraid of immigration into their territories by landless peasants. Individual Cossack land holdings before the revolution were on average seven times the size of those of peasants in neighbouring Samara, Price found, but "what our fathers won" said the Ataman "we shall not give up". Price then wrote an account of the causes and history of Cossack settlements, and showed how the Tsarist governments had traditionally taken advantage of Cossack privileges to gain their support against popular discontent. Eventually "their free nature revolted against this moral servitude" wrote Price, but the conversion to revolutionary principles had been skin-deep. Only in those Cossack territories where the land allotments were not so large and where industrial development was beginning were the Cossacks starting to feel any sense of genuine solidarity with the proletariat. "Class consciousness has not yet penetrated the bulk of the Cossacks" and though economic pressures and the effects of the war would eventually bring them into line, Price thought this would take time, and "meanwhile the revolutionary democracy has a territorial problem no less difficult to solve than the Ukraine and Finland".

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<sup>9</sup> Manchester Guardian 27.11.17. Dated Orenburg 1.10.17. 'The Russian Provinces and the Revolution'. Signed M. Philips Price.



Price wrote next about the general assembly (krug) of the Orenburg Cossacks which he was invited to attend<sup>10</sup>. Although in theory all Cossacks had equal rights, Price was struck by the parade ground atmosphere which was in marked contrast to that prevailing in the various Soviets which he had observed elsewhere, in which soldiers' delegates were rarely officers. At least half the delegates at the krug were officers, and for the first two days "the initiative came entirely from the generals, colonels and officials sitting on the front benches". Speeches were made against the notion that the revolution had any international significance. "'The Cossacks are fighters and not diplomats. Away with revolutionary councils financed by Jews'." A representative from the Don Cossacks told them how deeply injured the Cossack leadership in the Don was feeling because of the suspicious attitude of the Provisional government. What had they done to deserve it? "We only stand for discipline, order and firm power, for the dissolution of the democratic bodies and no politics in wartime. General Kornilov was the man who knew the real needs of Russia and he is the man who still inspires the ideas of us Cossacks." Price reported that there was wild applause from the front benches, but that the soldiers at the back "sat and looked stolidly in front of them, as if still waiting for the word of command". On the second day of the krug the threat to traditional Cossack systems of land tenure was discussed, and it became clear that a movement was in the making towards some form of autonomy where the territorial rights of Cossacks were concerned. On the third day the back benches at last produced a speaker, as brave as he was diffident, who made a plea for solidarity between the Cossacks and

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<sup>10</sup> Manchester Guardian 29.11.17. Datelined Orenburg 5.10.17. 'At a Cossack Provincial Assembly'. Signed M. Philips Price.

soldiers in the Russian army. "A dead silence came over the hall as the speaker finished. The generals in the front row were too astounded to utter a sound." A representative of the Cossack section of the Council of Workers and Soldiers' Delegates in Petrograd now also found his voice. This was too much for the front bench, and a number of irregularities were conveniently found in the procedures by which the delegates from the ranks had been elected, which enabled the more vociferous to be excluded.

With the sixth article in this series the Manchester Guardian gave Price the benefit of an excellent topographical map showing the types of soil and general ecology of the areas he was describing: Siberia, the northern Cossack territories, the Kirghiz steppes and Turkestan<sup>11</sup>. He showed how the nature of the land was influencing the nature of the different regional revolutionary governments. He paid particular attention to the treatment of the Kirghiz, whose territories had been reduced by half through the colonisation policy of the Tsarist government in the past ten years. Price reported that when the Kirghiz had protested about this half a million of them had been massacred in the summer of 1916 and another million fled to

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<sup>11</sup> Manchester Guardian 28.11.17. Datelined Orenburg 1.10.17. 'Asiatic Russia and the Revolution'. Signed M. Philips Price. (The dateline is probably an error as it is clear from the text that this article follows on from that datelined 5.10.17, describing the Cossack Assembly.)



China<sup>12</sup>. He then dealt in some detail with the effects of the revolution on the Moslems of Turkestan, ranging from the anti-revolutionary influence of the emir of Bokhara to the Maximalism of

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<sup>12</sup> On 25 June 1916 an Imperial Decree was issued calling up non-Russians in Turkestan and the Steppe regions for non-combatant duties in the army, from which the native populations of these areas had hitherto been exempt. The decree itself was so badly phrased that even those who could read could not be sure what was going to be expected of them, and to this uncertainty was added the suspicion that as soon as their backs were turned Russian colonisers would make even further inroads into the lands of those who had been called up. The Uzbeks began the rebellion in July, the Kirghiz followed in August and the Kazaks in September and October. No official report of the rebellion was ever published, partly at least because the revolutions of 1917 made the compilation of methodical statistics almost impossible. Russian losses were estimated by General Kuropatkin, who was sent to deal with the disturbances, at around 4,000 but no reliable estimate of Muslim casualties has even been made. Price wrote in terms of half a million dead and another million fled to China. Zenkovsky (see below) estimated that only 300,000 Kirghiz fled to China, but that even this number represented nearly one third of the total Kirghiz population of Turkestan. Price heard rumours of riot and massacres when he reached the Caucasus, soon after they began, but was only able to substantiate the rumours when he got to Orenburg a year later. His estimate of the number of dead cannot be taken as any more reliable than those quoted above, but that there was a massacre is not now disputed. Moreover the suppression of the facts involved not only Russian but - apparently - British censorship. Price's account of the massacre was published as part of another article by him on 28 November 1917. Scott took it as his text for a leading article on the same day. "His is the first news of this terrible affair which has appeared in the English press. That the facts should have been kept out of the English press is not very surprising when one remembers that for many months not a whisper found echo here of the hideous persecutions and evacuations of the Jews of Russian Poland and Cilicia by the Grand Duke Nicholas. But the Kirghiz rebellion and slaughter, so far as we are aware, were not mentioned even in the American or enemy press which had at that time no special tenderness for the government of the Tsar, nor yet in the papers published in China, which could have got hold of the story from the Chinese end. Mr. Price has been on the spot and has learned the facts there, so that the authenticity of his account cannot be questioned. Under all the circumstances this Kirghiz affair will take a very high place in the records of censorship and concealment." Recent research has revealed that the Grand Duke Nicholas, far from being to blame for the persecutions and deportation of the Jews of Poland and Galicia in 1915, did his best to put a stop to them. See Chp. 2 F/N 35. The best short account of the massacre of the Kirghiz is given by Geoffrey Wheeler: The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia (1964) pp. 92-96. See also Serge A. Zenkovsky: Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia (Harvard 1964) and Richard A. Pierce: Russian Central Asia 1867-1917 (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1961).

cotton workers in Fergana. Price saw "as yet little sign of class struggle between native property owners and labourers and nothing approaching Pan-Islamism, but there is growing a simple 'Turkestan' nationalism". The S.R. slogan of Land and Liberty had little meaning for the inhabitants of Turkestan. "No one in Turkestan wants land because it is all desert. But everyone wants water, and no party has come forward promising 'Water and Liberty' ..."

The next article came from Tartar country, where the mixed population of Great Russians and Moslem Tartars were at least not afraid of immigrants<sup>13</sup>. The small size of the average land holdings in this area made it more likely that the inhabitants would be wanting to emigrate eastwards themselves. Price noticed that the Tsarist policy of setting one element of the population against the other and of deliberately withholding education from the Tartars had been only too successful. The peasants in the Kazan government were "much slower and less effective in their organisation of revolutionary committees than elsewhere". On the other hand there was no movement, either, for territorial autonomy such as he had observed among the Cossacks, the Kirghiz and in Turkestan. The Tartar National Council was sensibly concentrating on education. There was however a strong pan-Turanian movement among some Tartar intellectuals, who were "looking to Stambul as their cultural shrine and long to become the messengers of peace between Ottoman people and the Russian republic". On the other hand the pan-Turanian movement, being purely cultural, took no interest in progressive movements elsewhere in Asia, unlike the more educated Moslems, who saw themselves in a much more political light.

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<sup>13</sup> Manchester Guardian 1.12.17. Dated Kazan 15.10.17. 'The Russian Tartars and the Revolution'. Signed M. Philips Price.



Islam for them was a means by which revolutionary class consciousness could be extended to "the whole world of Asia, sunk in mediaeval apathy and superstition, politically enslaved by the ruling classes of Europe". Price finally devoted some attention in this article to the success of the women's movement in this area, which had begun after the 1905 revolution but had only found a secure base against the reactionary influence of the mullahs since the revolution of March 1917.

Price's eighth article described a night spent on a cold quay on the banks of the Volga together with a random sample of Russians waiting for the next boat<sup>14</sup>. He had been turned off an earlier boat for which he not only had a ticket but a ticket for a second-class compartment, by a group of soldiers shouting "'Hey, you bourgeois! Out with you all! Make way for the honest folk!' It was no use to explain that although I had a second-class ticket I was nevertheless a sympathiser with the Russian Revolution. I wore a black coat and a felt hat and that was enough." Waiting for the next boat Price listened all night to what his companions in misfortune were saying to each other about the events of the past six months. He wrote it down with no comment, making a picture which has not lost any of its immediacy with the passage of time.

In the last of the series, written at Yaroslavl on 24 October, Price attempted to sum up the impressions and conclusions he had drawn from

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<sup>14</sup> Manchester Guardian 7.12.17. Dated Nijni Novgorod 21.10.17. 'The Voice of the People on the Revolution'. Signed M. Philips Price. (The text of this article appears as Appendix 2 at the end of this chapter.)

his journey<sup>15</sup>. The first thing that appears to have struck him was the drive "for the enlightenment of the masses": libraries, lectures, basic literacy courses were being organised everywhere by political parties, Soviets, town councils and Zemstvos. "A new type of intelligentsia is being created...It is this type that is now controlling the provincial democratic bodies." He then went on to consider what these democratic bodies were. The local Soviets in the areas he had visited though still influential, were he thought to a large extent being replaced by other bodies. The trades unions were becoming more important. "It would seem that among the Russian proletariat consciousness of the need for political struggle came first and the desire for economic organisation later. It is the exact reverse of what has taken place in the Labour movement in England." Price noted that elected town councils and rural Zemstvos, elected on adult suffrage, were taking over much of the work formerly done by the Soviets, although many of those elected were the same people who had formerly led the Soviets. Everything, Price thought, appeared to point to "a gradual deepening and broadening of the Revolution throughout the country " Against this impression, unfortunately, had to be set the factors making for anarchy: the havoc and dislocation caused by the war, and the separatist tendencies of the regions both in terms of land holding policies and reluctance to part with food. Price noted that in areas in which land holdings were small or non-existent but where an

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<sup>15</sup> Manchester Guardian 8.12.17. Datedlined Yaroslavl 24.10.17. 'How the Maximalists Have Come to Gain Control'. Signed M. Philips Price. It is probable that the title of this article was added in hindsight in Cross Street. Price appears to have used new-style dates himself when he dated his articles, but on 24 October the "Maximalists" had not yet "gained control", although by the time the article was published it had been overtaken by news of the Bolshevik Revolution.



organised and equitable attempt to redistribute land had taken place "there had been complete quiet". But where this had not happened there had been agrarian disorders and looting. The three main causes of anarchy were, in Price's view: the incapacity of the towns to supply the peasants with manufactured goods, leading them to hide their corn; the suspicion among the peasants that the Provisional government was not going to keep its promises where land reform was concerned: and, above all, "the endless prolongation of the war for objects which - to state the plain fact - nobody understands or cares about".

Price went on to say that he had thought towards the end of the summer that the March Revolution had reached the "second stage", in which the class struggle would predominate. But this development had become complicated by arguments between Maximalists and Minimalists (read Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) on the question of tactics. The Maximalists had "an immense if amorphous following"; but Price thought that many of their supporters among the soldiers and peasants did not really know what the Maximalists meant when they talked about "All Power to the Soviets". But "All the recent provincial elections have given immense majorities to this wing of the revolutionary democracy." Price concluded by observing "no sign of any military enthusiasm like that which inspired the French Revolutionaries. There is, on the other hand, a great possibility of a Napoleon...who will put an end to the war even at the cost of territorial losses to Russia and at the price of the political liberties won by the revolution." The desire to end the war was the one thing that held together "this confused social mass" in the third stage of the

revolution, as Price perceived it. But as soon as that had been accomplished new combinations and conditions would emerge "for the political struggle in the fourth stage".

In My Three Revolutions Price wrote that he gathered that his series of articles had created "a considerable sensation in the countries of the Western Allies, in the United States and even in enemy countries... Correspondents in Petrograd of the Western Allies were only too ready to listen to the reports of interested people who told them that if they dared to venture into these parts they would have their throats cut by the Bolsheviks and Red Terrorists. My articles showed that I had gone there, travelled widely and had been received in a most friendly manner."<sup>16</sup>

Price wrote one more account of the situation in Russia on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution which survives only in a carbon copy, with no indication for whom it was intended. (See Chapter 11 pp. 431-432) Since many of the observations and conclusions contained in it were derived from his journey through the Russian provinces it would seem appropriate to deal with them in the context of that journey, where they are relevant<sup>17</sup>. He headed his paper 'Memorandum on the State of Russia between August and November 1917' and it is dated 2 November, from Petrograd. The memorandum began with a short account

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<sup>16</sup> My Three Revolutions p.78. In fact, most of Chapter 7 of this book consists of either adaptations or direct quotations from his series of articles 'Through the Russian Provinces'.

<sup>17</sup> Price papers. Price kept a carbon copy of this memorandum. There is no indication on it as to for whom it was intended. It could have been for Scott, Hirst, Trevelyan or all three, but no echoes from it are to be found in the Manchester Guardian, Common Sense or U.D.C..



of Kornilov's attempted coup<sup>18</sup>. Price himself was already on the Volga when this was going on, but he described how he had seen for himself "the remarkably easy way in which the revolutionary leaders succeeded in instantly gathering round them all the live and active elements in the democracy". He noted also that after it was all over the revolutionary leaders with whom he talked had become distinctly more hostile to the Allies, some of them going so far as to allege that "England had 'got up the Kornilov affair in order to put down the revolution'." Price went on to describe and account for in greater detail than he had been able to do in his Manchester Guardian articles the fissiparous tendencies he had seen as between soldiers, the urban proletariat and the peasants. He had seen with his own eyes Volga boats crowded with peasants from one province attempting to buy food from another before the river froze. Once that had happened they faced a diet of roots and nuts. Freight trains from the south carrying food for Petrograd were plundered long before they arrived. Each district was running its own food and land policy and

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<sup>18</sup> Kornilov's attempted coup in August 1917 continues to attract speculation. There can be little doubt that the Allies - certainly the British - would have liked it to succeed, although they felt unable to support him openly. Having unnecessarily abandoned Riga (as the Germans pursued their summer counter-offensive) Kornilov, now Commander in Chief, declared Petrograd to be in the front line, in the hope of frightening the Provisional Government into resigning: a ruse which did not succeed. Kornilov was undoubtedly attempting to mobilise a march on Petrograd and the establishment of military dictatorship when Kerensky sacked him. The question remains whether there was ever a conspiracy between Kornilov and Kerensky - as some believe - designed to bring down the Petrograd Soviet and form a new, and less radical Provisional Government. An Extraordinary Commission of Enquiry into the Kornilov affair was set up, but Kerensky refused to appear before it. A member of the Commission, N. Ukraintsev, published a short memoir in the New York emigre paper Novoe Russkoe Slovo (28 October 1956) which left open the question whether the two men were in not some form of collusion. The conspiracy theory is also discussed in Russian Review 29 (1970) 3 pp. 286 300: 'The Kornilov Affair: A Reinterpretation' by Harvey Asher. A good short account, without speculations, is given by Marc Ferro in October 1917: A Social History of the Russian Revolution (1980) pp. 50-58.

Russia was "splitting up into a number of economic areas in which the inhabitants, seeing the calamity threatening them, cling together for common safety and cannot hear the cries for help from their neighbours...It literally strikes terror into one to move about Russia these days, not only because one does not know what unforeseen disaster may overcome one, but also because the sights one sees are such clear evidence of an even more terrible condition which is to come... And yet the Times and other organs of the English oligarchy accuse the revolutionary councils [Soviets] of being responsible for the anarchy and hope for another Kornilov to put them out of existence...I can confidently assert, after my recent journey in the interior of Russia in the last two months that if it were not for the revolutionary councils in the towns, villages and among the soldiers of the garrisons, the anarchy would be fifty times worse." Price proceeded to back up this assertion with many examples of the role played by local Soviets in maintaining some kind of order<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> William G. Rosenberg and Diana P. Koenker in 'The Limits of Formal Protest: Worker Activism and Social Polarisation in Petrograd and Moscow, March-October 1917' (American Historical Review Vol. 92 (1987) pp.296-326), corroborate that in the capital cities the Kornilov coup exercised the same radicalising and solidifying effect on the Left as Price observed in the provinces.



**PAGINATION AS IN ORIGINAL**

APPENDIX II

THROUGH THE RUSSIAN PROVINCES

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE ON THE REVOLUTION

By our Petrograd Correspondent, M. Phillips Price.

Nijni Novgorod, October 21.

It was getting dark when I reached the quay on the banks of the Volga where the boats discharge and load for Kazan. The barge where the steamer arrives was crowded with every conceivable type of humanity that Russia is capable of producing. In the greasy, chattering throng I saw a large number of peasants with sacks of flour piled up in heaps around them. They had come from the northern governments of Vladimir, Yaroslav, and Kostroma to buy flour for their starving families. Their pinched faces and ragged clothes told eloquently of the state to which the war has reduced these forest dwellers of North Russia. In the half-darkness I stumbled over a confused mass of sleeping and squatting humanity and sacks of flour till I reached the ticket office. Here I bought a second-class ticket, and on the arrival of the boat settled myself comfortably in one of the cabins for the night.

Presently I heard a commotion, and all at once there burst into the second-class department a number of "comrades" - revolutionary soldiers who are now acting as militia on the Volga quays. "Hey, you bourgeois! Out with you all! Make way for honest folk." It was no use to explain that although I had a second-class ticket, I was nevertheless a sympathiser with the Russian Revolution. I wore a black coat and a felt hat, and that was enough. I was a bourgeois, and I had to clear out - bag and baggage. As I passed out, discomfited, I struggled through a mob of these



same peasants whom I had seen on the quay. They had been waiting two days and two nights for the steamer to come and take them north to their starving families, and in the faint light I could see a gleam of satisfaction on their thin faces that they were at last one step nearer home. Here on the ship they annexed the first and second class cabins and stacked their sacks in the third class and the hold. The ship sailed away, and I was left on the open barge that acts as a quay to take my luck for the next ship.

It was pitch dark. A cold autumn wind was blowing. The city of Kazan lay five miles distant. There was nothing to do but to "stick it" out in the open till morning. On the barge I found a number of fellow-travellers in the same plight as myself. Several of the hungry peasants with their sacks had not succeeded in getting away. There were also some women from the villages near Kazan who were returning from market; there was a retail trader in skins or, to be more precise in these days, a speculator ("heeshehnik" is the Russian word); two mechanics from cotton factories further up the Volga, a Tartar fisherman, and an officer, the only member of the "intelligentsia" present. As comrades in misfortune we all got together. Someone lit a fire, and there was a general atmosphere of companionship around it. Some lay on the sacks, some squatted near the fire.

### "The Kingdom of Hunger"

The moon rose and half lifted the curtain of darkness, while the wavelets lapped rhythmically against the sides of the barge. I lay down and drew my coat over me, but the cold prevented sleep, and I listened to the conversation. Every discussion in a public place in Russia now

concerns food. It is the essence of politics. It looms larger even than the question of war and peace, for in international politics the stomach seems to be a more influential factor than the brain. Last year food, or rather the absence of it, made the Revolution; this year it seems to be on the verge of destroying it.

"You fellows down here in the south are living in paradise," said one of the peasants from Vladimir, "with your flour at 30 kopecks a pound, and your eggs at 15 kopecks each. You come up north, my boys, and you'll find no honey that way."

"There is plenty of corn," said one of the mechanics, "but it's hidden in the villages and the speculators have got hold of it. It will be no good until they are searched and made to give it up."

"We have only just got enough for ourselves," said a peasant woman from the south. "In our village each 'izbi' (an old Russian term for a collection of families living under one roof) has not more than 50 poods (a pood equals about 36lb.) each, and what can we sell from that when we don't know what will happen tomorrow? Perhaps next year there will be no machines, no horses, no labour to work. If there is no store in the 'ambar' (public village granary) we, too, shall see the kingdom of hunger." "Take it from the landlords," retorted the mechanics; "they are fat enough. Why don't the councils and the produce committees requisition their granaries?" "Ah! those committees," croaked an old woman; "what do they do but take large salaries and live at our expense?" "Yes," said one of the old peasants, "the Government of Nicolas had little bread to give us, but these 'comrades' have even less." "But don't you see," suddenly interrupted a young peasant soldier who had joined the



company in the meantime, "that the councils and committees are not to blame? They can't get workmen because they are all at the war; they can't make machines for you because the factories won't work; they can't get horses for the transport because they are all at the front. Talk about Nicolas if you like, but would he do any better if he came back to look after your souls?" "Anyway," said an old peasant, "Nicolas could feed the army, but these fellows can't. Only yesterday I had a letter from my son at the front. He wrote imploring us to send them flour to bake bread with." "But I replied," said an old woman, apparently his wife, "That if he wants bread he had better come home. What are they fighting about? If the Germans come it could not be worse than it is now."

There was a general silence, and I heard the Tartar snoring on one of the sacks. He was doubtless dreaming about his native steppes away to the east. "They won't give us any boots or shoes, or cloth for our coats," persisted the old peasant; "the workmen in the towns take an eight-hour day and double their wages, but we peasants have to work all day, live on air and clothe ourselves with straw mats; and then they expect us to feed them."

"Eh, little father," retorted the mechanic, "under Nicolas they looked after us well; we had to work all day for 40 roubles a month, and if we complained they packed us off to the front and put us in the front trenches to get us killed as quickly as possible. It is time for us to get a little for our work. Ask the capitalists and factory owners why you don't get your boots and shoes. They want to produce small quantities, so as to sell them at high prices. They are living nicely off you peasants, if you only knew it; but you don't know it, and you go blaming the revolutionary committees."

"But how are the factory owners to live," said the leather trader, who had been silent up to now. "if you workers take all his profits in wages?" "Fix our wages and his profits and the price of the goods," replied the mechanic, "and then these comrades in the villages will get their boots. But that song does not please the gentlemen speculators. The bourgeois want the workers' blood, and know how to get it while there is a war going." "By the Mother of God," said an old peasant, "this is not true. What is a bourgeois? He is a man like you and me. You ought not to call a man bad because he is a bourgeois. It is a sin to say evil things." "If a man lives at other people's expense he is a parasite and nothing more." retorted the mechanic. "If a bourgeois is a parasite," replied the old peasant, "then he is bad, but if he is only a bourgeois and nothing more, then he is a comrade like you and me. God forgive us if we say evil things about each other. The war began in the world because the rulers of the people said evil things about the rulers of other people. Now there is war in Russia among her own people because we say evil things about one another."

#### The Ignorance of Slaves.

There was another silence, broken by the officer, who all the time had been intently staring into the fire and puffing a cigarette. "The real truth is," he said, "that Russia is being ruined because her people are dark and ignorant. They have no patriotism or love of their country." "Yes," said the leather merchant, "we are only fit to be serfs, because when we get liberty we don't know what to do with it." "Of course we are dark and ignorant," retorted the mechanic, "if landlords, speculators, and capitalists rule us, because they want us to be so. It serves their interest, just as it did that of Nicolas Romanoff. You say that the



Russian people have no patriotism, but what have they got to be patriotic about if they have no land and are wage-slaves, and are then told to go and fight for foreign allies, who want colonies?"

"Why don't we follow the example of the English and French?" said the officer. "They are an enlightened and educated people. They have money, and they are coming here to put order into the country." "And fill their pockets, too," retorted the mechanic. "You talk like that," replied the officer, "but don't forget that a few years ago we were the slaves of the Germans; now we are only living thanks to the benevolence of our English and French allies. Tomorrow we shall perhaps be the slaves of all three." "And that is just what our bourgeois want," said the young peasant soldier; "they want us to be slaves. They don't want us to have the land for ourselves; they want us to go on fighting, so that we shall be under the foreign capitalists. Only peace and a union between peasants, labourers, Cossacks, and soldiers can stop our sufferings and make us free and independent and give us bread. It was for these things that we made the Revolution."

"Yes, my son," said an old peasant, "you have made it, and you have given us neither peace, nor freedom, nor independence, nor bread. You have only brought the black ravens over Russia." And tears came in the old man's eyes. "Are we to blame for that, little father?" said the young soldier. "It is bad times now, but don't forget that it was worse before the Revolution. True, we had more bread than we have now, but then we had no hope in life. Now we have less bread but more hope."

The conversation ended, the fire died down, the Tartar continued snoring, and the waves of the Volga still rippled against the sides of the barge.

For a long time I lay gazing up at the stars and trying to understand the meaning of the words that I had heard uttered that night by the only true voice of Russia.

Manchester Guardian, Friday December 7, 1917.



## Chapter 5. The November Revolution

Price returned to Petrograd on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution. Although he had kept abreast of political developments in Petrograd throughout August, even if he did not write about them for the Manchester Guardian for the time being, he was out of reach on the Volga during the so-called Democratic Conference which met in the capital on 27 September<sup>1</sup>. In the memorandum which he wrote on the state of Russia between August and November (see above, Chapter 4, p.114) he attributed its failure to the fact that the parties of the Left

"had allowed themselves to be browbeaten by the bourgeois class, the banks and the diplomacy of the Allies. The capitalists and the bankers were prepared to declare a strike if the democracy took over the Government...I was told on good authority that Kerensky spoke in this sense to the democratic leaders at a secret sitting of the Council."

Price naturally did not disclose his source. Nonetheless his memorandum went on to express his opinion that the agreement reached

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<sup>1</sup> After the failure of the Moscow Conference in August 1917 the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet convened what was known as the Democratic Conference, which met at Petrograd on 27 September 1917. It consisted of representatives of the Left parties: Kadets and parties of the Right were excluded but even so its composition was devised so as to ensure an anti-Bolshevik majority. Trotsky and Stalin, supported by Lenin who was then still in hiding after the July Days, wanted the Bolsheviks to boycott the Conference but were overruled. Carr described it as having been designed to fill a gap until the Constituent Assembly should meet. Filling the gap meant the creation of yet another interim body: the Pre-Parliament to which, Kerensky had indicated, he would be prepared to hold himself accountable. Price, who only heard about the Democratic Conference after his return from his travels and who may at that time have been prepared to give it the benefit of the doubt, eventually wrote in My Three Revolutions "From all I could gather it had accomplished nothing but engaged in endless talk and petered out." It had, however, set the scene for the last act of the political shadow play which preceded the November Revolution. See Carr The Bolshevik Revolution Vol. I (pp. 92-93); Marc Ferro October 1917 (pp. 232-234); Deutscher The Prophet Armed (pp. 283-286); Sukhanov The Russian Revolution (Chapter 25); Price My Three Revolutions (p.78).

by the Democratic Conference to establish what he called a temporary Parliament (the Pre-Parliament) was a worthwhile one<sup>2</sup>. Although he had, by now, come to realise that the real power in the country lay with the Petrograd Soviet, he was troubled by its lack of accountability; he thought the Pre-Parliament would have more "moral force". However the immediate boycott of the Pre-Parliament by the Bolsheviki made him equally uneasy. He now knew from his own observations that their following in the provinces was very great, and that soldiers and workers might "come out at any moment on the streets with arms in their hands and attempt to put down the 'bourgeois government' as they call it". In the same memorandum Price wrote that he believed the financial and military oligarchies of both the Allies and the Central Powers were subconsciously hoping "that the prolongation of the war will bring the revolution to disaster". The only issue on which everybody: "peasants and workers... the army at the front and the army at the rear" was united

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<sup>2</sup> The Pre-Parliament, or Provisional Council of the Russian Republic, met in the Mariinsky Palace in Petrograd on 20 October 1917. It was composed of delegates selected by party organisers. Sukhanov described it as "... exceptionally brilliant. It concentrated within itself, indeed, the flower of the nation. It owed this precisely to the unprecedented method of its selection. All the political parties and other associations sent their best people..." At the first session Trotsky, just released from prison and newly elected Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, delivered a scathing attack on the Provisional Government for the betrayal of the Revolution and led the Bolshevik delegates out. In the ensuing political vacuum foreign policy and ideas for a general peace occupied most of the discussions. Price, who did not get to the Mariinsky until early November, was there to hear the announcement that the British Government had decreed that the forthcoming Allied Conference, upon which the Provisional Government had pinned great hopes, would not discuss peace at all but only war aims. He was also present, and, indeed, talking to Martov, when Kerensky came in to announce the formation of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and heard Martov say that this was a step with which the Menshevik Internationalists could not go along. See Price My Three Revolutions pp. 78-81 and My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution pp. 141-142; Ferro October 1917 pp.234-238; Deutscher The Prophet Armed (1954) pp. 294-297; Sukhanov, The Russian Revolution 1917 Chapter 26.



was in the desire to end the war. He thought the Bolsheviks would probably do so more quickly than any other group if they achieved power, but he feared that a Bolshevik victory would lead, in the end, to the ruin of the revolution. However whichever party took power "there will be peace and the sooner the Western Allies wake up to this fact the better for them".

Because of the supposed division of functions between himself and Soskice Price had written nothing for the Manchester Guardian about events in Petrograd throughout the early autumn of 1917. He was also - and remained to the end of his life - hurt by the fact that Scott had appeared to consider his reports insufficient. This was not so; as already noted, Soskice had proposed himself to Scott, not the other way about. But Price did not know it at the time and never found out. In a letter to his aunt, written on 22 December 1917, when Soskice had fled from Russia and everybody wanted to hear from Price, he described his mood during the period of Soskice's maximum influence as Kerensky's Secretary and Special Correspondent of the Manchester Guardian. "I retired in the shade while all this was going on and bided my time." But time was obviously something that Soskice did not have for the Manchester Guardian during the weeks immediately preceding the November Revolution and thus the paper, with two correspondents on the spot, got nothing but agency reports and rumours during this critical period. A single message only was printed from Price: a short account which appeared on 15 November of reactions in Petrograd to Balfour's announcement that the forthcoming conference of the Allies in Paris would not, as had been expected by the Russians, discuss the aims of the war but only the methods by

which it was to be fought<sup>3</sup>. Scott took up a point made by Price in a leader on the same day, noting that although the spokesmen of the Soviet and of the Provisional government had very different views as to what Russia's war aims ought to be, public opinion in Russia had been "staggered" to learn from Bonar Law that war aims would not be discussed at all. Scott went on to point out that this came on top of "a prolonged campaign in important sections of the Allied press" which was hostile to Russia, and that it was no wonder that public opinion in Russia was puzzled and disturbed.

"The Russian Revolution is one of the finest and most hopeful achievements of this war...But a conference on war aims is needed by the peoples of England and France and the United States to only a less degree than by the people of Russia."

Price was at the Pre-Parliament in the Mariinsky Palace when Kerensky announced the powers which the Military Revolutionary Committee had arrogated to itself<sup>4</sup>; he was at the Smolny when power passed into

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<sup>3</sup> Manchester Guardian 15.11.17. Dated Petrograd Tuesday. Probably Tuesday 3, not 11, November. 'Russia and the Paris Conference'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>4</sup> The Military Revolutionary Committee was first set up by the Petrograd Soviet to co-ordinate resistance to the Kornilov coup. It then, according to Sukhanov, "fell into suspended animation, to revive on different foundations later on and tower aloft in October". None of the sources used for this note can agree on a single date; it is only possible to put events in a rough chronological order. Early in October a Bolshevik-initiated resolution in the Petrograd Soviet was passed by the Executive Committee of the Soviet: that an apparatus should be created ready to take power. A few days later, and presumably to implement the resolution, the formation, or re-formation of the Military Revolutionary Committee was announced, also its composition. It was to represent the Soviet, the Soldiers' Committee of the Soviet, the Central Committee of the Fleet, various party military organisations, and a number of trade unions. Its ostensible purpose then was still the defence of the capital. At the end of October the Petrograd garrison announced that it no longer recognised the authority of the Provisional Government and would obey its orders only through the Military Revolutionary Committee. It is nowhere claimed that the Committee actually made the revolution, but Carr, in his remarkably sparse allusion to its existence, maintained that it was the body that had made the military preparations for it. See M.N. Sukhanov The Russian Revolution 1917 (1955) pp. 505, 561-562; J. Reed Ten Days That Shook the World (1970) ed. pp. 71. 187;



the hands of the Bolsheviks during the night of 4/5 November. When he got back from the Smolny he found a message at his lodgings from the Danish Telegraph Agency offering to convey his despatches<sup>5</sup>. It is almost inconceivable that he wrote nothing at this time, but it is certain that nothing got through until 20 November, when a half column appeared in the Manchester Guardian headed 'Bolshevik Ascendancy'. It was the first authoritative and signed report to appear in the paper since the Bolshevik Revolution. In it Price gave his own explanation for the success of the coup: the many failures of the Provisional government, matched by the growth of support for the Bolsheviks throughout Russia, which he had just seen for himself. He pointed out, however, that "though supported by the masses" the Bolsheviks were isolated from the right wing of the Socialists and indicated that they were having difficulty in forming a government. Scott, in a leader published the same day, seized on this point and concluded that the Bolsheviks were "a clique who, after a fortnight in office have begun to disintegrate and have demonstrated the poverty of their authority". All the same, Scott concluded with a warning against interference. Russia would have to work her way through her troubles by herself. "Though efforts of ours may hamper they are hardly likely to assist the process of recovery." At some point in late November or early December Price was appointed telegraphic correspondent for the Manchester Guardian as well as Special Correspondent, which he had always been, but it was not from

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Price Reminiscences (1921) pp. 156-557, 186; Carr The Bolshevik Revolution Vol. I, p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> The same offer appears to have been made to Soskice, who at least once was able to make use of it. Among the Soskice papers is a handwritten despatch on Den Norske Rikstelegraf forms which is substantially what appeared over his name in the Manchester Guardian on 24 November. (Stow Hill papers, House of Lords. DS1. Box 4 MG/5.)

him that Scott first learned of the Bolsheviks' proposal for a general armistice. This arrived in an agency report from Copenhagen which was printed on 22 November and on the strength of it Scott wrote a shocked and critical leader. But from now on reports from Price began to arrive fairly regularly, and a kind of rapport grew up between editor and correspondent the extent of which Price himself did not appreciate until many years later. Although some of Price's reports were of a general nature and the material in them does not lend itself to easy classification, most of what he wrote in the next three months dealt in the main with four subjects and the effective collaboration of Price and Scott will be more clearly seen if they are again dealt with thematically. It is therefore proposed to identify them as the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, the publication of the Secret Treaties, the Constituent Assembly, and the origins of the civil war.

(i) Brest Litovsk

Within hours of its formation the Bolshevik government published an appeal to all nations and all governments to stop the war. Trotsky, as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs followed this up on 8 November with a Note to all Allied Ambassadors which he asked them to regard as an official proposal for the immediate opening of peace negotiations. The Note was not answered by any of the Allied governments, and on 13 November Russian plenipotentiaries crossed over to the German lines to arrange for preliminary talks to begin at Brest Litovsk on 19 November. The first report from Price which mentioned the possibility of an armistice was written on 24 November



and printed three days later<sup>6</sup>. In it he said that the proposed armistice was being seen in Russia as the first step for carrying on revolutionary propaganda in the German army, but added that there would be no demobilisation of the Russian army at the front as yet. The armistice proposals were also, he said, connected with the elections to the Constituent Assembly which were then taking place, and were designed to secure the votes of the army as well as those of the proletariat and the peasants. Scott's comment on this despatch, printed the same day, was surprisingly constructive in view of the reproachfulness of his leader on 22 November. Price's report had, he said thrown "much light on the procedure and aims of the Maximalist Government". Their direct approach to "German democracy" was unconventional but their instinct was right. German democracy was at "the heart of the problem" and "the democracies of the Allies will respond instantly when the German democracy asserts itself and establishes itself". The Bolsheviks were seeking, he pointed out, a general and not a separate peace, but having no confidence that the Allied governments share their desire for peace, they were justifying their lack of faith by publishing the secret treaties. Scott concluded that the Bolshevik proposals should be studied objectively by governments "who have not always distinguished themselves by an intelligent understanding of revolutionary Russia". But the Bolsheviks, he said, "should also try to understand the Allied democracies, who know that they are in this war through Russia". Three days later (30 November) Scott again appealed to the Bolsheviks to consider not only their own interests only but to bear in mind

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<sup>6</sup> Manchester Guardian 27.11.17. Dated Saturday (24 November). 'The Armistice Proposals'. Signed M. Philips Price.

what repercussions peace with Germany might have on Russia's allies. As if in answer, a telegram from Price was printed next day (1 December)<sup>7</sup> which consisted mainly of quotations from the Russian press on the subject of the proposed armistice, and concluded with an extract from Pravda (the official organ of the Bolsheviks) printed on 28 November. "It is in our power to prevent German troops from being sent to the West and we will insist on this in the armistice negotiations."

Another discursive account of opinion in Russia insofar as he could assess it, was printed in the Manchester Guardian on 7 December<sup>8</sup>. Price began by saying that he had just interviewed a delegate of the armistice commission: "the delegate told me that the composition of the Commission was the best guarantee that secret diplomacy had gone for ever so far as Russia was concerned". He then summarised the line being taken by a number of journals, indicating that opinion on the desirability of an armistice was by no means unanimous. On 9 December Price attended a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets (TsIK)<sup>9</sup> called to hear a

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<sup>7</sup> Manchester Guardian 1.12.17. Dated 'Petrograd Wednesday' (28 November). 'The Russian Press and the Allies'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 7.12.17. Dated 'Petrograd Tuesday. (4 December). 'Opinion in Russia: Peace expected after Armistice'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>9</sup> Russian acronyms and abbreviations are a linguistic study in themselves. A useful table of those most commonly needed in order to read modern Russian history is given on p. 429 in Vol. I of E.H. Carr's The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923. In this paper those organisations which will most frequently be noted by their acronyms are: the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets: TsIK; the Council of People's Commissars appointed by TsIK to carry out its instructions: Sovnarkom; the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs: Narkomindel; the Supreme Council of National Economy: Vesenkha; the Communist International: Comintern; and the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Social Democratic/Bolshevik/Communist Party: Politbureau.



report from the armistice commission. His short account was printed two days later. He devoted nearly a quarter of it to Kamenev's insistence that Russia was not deserting the Allies, though how far this position could be maintained "depended on whether the Allied democracies took a decisive step" between then and the opening of full peace negotiations<sup>10</sup>. Price concluded his account with a description of the "confident" mood of the Executive Committee and noted that the soldier's and sailors' delegates had made it clear that they were determined to have peace. Scott picked this up in a leader the following day (12 December) and noted with approval that Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, at least and at last had been realistic enough to recognise that Russia could not be made to fight and to advise that no attempt should be made to constrain her to do so<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> LEV BORISOVICH KAMENEV (1883-1936). Kamenev gained much of his revolutionary education in Paris and London or working underground in Russia. He was involved in starting or managing a number of newspapers, including Novaya Zhizn and Pravda. Married to Trotsky's sister, he and Zinoviev became recognised as Lenin's closest associates in exile. In March 1917 he returned from Siberia to assume direction, together with Zinoviev and Stalin, of the direction of Bolshevik strategy until Lenin's return. Although on the conciliatory wing of the party, he was elected to the Central Committee in April and used his position to question the validity of Lenin's tactics right until the November revolution had actually taken place. Nonetheless it was he who was in the chair of the Second Congress of Soviets on the night the Winter Palace was taken. Despite his conciliationist views Lenin continued to find uses for his diplomatic and linguistic skills, notably at Brest Litovsk. He was elected to the Politbureau in 1919 and was at the height of his power and influence until 1925, when he publicly denounced one-man rule at the 14th Party Congress. From then on his fortunes and influence declined and he perished after the first of the Show Trials in 1936. No detailed study of Kamenev has yet appeared in the English language.

<sup>11</sup> Buchanan's telegrams 1878 and 1881 were discussed by the War Cabinet on 20 November. Unfortunately the originals have not survived, but Cecil reported that in them Buchanan had "urged the Government that as the situation was now desperate, it was advisable to set Russia free from her agreement with the Allies, so that she could act as she chose, and decided to purchase peace on Germany's terms or fight on with the Allies." This course, Buchanan, as

On 19 December a precis of the terms of the armistice agreement was printed in the Manchester Guardian, together with another short survey by Price of opinion in Russia<sup>12</sup>. He reported that the Bolsheviks were taking credit for ending the fighting on the eastern front, but that the Menshevik, Right S.R., and Kadet press had described the armistice as treachery to the Allies. The Left S.R. journal, while claiming a political and moral victory for the Bolsheviks admitted that the victory had not also been a strategic one "for the Germans had already made fresh dispositions" and in any case they had never had more than 35% of their troops on the eastern front. Meanwhile Scott had again (17 December) praised Buchanan, and welcomed the imminent release of Tchicherin from Brixton Gaol<sup>13</sup>. He

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reported by Cecil, would "if adopted...make it impossible for the Bolsheviks to reproach the Allies with driving Russian soldiers to slaughter for their Imperialist aims." War Cab. 286.

<sup>12</sup> Manchester Guardian 19.12.17. Dated Petrograd Sunday (16 December). 'The Armistice: Party Opinion in Russia.' Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>13</sup> GEORGII VASIL'EVICH TCHICHERIN (1872-1936). Born of a noble family with strong diplomatic service traditions, Tchicherin was more reclusive than his ancestors and initially joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1896) as an archivist. He began to take an interest in radical movements both in Russia and Germany, but his first political affiliation was with the Mensheviks. He was in England when the war broke out and soon came to oppose it with vigour, using his position as Secretary of the Committee of Delegates of Russian Socialist Groups in London as a platform for his denunciations. For his activities in support of the Committee (which was formed to prevent the deportation to Russia or alternatively conscription in Britain of Russian emigres) Tchicherin was in August 1917, arrested and imprisoned in Brixton Gaol. By now he had become convinced that Menshivism was not enough and his increasingly well-known Bolshevik sympathies combined with his experience made him a valuable convert. Trotsky secured his release and he returned to Russia in January 1918; within two months he had succeeded Trotsky as Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had little scope for his talents as a diplomatist during the civil war but between 1921-24 secured widespread diplomatic recognition for the Soviet government. He was the architect of the Rapallo Treaty which produced a major realignment of European powers. Anti-British and pro-German, he was unimpressed by the League of Nations and often at odds with his Deputy, Maxim Litvinov. Never a member of the Politbureau, he lost his principal support with Lenin's death and resigned his post in 1927. Though without influence, he was not disgraced and died in



called for the de facto recognition of the Bolshevik government. "We should... accept facts as they are and...treat the Bolshevik Government as the only one that is representative of Russia in her present mood...We cannot prevent Russia from concluding peace if she wishes; we can prevent her from forming a friendship with Germany that will have a point directed against ourselves." Earlier in the same editorial he had repeated his advice against interference in Russian internal affairs.

For the remainder of 1917 references to the progress of the peace negotiations were of a rather scattered and fragmentary nature throughout Price's reports, which had to deal with a variety of other topics. But on 21 December a report from him was printed quoting Trotsky as having said that "the Russian delegates had only gained their two points - no transference of German troops to the West and the right of Russian troops to fraternise with German troops - after great difficulty." On the following day a report appeared from Price stating that the Germans were taking advantage of "the desire of the Russian soldier for peace at any price", and it was desire which had "forced" the government in to negotiations for a separate peace. In a report printed on 29 December Price summarised the five points of

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retirement in Moscow in 1936. For further reading on Tchicherin in English see Richard K. Debo: 'George Tchicherin: Soviet Russia's Second Foreign Commissar' (Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1964; 'The Making of a Bolshevik: Georgii Tchicherin in England, 1914-1914' Slavic Review XXV No. 4 (December 1966) pp. 651-662; Louis Fischer: The Soviets in World Affairs (Princeton, 1951, 2nd edition); Georges Haupt and Jean-Jacques Marie (ed.s) Makers of the Russian Revolution (Ithaca N.Y. 1974) pp. 331-341; Theodore H. von Laue 'Soviet Diplomacy: G.V. Tchicherin, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs 1918-1930' in The Diplomats, 1919-1939 (eds) Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton 1953) pp. 234-281.

the Russian peace proposals to the Central Powers, which included the removal of troops from occupied territories, the independence and rights of nationalities to self-determination, and the forswearing of indemnities. He went on to point out that the acceptance in whole or in part by the Central Powers of at least some of these principles would automatically secure recognition for the same principles as applied to Belgium, Poland or Serbia. And in a report printed on 31 December he pointed out that German acceptance (as it then seemed to observers) of these points had undoubtedly raised the prestige of the Bolshevik government, who could now "show the wavering democratic elements that they are the only people who can force foreign powers to recognise the Russian peace programme". Scott challenged this conclusion in an editorial printed on the same day. "Fine words do not alter facts" he said, and the facts were that Russia had surrendered territories and people without securing for them "anything more than a colourable appearance of liberty" and no real freedom of choice for those concerned. Scott concluded that Russia was "lost as an ally".

Yet on 3, 4 and 5 January 1918 Scott wrote a series of editorials on the Russian peace negotiations which were as positive as his last had been negative. This could have been due to incomplete or misleading information that he had been getting. There is no evidence that Price's despatches were yet being censored except much earlier in the case of the appointment of the Grand Duke Nicholas as Commander in Chief noted above. He had, however, complained to all his correspondents that his letters to them did not seem to be getting through. Yet the first of Scott's trio of powerful editorials began



by admitting that it had "until very recently" been too readily assumed that the Bolshevik government had no cards in its hand and no alternative but to accept a dictated peace. "We ourselves were misled by the fragmentary form in which an important telegram reached us into believing that this is what had actually happened." (My emphasis). This could easily have been Price's immediately preceding cable in which he made but completely failed to substantiate the Bolshevik claim to have had its peace programme recognised by the Germans. Such a claim would certainly have been inconvenient to the British War Cabinet. Scott went on to enumerate the various strengths in the Russian position: their very commitment to peace for a start; the potential influence of German Socialists, together with the known popular desire for peace in Germany and Austria and a recent mutiny in the Germany Navy<sup>14</sup>; Russia's most potent defensive weapon - winter; and the fact that Germany had more to gain from a peaceful penetration of Russia than from a continuation of the war in the east. Scott pointed out that the Allied publics had not yet been allowed to hear the Bolshevik proposals for a general peace, but insofar as the Bolsheviks appeared to be adhering to them "they go a very long way indeed" towards satisfying the Allied conditions for a post-war settlement. "It is for us to support, in so far as we may be able, the Bolshevik demands."

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<sup>14</sup> The suppression of news of a mutiny in the German Navy in December 1917 appears to have been very successful. What Scott actually wrote was "...the mutiny in the German fleet of which a good deal less has been heard in this country than its importance merits." If this was a case of censorship policy at work, it is certainly consistent with the subsequent application of that policy to the Reichstag Resolution in July 1918. (See below Chp. 7 p. 228).

Next day (4 January) Scott addressed himself to the "war of principles" being waged at Brest Litovsk: the principles of no annexations and the right to self-determination of small nationalities. The Germans, said Scott (and here perhaps he was also speaking for himself) had not been quite prepared for the "extraordinary energy" with which the Bolsheviks had repudiated the German proposal that the territories already occupied by them should be considered as having already chosen not to be Russian. The Russian sheep was not after all a sheep: "it has fangs...it actually threatens to use them." It might be supposed as certain that the Germans would reject the Russians' insistence on these principles "but for one supreme consideration. Russia holds the door of the prison house". Scott went on to list the vast resources which were, in his strange choice of metaphor, stored in that prison house: resources that Germany wanted. The moral of this tale, said Scott, was that whatever the Allies thought of other aspects of Bolshevik policy "the fact remains that they stand for freedom, not only within the Russian state but in every other state, and the policy for which they are now contending is broadly speaking our own policy and that of our Allies".

In the third of this remarkable series Scott, perhaps thinking wishfully, noted that there had been a "curious and marked revulsion of feeling" in favour of the Bolsheviks for the stand they were taking, and that there had even been "credible" reports that the British government had decided upon de facto recognition. He would welcome such a step, particularly in view of the internationalist character of the Bolshevik philosophy. "It is a new thing, this



spirit of the people appealing to the common interests of all the peoples... it is in itself a fine thing, and destined to have some transforming results." Scott reiterated his belief that the contest was not as unequal as it seemed. The Russians had strong moral and political weapons and they had friends too, even if many of them were now in German prisons. They should stand firm and the Allies should not stand aloof.

The dialogue between Price and Scott was continued with Price's next message, printed on 8 January, in which he reported that the refusal of the Allies to join in the peace process was being taken by the Bolsheviks to mean that they need no longer insist on German recognition of the right of self-determination. He also reported that delegates to the peace talks had stated that the Germans appeared to show "great anxiety" to conclude them and to pass on to talks about trade, while the Russians, knowing the internal situation in Germany, were in no hurry. This appeared to prove that Scott had been right in his analysis of Russian strength.

Price added, however, that the Bolsheviks were now expecting the Allies to approach the Central Powers "with a view to finding a common peace formula...in order to defeat the principles of the Russian Revolution". This could lead to an attempt by the Russians "to barter Russian conquests in Asia for German conquests in Europe" in order to prevent such an alignment against them. Scott was quick to take note of the threat to British interests implied in the "interesting and candid analysis of the Bolshevik policy" of his Petrograd correspondent. In a leader printed on the same day as the

report (5 January) Scott elaborated on Germany's internal difficulties and congratulated the Bolsheviks in having brought them about. He went on to deal with the possibility of bartering conquests. The British, he said, were not called upon to pronounce an opinion on the Bolsheviks but to defend the interests of their own country. "We know of no way of helping British interests except through the Bolsheviks. Whether they are politically wise or not is not the question. Did we ask that question when the Tsar was in power?"

In the course of the following week the only report from Price to arrive in Cross Street dealt with the Bolshevik repudiation of Russia's national debt, and Scott had to depend on agency reports of developments at Brest Litovsk. On 15 January he began an editorial on the situation in Russia by deploring the fact that the British now had no-one to represent them at Petrograd. Buchanan had returned to London, and Lockhart had not yet arrived in Petrograd. Moreover the British had "apparently no policy except to stand aside in offended helplessness". Trotsky had drawn the conclusion, as reported not only by Scott's own correspondent but also by Arthur Ransome, who was described by Scott as "the able and well-informed correspondent of the Daily News" that Britain was now actively encouraging Germany in her annexationist policy in the east "in order to buy her off in the west". Yet on the vital question of the principle of annexations the Bolsheviks had taken a stand "as courageous as it is just and are fighting not only their own fight but ours". The British like the Germans might be surprised, but they should at least also be pleased "unless indeed" Scott concluded ominously "we were to suppose, as the



Bolsheviks believe and as we absolutely refuse to believe, that our Government in its heart desires that the Bolshevik effort should fail".

On 31 January the Manchester Guardian carried an account by Price, written on 27 January, of Trotsky's speech to a meeting of the Third All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Delegates jointly with the All-Russia Congress of Workers and Soldiers' Delegates on 26 January<sup>15</sup>. The Central Executive Committee (TsIK) had already decided by then, though by only a narrow margin, to stop the war but not to conclude peace on the terms then offered by Germany<sup>16</sup>. Price quoted

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<sup>15</sup> The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets was summoned by TsIK (the creation of the Second Congress) to demonstrate where popular power really lay after the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly. It included not only delegates from the provincial Soviets but also those delegates from the Assembly who were willing to recognise that final authority lay with the Soviets: in effect the Bolshevik and Left S.R. delegates. Its first plenary session was held on 26 January, and Price, who was present, described it in some detail on pp. 222-227 of his Reminiscences, as well as in his account for the Manchester Guardian. After endorsing the previously agreed formula for the next stage of the negotiations at Brest Litovsk, the Congress went on to discuss and agree the final draft of the Declaration of the Rights of Toiling and Exploited Peoples.

<sup>16</sup> Taking advantage of the presence in Petrograd of party leaders from all over Russia for the forthcoming Third Congress, Lenin invited a number of them to an enlarged meeting of the Central Committee of the Party on 21 January, and put forward, in advance of the meeting of the Congress, his arguments against embarking upon a revolutionary war and in favour of signing a peace with Germany, however great the territorial losses entailed. His arguments were narrowly rejected, but before the next meeting of the Central Committee proper (due to be held on 24 January) Lenin discussed with Trotsky the relative merits of his policy formulation and Trotsky's 'no war no peace' proposal. Having secured from Trotsky an assurance that if his own proposal failed he would not support a revolutionary war, Lenin agreed to give Trotsky's plan a chance. At the meeting of the Central Committee Lenin's views were again defeated by the proponents of revolutionary war, but Trotsky's scheme offered a face-saving alternative, with the rider added that the negotiations were to be dragged out for as long as possible. This formula, endorsed by Sovnarkom, was duly approved by the Third Congress on 26 January. See Richard K. Debo: Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia 1917-1918 (Liverpool, 1979) pp. 72-84; Price, Reminiscences, pp. 222-227; Issac Deutscher: the Prophet Armed :

extensively, presumably from his own notes, Trotsky's denunciation of the attitudes of both the Central Powers and the Allies which, he maintained, proved his thesis that Russia was engaged not in a national but a class struggle. The Allies were hypocrites, Trotsky was reported to have said, ready to agree to an annexationist peace at the expense of Russia for what else had Lloyd George meant when he said Russia could make her own peace with Germany<sup>17</sup>. Trotsky had ended with the affirmation: "We shall never sign a disgraceful peace with the German tyrants but will carry on defensive Socialist war against all our class enemies". Scott added a rider to this report in a very short leader on the same day, which took note of the principled stand of the Bolshevik government and concluded that "at Brest Litovsk, as elsewhere, the struggle with German militarism and Imperialism is very far indeed from being over". It was, however, approaching what was widely perceived to be its end. The day after Price wrote his account of Trotsky's speech he spent time conversing "with party leaders in the lobbies" and in a despatch printed on 2 February reported that wide divisions of opinion still existed on the question of signing a separate peace. The only common denominator between the factions appeared to be the recognition that much depended upon "the proletariat of the Central Empires". If the

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Trotsky 1879-1921 Chapter 11 'The Drama of Brest Litovsk'.

<sup>17</sup> By the end of 1917 the Lloyd George government was experiencing severe difficulties in mobilising sufficient manpower for the requirements of war industries, and lack of enthusiasm for the war had become so obvious that the Prime Minister invited the Trade Unions to a conference on the subject of war aims. This took place on 5 January 1918 at Caxton Hall. See Lloyd George: War Memoirs Vol. V, Appendix II, pp. 2515-2527. What Lloyd George actually said a propos the possibility that Russia would sign a separate peace, was: "...if the present rulers of Russia take action which is independent of their Allies, we have no means of intervening to arrest the catastrophe which is assuredly befalling their country. Russia can only be saved by her own people".



moderate Socialists in Germany and Austria agreed to compromise with their governments, those governments might succeed in "forcing veiled annexations of the Russian Revolution". Before Scott wrote on the subject again, and in his last leader before the conclusion of the peace of Brest Litovsk, the Germans had resumed their invasion of Russia. On 19 February Scott recognised that the "new war" was "directed against the Bolshevik Government because the Bolshevik Government will not sign a peace". Only a formal peace would leave the German leaders free to concentrate wholly on the Western Front. Scott reminded his readers that these were men who had been "fighting democracy in Germany and outside Germany all their lives." They had talked peace with the Bolsheviks for as long as it seemed that the Bolsheviks would comply with their plans and in so doing "demonstrate themselves as merely ridiculous. But the Bolsheviks instead have inflicted a heavy moral defeat on the Germany militarists and their principles, as the strikes show, menace Germany with infection."

(ii) The Secret Treaties

In the first of his editorials to make any reference to an armistice (see above p. 123) Scott had observed that the Bolsheviks were publishing the secret treaties of their Allies because they had no confidence that their Allies had any intention in joining with them in the pursuit of a general peace. When he wrote that (24 November) the first translated texts had not yet arrived in England, but the existence of secret treaties or understandings between the Allies had been known about or at least guessed at for some time. One of the first acts of the Petrograd Soviet after the March revolution had

been to repudiate them in principle, but Miliukov had immediately issued a statement on his own account to the effect that Russia would stand by her international obligations. In his interview with Price on 22 April he clearly intended to reinforce that statement. His subsequent downfall was an indication that not merely the Petrograd Soviet but now also the Provisional government were looking for a new style in diplomacy. After the November Revolution, and as soon as it became clear that the Allied governments were going to stand aside from the peace initiative of the Bolsheviks, the new government found in the secret treaties the perfect argument with which to demonstrate to the world why they should proceed with it anyway. Price heard on 23 November that Izvestia was about to publish the texts of the secret treaties. He went to the Soviet Foreign Office and, on Trotsky's personal authority, was allowed to take copies home with him provided he returned them next day. He sat up all night translating the documents, and then sent off a series of despatches to the Manchester Guardian which appeared at intervals over the next ten weeks. The first was printed on 27 November and the second on 28 November. The rest appeared on 5, 7, 19 and 20 December and 30 January and 8 February 1918.

Price has been generally credited with having secured a major journalistic scoop; certainly it was one which was remembered when much else of his work was forgotten. Certainly, also, the Manchester Guardian was the first British paper to publish any of the so-called treaties, many of which were not so much treaties as understandings or even exchanges of diplomatic correspondence. But as revelation followed revelation in the Russian press other British papers could



and did publish their own translations or epitomes of them. Scott, although he printed, so far as can be ascertained, everything Price sent to him on the subject, obviously did not personally regard this material as being quite as sensational as many other people did and have continued to do. He wrote only one major and one very minor editorial on the treaties, the first of which appeared with the second batch of translations of 28 November 1917. He declared against secret diplomacy and was all in favour of "re-writing all these secret agreements on a clean sheet of notepaper". But he added that the documents should be accepted "only under great reserve, for the object of the Maximalist Government is to present a case, not to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth". He also pointed out with some justice that the documents, even at their face value, were not all of equal authenticity. Some appeared to be just proposals, others seemed to have been wrongly dated in the light of known events, yet others were already revised, irrelevant or obsolete. The disclosures were "partial and, we dare say, inaccurate and misleading". But he reiterated that they did make a case for open diplomacy; moreover men who were fighting had a right to know what they were fighting for. With the last of the treaty publications (8 February 1918) he wrote another short leader pointing out that the account given in it of Rumania's bargaining at least gave the lie to the rumour that Russia had forced Rumania into the war by an ultimatum.

Despite Scott's cautious response, reaction to the publication of the treaties in the House of Commons was lively. On 28 November, the day on which the first translations appeared, Cecil, <sup>in</sup> reply to a question

from R.L. Outhwaite M.P., merely denied that the Allies were secretly committed to "aims of vast territorial aggrandisement"<sup>18</sup>. But next day, perhaps when the information had had time to sink in, he was confronted with a flurry of oral questions from not just Outhwaite but also Richard Lambert, Joseph King and James Hoggel<sup>19</sup>. He refused to answer any of them, and had to be rescued by the Speaker, who insisted that they should be presented in writing. They did not, however, appear in written form, suggesting that the Official Press Bureau had been busy (see below, Chapter 7 p. 225). On 3 December Cecil still refused to answer any question about the treaties on the ground that he had not yet received copies of them from the British Ambassador in Petrograd<sup>20</sup>. On 12 December Balfour himself replied somewhat testily to a question from the Irish M.P. John Dillon: "the documents in question should not have been published and I do not propose to republish them."<sup>21</sup> There is no doubt that the publication of the treaties embarrassed the British government. It also caused widespread popular resentment. Appendix III deals in greater detail with the repercussions of the publication of the treaties both inside and outside the House of Commons.

It remains to summarise what the articles about the Secret Treaties which Price sent in to the Manchester Guardian actually contained. On 27 November readers learned that since 24 February 1916 Russia's right to Constantinople had been considered a settled thing, and that Russia was to have a free hand in Poland in return for the cession to France of Alsace and the Lorraine and Saar basins and the creation of

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<sup>18</sup> Hansard 28.11.17. Col.s 1986/7

<sup>19</sup> Ibid 29.11.17. Col. 2191.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid 3.12.17. Col.s. 24/26.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid 12.12.17. Col. 461.



an autonomous neutral state on the left bank of the Rhine, under French military rule for as long as was considered necessary. The terms of the Russo-Rumanian Convention of 1916 were disclosed on 28 November. This gave Rumania Bukovina, Banat and Transylvania as the price of entering the war on the side of the Allies. On the same day, details were given of a Convention in London in April 1915 which provided concessions in Serbia and Montenegro for Italy in return for withdrawing from the Triple Alliance and joining the Entente powers. On the same day the existence was also revealed of an agreement made in the spring of 1916 between Russia, France and England for the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Russia was to get the vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Bitlis and Van and part of Khurdistan up to the Persian frontier. France got the Syrian coastline, the vilayet of Adana and part of Lesser Armenia. England was to have Lower Mesopotamia and special rights in the ports of Haifa and Jaffa. A number of independent Arab states were to be set up in the interstices of this settlement, and Palestine was to become the protectorate of all three beneficiaries of the agreement. Spheres of influence in Persia were divided between Britain and Russia.

On 5 and 7 December the Manchester Guardian printed some of the correspondence of the Provisional government, also sent by Price. This included an account of Bulgaria's bargaining (at the expense of Greece and Turkey) for her support of the Central Powers; and Greek demands for Turkish and Serbian territory made during a long period of haggling which had continued throughout most of 1915 for her support of the Allies. Britain was deeply implicated, having at one stage offered Cyprus as an inducement. On 19 December the Manchester

Guardian printed evidence dating from August 1917 that the Chargé d'Affaires of the Provisional government in London, Nabokov<sup>22</sup> had passed on information from an unidentified American source to the effect that the Stockholm Conference was inspired by German propaganda, and that this alleged fact gave the Provisional government an excuse to pull out from the Conference. There was also, in this collection, a telegram from the Rumanian Minister in Petrograd to his government, after an interview with Kornilov, in which he reported that Kornilov had admitted that he deliberately evacuated Riga because he thought the effect of the fall of the city would help to restore discipline in the Russian Army. Apart from a report in the Manchester Guardian of 20 December that Russia and Japan had agreed in July 1916 to keep the influence of any third power out of China, the rest of the Secret Treaty disclosures were

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<sup>22</sup> Little is known about Constantin Nabokov and that little is mainly from his own account of himself during the relatively short period he was in Britain. He must have been a Tsarist career diplomat, and came to London as Counsellor to the Russian Embassy in December 1915. In January 1917 he was promoted Charge d'Affaires and held that post until the November Revolution. After that he formed a short-lived, anti-Bolshevik Russian Government Committee in London and refused to hand over the keys of the Russian Consulate General to Litvinov until called to heel by the Foreign Office, who solved the problem by closing the building down. The British Government continued, however, to pay Nabokov a salary (formally held to be part of a repayable loan to Kolchak) until the end of March 1919. He wrote incessantly and at length throughout 1918 to Cecil, Hardinge and Sir Robert Clerk, usually advocating intervention of one kind or another, and styling himself as 'Representative of the late Provisional Government'. The Foreign Office stuck strictly to protocol during this period and did nothing more than acknowledge receipt of his letters. They were not answered, nor did he see any of the officials to whom they were addressed. Nabokov enjoyed a brief period of further usefulness later in the year when he was used by the Foreign Office as an intermediary for contacts with the Omsk Directorate, and was granted the use of a cypher again. But the Directorate sent its own representative, Sazonov, to the Paris Peace Conference and Nabokov found himself once more representing no-one. In September 1919 Sazonov ordered him to leave London and to take charge of the Legation of the Omsk Directorate in Norway, but it seems unlikely that he did so for his book The Ordeal of a Diplomat was published in London only two years later.



all further details about Rumania's entry into the war. On 30 January 1918 the paper published a short account and on 8 February a very full account of the documents recording the extremely hard bargaining which had gone on for over two years after 7 August 1914, with the object of bringing Rumania into the war on the side of the Allies. Again Britain and France were deeply involved, having promised an advance on the Salonika front to counteract any possible pressure on Rumania from Bulgaria. There was also evidence that in May 1917 the Provisional government had undertaken to abide by the territorial concessions promised to Rumania, however much the Petrograd Soviet might, by then, be calling for a foreign policy of no annexations and no indemnities.

### (iii) The Constituent Assembly

The third theme that runs through Price's despatches between November 1917 and February 1918 was the rise and fall of the Constituent Assembly. The notion, which progressively became a fiction, that a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage would eventually underwrite all the reforms proposed by the Provisional government was maintained at first by the Bolsheviks. Lenin, at the opening session of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets said that it would be for the Constituent Assembly to ratify the terms of any peace settlement that might be reached with Germany. The decree on land was also a provisional measure, pending "a final solution by the Constituent Assembly". Elections were called for 13 November and carried out in an atmosphere of considerable freedom, but the candidates' lists had been drawn up in the early autumn and the situation had changed. The results gave a distorted picture of

articulate opinion by any standards. The Social Revolutionaries, with their now quite incompatible left and right wings combined, emerged with 58% of the votes and the Bolsheviks with 25%. Nonetheless the government announced that the Assembly would be opened as soon as the first 400 delegates had arrived in the capital. It was subsequently decided that the opening should take place on 18 January 1918.

During most of the time between the November Revolution and the opening of the Assembly Price had viewed the policies of the Bolshevik government with considerable reserve. In a report to the Manchester Guardian printed on 28 November he considered the possibility that the All-Russia Peasant Congress might decide to support the government<sup>23</sup>. The S.R.s were the traditional party of the peasants, and the Left S.R.s had been gaining ground even at the expense of the Right peasants. Nonetheless Price thought that such a support would have a "sobering effect" upon the government and strengthen the Bolshevik Right against "the demagoguery of Lenin and Trotsky", which leaves little room for doubt as to what Price thought of them. When the Peasant Congress did decide to join the government Price immediately saw this move in terms of its effect on the Constituent Assembly. In a despatch printed on 3 December<sup>24</sup> he described the probable voting patterns in the Assembly on a regional basis: the Ukraine, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Cossack territories. Only the Ukrainians, he thought, might agree to join a Coalition government with the Bolsheviks. The decisive factor in the

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<sup>23</sup> Manchester Guardian 28.11.17. Datelined Petrograd Monday. (26 November). 'Russian Party Forces'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid 3.12.17. Datelined Petrograd Thursday. (29 November). 'Russian Socialist Coalition'. Signed 'From Our Correspondent'.



Assembly would be the peasantry of the Central and Volga provinces, who were sure to vote for the S.R.s. But the list of S.R. candidates had been made up before the revolution, at a time when the Right S.R.s were dominant in the party. The Left S.R.s would therefore have either to persuade the Right to support the coalition with the Bolsheviks which they wanted, or vote directly for the Bolsheviks. The possibility, said Price, had led the Bolsheviks "during the last few days" to adopt a more conciliatory policy towards other Socialist parties in the hope of forming a block in the Constituent Assembly which they could not otherwise hope to control. This impression was swept away when the Bolsheviks shortly afterwards dissolved the Petrograd Municipal Council and ordered elections for a new council to be run on soviet lines. Reporting this in an article printed on 5 December<sup>25</sup> Price quoted Pravda of 1 December as having claimed that soviets "more truly express the will of the proletariat than any other assembly" and that any permanent constitution for Russia would have to be based on "a union of the syndicates or councils". Price concluded: "This shows clearly the inner character of the Bolshevik movement, based on the theory of anarchy and syndicalism preached during the last century by Bakunin. It is not socialism at all but syndicalism." In the same article Price predicted that Russia would now become "the arena of a great class struggle".

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<sup>25</sup> Manchester Guardian 5.12.17. Dated Petrograd Saturday. (1 December). 'The Russian Class Struggle'. Signed M. Philips Price.

Price began the next despatch in which he referred to the Constituent Assembly, (printed on 15 December)<sup>26</sup> by stating that interest in the armistice negotiations had now been "overshadowed by the conflict between the Soviet and the Constituent Assembly". The results of the election had made the support of the Centre parties, discredited by their association with the Provisional government, necessary to the Bolsheviks, "but instead of having a sobering effect it is making them increase the policy of terrorism". Newly elected Kadet members of the Assembly were being arrested as they arrived in Petrograd. Even the Left S.R.s were "powerless to arrest the mad career of the Anarcho-Syndicalist dictator" and the country was becoming more divided every day: "the classes and the masses...It is a terrible lesson in what happens when a people, tortured by 3 years of war, turns on the ruling classes who have exploited and tormented them." In a half column printed two days later (17 December)<sup>27</sup> Price reported that at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee the previous evening he had heard Lenin say "The Constituent Assembly can only meet under the guarantee of the Soviet, which alone is capable of protecting it from becoming a tool of the reactionaries". Lenin had also justified the arrest of the Kadet delegates because, he alleged, they were going to try to use the Assembly to incite civil war. Price reported that there had been some opposition to Lenin, mainly from the Left S.R. members, but that the majority of the Executive had supported him. In his next reference to the Assembly

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<sup>26</sup> Manchester Guardian 15.12.17. Datelined Petrograd Thursday. (13 December) 'Bolshevik Terrorism: How the Russian Electors Voted'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid 17.12.17. Datelined Petrograd Saturday afternoon. (15 December) 'Bolshevik Ascendancy: Merciless War on Kadet Traitors'. Signed M. Philips Price.



(28 December)<sup>28</sup> Price stated that "The whole of Russia from Bessarabia and Siberia, is breaking up into chains of autonomous republics, resisting the Bolshevik Government and protecting the Constituent Assembly". The provinces were refusing to send food to Petrograd unless the Bolsheviks recognised the Assembly, and there was only food for seven days left in the city. "The Bolshevik oligarchy, ruling in the name of the proletariat, is faced with the alternative of concession to the provinces or capitulation before the spectre of starvation."

On 8 January the Manchester Guardian printed a report from Price to the effect that the Bolsheviks were now prepared to allow the Assembly to meet provided it agreed "to recognise the authority" of the Soviet<sup>29</sup>. Price thought such an agreement unlikely. "It is as if the question were raised, who should rule England, Parliament or the Trade Union Congress?" But the Assembly did finally meet on 18 January. On that day a long article appeared, written by Price three days earlier<sup>30</sup>. In this it became clear that somewhere between 28 December 1917 and 15 January 1918 Price had begun to change his mind about the nature of Bolshevism and Bolsheviks. His fluent Russian and the fact that he now attended so many meetings and habitually talked to people about them afterwards make it seem likely that watching and listening were now playing a greater part in forming his opinion than reading the Russian newspapers. The article

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<sup>28</sup> Manchester Guardian 28.12.17. Datelined Petrograd Wednesday. (26 December). 'Bolsheviks and the Ukraine'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid 8.1.18. Datelined Petrograd Wednesday. (2 January 1918). 'Bolshevik Peace Alternatives'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid 18.1.18. Datelined Petrograd Tuesday. (15 January). 'Russian Revolutionary Developments. Titanic Struggle'. Signed M. Philips Price.

began with an analysis of the voting results for the Assembly, of the factors which had determined them, and a summary of the arguments which were being advanced as to whether or not the Assembly was representative of the current climate of opinion. The Bolsheviks had announced that they were calling another All-Russia Congress of Soviets "to test the opinion of the proletariat and exercise moral pressure on the Constituent Assembly to recognise the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat". Price now saw that the Bolsheviks were neither demagogues nor anarcho-syndicalists but were simply convinced that the war could not be ended until society was reconstructed on a socialist basis. This could not be done without first breaking up class coalitions all over the world and bringing the control of the machinery of government into the hands of the "labouring masses". The Constituent Assembly was regarded by the Bolsheviks as the embodiment of the principle of the class coalition. Price noted that "the process of proletarianisation of the Russian economy" was already going on in the provinces although it remained to be seen if local soviets could summon enough managerial and technical skills for the task. But, said Price, writing as if he had received a revelation, "an attempt is being made to reconstruct society on an entirely new basis...The October revolution, which began as an anarchical adventure, seems now developing into an attempt to bring about a revolution of ideas in the whole theory of human government."

Price appears to have been present throughout the short-lived Assembly for his next message to the Manchester Guardian, printed on 22 January, is full of quotations from speeches and in one instance



described the manner in which a speech was made<sup>31</sup>. He noted that even on the basis of the disputed franchise of the Assembly, the centre of gravity of the Revolution had obviously moved to the left, and the atmosphere was heated "in the absence of the sobering traditions and precedents of the western democracies". Tseretelli<sup>32</sup> speaking on behalf of the Mensheviks (now reduced to a very small group) had protested at the Bolshevik ultimatum on the question of conceding power to the Soviet and argued that the break-up of the Assembly would only serve the interests of the bourgeoisie. But, said Price, his speech "sounded like an apology for the eight months in which the Russian Revolution wandered in the wilderness under Menshevik guidance". On the same day (22 January) the Manchester Guardian printed a second despatch from Price, this time reporting Lenin's speech in which he moved for the dissolution of the Assembly on the grounds that the parliamentary phase of the revolution was already over and the time for the dictatorship of the proletariat had come. Price clearly found the speed of this development difficult to accept and commented that "the methods of high-handed coercion and

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<sup>31</sup> Manchester Guardian 22.1.18. Dated Petrograd Saturday. (19 January). 'Bolshevik Assembly Parties'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>32</sup> IRAKLI GEORGIEVICH TSERETELLI (1881-1959). The leading Georgian Menshevik (though opposed to Georgian nationalism), he was only briefly active in Social Democratic politics before 1917, spending most of the years between 1902 and 1917 either in exile or disabled by ill health. In Siberia he became the central figure in the Siberian Zimmerwaldist group of Social Democrats opposed to the war. He served as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in the first Coalition Government and rapidly established himself as an inveterate believer in the possibility of a non-Bolshevik but socialist alternative government after the November Revolution. He led the opposition to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, after which he retired to Georgia and reluctantly played a small part in the government of the Republic of TransCaucasia. He abandoned political activity in 1929 and died in New York. For further reading see W.H. Roobol: Tseretelli: A Democrat in the Russian Revolution: A Political Biography (The Hague, 1976); and S.G. y Garda: 'The Origins of Revolutionary Defensism: I.G. Tseretelli and the Siberian Zimmerwaldists'. Slavic Review Vol. 41 (1982) pp. 454-470.

terrorism which the Bolsheviks adopt to carry out their ideas are an inevitable result of the bitter class war that makes conciliation between two factions in such bodies as the Constituent Assembly impossible". He could see, and went on to explain, why the moderate socialists had forfeited the confidence of workers, soldiers and poorer peasants, but he was clearly worried by the outcome. By their action the Bolsheviks had "created the Russian counterpart of Sinn Fein".

Earlier in the second of his articles printed on 22 January Price had sympathetically reported a speech by Ryazanov, a Bolshevik, who was also the president of the All-Russia Union of Trades Unions<sup>33</sup>.

Ryazanov had challenged the right of the Executive Committee of the Soviet to dissolve the Assembly before the meeting of the All-Russia Congress which was due to meet the following week, and to which alone he was prepared to ascribe the right to dissolve. Price naturally attended the Congress, and in his first account, printed in the Manchester Guardian on 26 January, it seemed as if his recurring

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<sup>33</sup> DAVID BORISOVICH RYAZANOV (1870-1938). A Social Democrat from his early days, Ryazanov joined the Mensheviks after the Second Congress. He worked for the Menshevik fraction in the Duma and as a Trade Unionist. He would have supported a Menshevik - S.R. coalition with the Bolsheviks after the November Revolution had such a coalition been on offer. The episode described by Price is therefore in character. Debo also described how Ryazanov's was the only voice which protested, at the 4th All-Russia Congress of Soviets, against the sweeping powers over the economy which the Party had assumed at its 7th Congress the preceding week (Revolution and Survival, p.176). Ryazanov left the party after Brest Litovsk and was dismissed from his Trade Union work in 1921, but in the same year was made Director of the Marx-Engels Institute, a post which he held for ten years. During that time he edited the first editions in Russian of the works of Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Hegel. He remained a Delegate to Party Congresses from the 7th to the 16th, but was finally expelled in 1931 on account of his ties with Mensheviks abroad. The year of his death strongly suggests that he was a victim of the Purges.



doubts about Bolshevik tactics had again been somewhat dispelled<sup>34</sup>. "Instead of an atmosphere of suspicion...there was now enthusiasm". The Third Congress was "a Parliament without landlords, capitalists, small bourgeoisie or intellectuals". However he could not resist pointing out that the Congress had spent the whole of its first day, in true Slavic mood, discussing plans for "Internationalism", while the banks were closed, the bread ration was down to 1/4lb. a day, and "we sit in icy rooms in fur coats and have sixteen hours of darkness buoyed up, however, by the hope that humanity will one day hear Russia's bitter cry and awaken to the true meaning of her revolution". The Congress did, however, eventually get down to the business of constructing a socialist order. On February 2 the Manchester Guardian printed a final short account by Price of its work<sup>35</sup>. He summarised its programme of political and economic organisation without comment, concluding "Thus is being formed a new Government of the working classes aiming to reorganise society on a Socialist basis".

The experience of reporting the Constituent Assembly probably took Price some way along the path to the Marxism which he subsequently professed. In his article of 26 January (see last paragraph) he had recognised that the Bolshevik government had the support of the social elements represented at the Third Congress: "bayonets and land, labourers and factory workers, forming two thirds of Russia". It was true that the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and the peasants

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<sup>34</sup> Manchester Guardian 26.1.18. Dated Petrograd Thursday (24 January). 'A Parliament without Privilege'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid 2.2.18. Dated Petrograd Thursday (31 January). 'Russia's Democratic System'. Signed M. Philips Price.

of the eastern provinces were not represented, but the "most active and virile elements of Revolutionary Russia" were all there. "To regard them as representative of all Russia would be a mistake, but... not to recognise them as the greatest force in Russia today would be a greater mistake, and one fraught with the gravest consequences for the relations between Russia and Western Europe."

Scott wrote only three leading articles on the Constituent Assembly, and the first was only a disguised plea for proportional representation. On 8 December 1917 he wrote that as the Russians had the benefit of that system the voting would "pretty fairly mirror the strength of the various parties". He believed that the "astonishing regularity" with which the elections had been held were "evidence that the new Russia does respect at least the democratic vote". In his other two editorials Scott wrote more in sorrow than in anger. On 21 January he summarised the Bolshevik programme which the Assembly had been called upon to endorse and noted that the objects of the Right and Centre S.R.s did not differ markedly from it. But the Bolsheviks, said Scott, "in killing the Constituent Assembly have, in fact, adopted in internal affairs that principle of power which at Brest they are combating in external affairs". Worse, they had left their opponents with no constitutional means of self-expression, only the appeal to force. If the Bolsheviks failed to bring about peace at Brest Litovsk they would probably be overthrown, but "it need not be concluded that the work of the Bolsheviks, even after their defeat, would have been fruitless...They are busy carrying out economic changes in Russia some of which at any rate no succeeding Government will ever be powerful enough to undo. For the



rest, they are injecting certain ideas into the world, confident that they will ferment." Scott believed that Lenin and Trotsky would have to go, "but they will not budge a second earlier or waste an instant of the scanty weeks of their power to establish their conception of Utopia".

On 23 January Scott made a serious attempt to understand the Bolshevik principles which had led to the dissolution of the Assembly. "They do not want to keep alive the goose which lays the golden eggs of private property". But he thought that Marx would disapprove of their timetable. The stage of capitalist growth was missing. "Is it to be seriously contended that the Russian peasant and Russian workmen are the most highly developed and the most class-conscious in the world?" Scott feared that, given the human material with which they had to work, "Lenin and his friends are building not an enduring fabric but a ramshackle hut which is likely to collapse even before the roof is on." Scott was inclined to agree that their labours would not have been entirely wasted, but more positive, constructive results might have been achieved if the Bolsheviks had been prepared to collaborate with "other sections of the revolutionary democracy". Scott's main criticism of the whole episode was, again, that it had "entrenched force and violence at the heart of society" and in so doing carried on the tradition of Tsarism.

(iv) Undertones of Civil War

The last theme with which Price began to deal in the period November 1917 - February 1918 was the first intimation of civil war. He did not personally report the outbreak of the revolts on the Don and the Ukraine; Scott heard of them through an agency message which he printed on 10 December. On 12 December he wrote a short perceptive leader in which he questioned the assumption that the actions of Generals Kaledin and Dutov automatically constituted civil war<sup>36</sup>. Had not his Petrograd correspondent told him that the desire for

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<sup>36</sup> Dutov, the Ataman of the Orenburg Cossacks (at whose election Price had been present) and Kaledin, the Ataman of the Don Cossacks, were only two of the recusants in South Russia on whom the Allies were to pin their hopes of bringing about a counter-revolution. But at this stage they had little in common except protecting the interests of their own Cossack constituencies. There was even less to bind them to the Tsarist generals Alexeiv and Kornilov, who reached Novochoerkassk early in December 1917. There is a voluminous literature on the origins and development of the civil war in Russia, although much of it is partisan and most of it written in terms of its relationship to the subsequent Allied intervention. For further reading see M.J. Carley: Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War 1917-1919 (McGill 1983); George A. Brinkley: A Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia 1917-1921 (Notre Dame 1966); James Bunyan: Intervention, Civil War and Communism in Russia, April-December 1918 (Baltimore 1936); W.P. and Z.K. Coates: Armed Intervention in Russia 1918-1922 (1935); Robert Jackson: At War with the Bolsheviks: the Allied Intervention in Russia 1917-1920 (1974); Peter Kenez: Civil War in South Russia 1918: The First Year of the Volunteer Army (Berkeley 1971) and Civil War in South Russia 1919-1920: The Defeat of the Whites (Berkeley 1977); also by Kenez: 'A.I. Deniken', Russian Review Vol. 33 (1974) pp. 139-152 and 'The Ideology of the White Movement', Soviet Studies Vol. 32 (1980) pp. 55-82; John Silverlight: The Victor's Dilemma: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War (New York 1970); Eugene P. Trani: 'Woodrow Wilson and the Decision to Intervene in Russia: A Reconsideration', Journal of Modern History, Vol. 48 (1976) pp. 440-461; Richard H. Ullman: Anglo-Soviet Relations 1917-1921: Vol. I Intervention and the War (Princeton and Oxford 1961), Vol. II Britain and the Russian Civil War November 1918-February 1920 (Ibid. 1968); J.A. White: The Siberian Intervention (Princeton 1950); Appleman Williams: Containment and Revolution: Western Policy Towards Social Revolution (Studies in Imperialism and the Cold War Series, ed. David Horowitz, 1967.) and David R. Woodward: 'The British Government and Japanese Intervention in Russia during World War I' Journal of Modern History Vol. 46 (1974) pp. 661-685. The most recent addition to the bibliography is Evan Mawdsley The Russian Civil War (1987).



peace was particularly strong among soldiers? But "as Mr. Price has illuminatingly explained" Scott went on, the interests of all sections of the country were not identical. If there were to be civil war it would probably be occasioned "by differences as to internal politics". Scott appeared to have concluded that soldiers who were tired of fighting would be unlikely to fight about such differences.

Although Price referred in passing to civil war in his report of Lenin's speech to the All-Russia Congress on 15 December (see above p.144), when Lenin had defended the arrest of Kadet delegates to the Constituent Assembly on the grounds that Kadets had "forced" Kaledin into action it was not until 22 December that the Manchester Guardian had a major article by him on this subject<sup>37</sup>. Price now gave a long account in which for the first time he appeared to take seriously the danger of civil war in Russia. Like Scott before him, he identified the danger as an aspect of the class struggle, complicated by intense differences of self-interest between the populations of North and South. The North had suffered most from war and famine; the South had more food and the land question was not acute. But (and it must be remembered that Price was at the time of writing this piece still unimpressed either by Bolshevik strategy or Bolshevik tactics except in relation to peace) the government in Petrograd was trying to apply the same "syndicalist experiments" to the South as to the North. "Instead of realising the strength of...Southern opposition the Petrograd oligarchy and a revolutionary hotheads have sent an ultimatum to the Ukrainian and Cossack republics, and civil war is

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<sup>37</sup> Manchester Guardian 22.12.17. Dated Petrograd Tuesday (20.12.17) 'Dangers of Bolshevik Dictatorship: Growing Opposition'. Signed M. Philips Price.

imminent." At this time Price still thought, however, that "opposition to the revolutionary oligarchy" was growing even in Petrograd, "and the near future may see its fall".

On 24 December Price wrote again, a piece entitled Cleavage in Russia and printed with remarkable speed - Price now being the paper's official telegraphic correspondent - on 26 December<sup>38</sup>. By this time he was in a position to give a detailed account of the Kaledin revolt. He pointed out that Kaledin's supporters were mainly "reactionary refugees" and not Cossacks, "for the Cossack rankers have no wish to interfere with the Revolution in North Russia and are only desirous of being left alone in possession of their lands". Kaledin, on the other hand, by arresting the leaders of soviets in the Rostov coal basin had declared war not only on the Bolsheviks but "against all the revolutionary democracy". The action of the Ukrainian Rada in refusing passage to Bolshevik troops but allowing Don Cossacks who wished to join Kaledin to pass through their territory had been declared a breach of neutrality by the government in Petrograd. Price noted that there appeared to be two factions among the Don Cossacks, one of which opposed Kaledin's offensive against the soviets "as long as the latter create no disorder". In this article Price again castigated the Bolsheviks - it should be remembered that at this time he was still sceptical about their ideology - for having failed to appreciate the genuine differences of interest between northerners and southerners, and for trying to apply the same solutions to both. "...the northern Bolshevik leaders are

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<sup>38</sup> Manchester Guardian 26.12.17. Datelined Petrograd Monday Night (24.12.17). 'Cleavage in Russia: South Against Social Upheaval'. Signed M. Philips Price.



little better than Jacobins and have no capacity for constructive social reform". But even so Price went on to point out that their strength lay in the fact that they were "the first people who had the courage to see that peace was the first necessity for Russia and to act accordingly".

## Chapter 6. The Breathing Space

In 1962 Price was asked by a group of people with whom he happened to be sharing a table at an hotel in Moscow how he would, in the last analysis, have defined himself politically if he had been a Russian in 1918. After a long silence he eventually said, with something like reluctance, "Menshevik"<sup>1</sup>. Like many Russians in the winter of 1917/18 he supported the November revolution but not necessarily the Bolshevik party. Like many Russians he used revolutionary catchphrases without necessarily understanding them. Thus in a letter to his aunt as early as 30 November 1917 he said: "We have got the dictatorship of the proletariat with a vengeance this time!! But I rub my hands and chuckle with glee. May the day soon come when the proletariat of Western Europe does the same." In the few letters to his family which survive from this period he spoke of civil war as a fact of life already; he could understand it as a conflict between regional interests but he could not understand it as a class conflict, which he deplored. On 22 December he wrote to his brother that in the face of famine "organisation is the sole hope; it is clear that only a widespread acceptance of Socialism will save us all". But he still did not think the Bolsheviks were the people to bring about Socialism (as he understood it and how he understood it was not clear). "They will have to go and make way for more constructive people."

Very quickly after the November revolution Price was overwhelmed with offers of work. He wrote to his uncle on 30 November: "I have now

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<sup>1</sup> This episode was witnessed by Price's daughter.



got the correspondence for three newspapers - the Manchester Guardian, the Labour Herald<sup>2</sup> and an American newspaper, the New York Tribune. It keeps me pretty well occupied. Evidently my work here is known in the journalistic world, because I am continually getting letters and cables from England and America from editors whom I have never known or met, asking me for an article or for information about this or that subject. I am beginning to demand a price for my information now!!" Not much of this work can be traced, but a few articles by him appeared in the New York Tribune, and in these he was clearly trying to present an explanation of the revolution which would be acceptable to American readers. The first of his articles for this paper, written on 13 November and printed on 23 December, was little more than a travelogue based on his recent journey in the Volga provinces, but he ended it by making an attempt to account for the peculiar nature of "the communism of the Russian peasant" as "a simple and noble philosophy of labour". The second article, written on 1 December and printed the following day, again drew on his travels, but this time he attempted to account for the

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<sup>2</sup> Price may have been confusing two titles, Labour Leader and Herald (in the case of the latter using the word "labour" adjectively. He wrote nothing from Russia for the former journal and, in the event, only one piece for the latter. On 24 November the Herald published a 300-word telegram, sent on 17 November, from Price, who was described as "Our Special Correspondent in Petrograd". It consisted of a curious mixture of straight reporting in prose that was sometimes quite heavily loaded, and which does not accord well with anything else that Price wrote about the Bolsheviks, even when he was at his most critical. He described the "Maximalists" as having isolated themselves from the right wing Socialists as the result of having made "unreasonable demands" and having systematically terrorised the Petrograd bourgeoisie. A few sentences later he wrote that despite "differences over tactics...the two wings of the Socialists are agreed in principle on a common programme" which he defined as peace and land. However, he concluded gloomily, "Telegrams from all over Russia indicate that the condition everywhere is desperate". It is perhaps not surprising that the Herald did not use any more material from him while in Russia.

revolution in terms of the experiences of factory workers and soldiers with whom he had talked on a Volga steamer. The theme running throughout the piece was the unreality and irrelevance of the war to these people, who could see in it only "a disturbance going on somewhere far away in the West...indissolubly connected with government that oppresses". The longing for peace among ordinary Russians was deeply rooted and was "not due to the agitation of a few fanatical Bolsheviki with Jewish names in Petrograd". This was, perhaps, the most unpleasant thing he ever wrote about the Bolshevik leadership. It must be balanced against a piece which appeared in Common Sense on 1 December. This was as usual not attributed to him, only to "a correspondent" but it bears the hallmarks of his style and it is also unlikely that Hirst had any other correspondent in Russia at that time with as much inside knowledge. Hirst introduced the extract by explaining that his "correspondent" had been disturbed by the distorted accounts of the November revolution which had been appearing in the British press. He then quoted from the letter in question: "When will our press realise that the Bolsheviks are not necessarily blackguards nor Trotsky and Lenin scoundrels (however much certain people on this side may consider their methods unfortunate)." And in his last letter to his aunt in 1917 (28 December), after describing his frugal Christmas dinner (a small sausage, 1/4lb. of black bread and a few sweets) he added that although physically starving he was "mentally fed with the joyful news that Russia, Red, Revolutionary triumphant Russia had overthrown her capitalist tyrants, burst her chains and had set out on the road to peace".



During this period, when Price was attempting both to describe and to understand the consequences of the November revolution, he was living under great difficulties. For a while, during the closure of the banks<sup>3</sup> in December/January he was unable to get hold of any money, earned or unearned. He existed on the starvation rations of the Food Commissariat: one eighth to one quarter of a pound of bread a day, tea, potato skins, and a few smoked herrings. He lost two stone in weight in little over a month and became so weak that he had to sit down on a doorstep every hundred yards on his way from his flat in Fontaka to the Smolny. Nonetheless it was during this period that he made up his mind to stay in Russia. He could have got out at that time. But he had no family ties and he felt it was his duty to stay. He also realised that he was, above all, "immensely lucky to be where I was during this great upheaval. So I decided to set my teeth and carry on"<sup>4</sup>. He was rescued from starvation by Tchicherin, whom he went to see one day in January, shortly after Tchicherin had returned from England. He found that Tchicherin had already been asking about him and had apparently told Lenin that he ought to be given every facility to continue his work because his despatches, together with those of Ransome in the Daily News, were the only fair and objective reports on Russia appearing in the West. In My Three Revolutions

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<sup>3</sup> Although the Russian State Bank had legally become an agency of the Government when the Bolsheviks took power, the private banks held out against the government, remaining closed or opening only for a few hours occasionally, and refusing to supply cash either for the government or for private depositors. On 27 December the private banks were nationalised, but a strike of bank clerks prolonged the cash crisis until towards the end of January 1918. See E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, Vol. II, p.75 and pp. 131-138. During this period the British Government had already embarked on a series of covert dealings aimed at buying out a number of major private Russian banks, to enable them to finance the opposition groups forming in South Russia. See Michael Kettle, The Allies and the Russian Collapse: March 1917-March 1918 (1981) pp. 176-219.

<sup>4</sup> Price papers. Ms. 'Back Bench Traveller' p.646.

Price wrote "I thereupon asked if I could have facilities to receive money from England at one of the banks. He was horrified to hear that I was suffering in this way and saw the appropriate people at once."<sup>5</sup> Relieved, still confused but now basically sympathetic to the Bolsheviks, Price addressed himself to the task of reporting the final stages of the negotiations leading up to the treaty of Brest Litovsk. His accounts of these events for the Manchester Guardian were, however, fragmentary and discontinuous, as information came through in a piecemeal fashion and could not always be easily or accurately interpreted. His account of Brest Litovsk in Chapter XV of his Reminiscences gives a much clearer account than anything that appeared in the paper, with the exception of a mysterious article "From a Correspondent" which could have been by him, but did not, in any case, appear until 9 April.

Price had last mentioned the negotiations in an article written on 28 January when he referred briefly to Trotsky's formula of "no war no peace", itself the subject of a compromise with Lenin as the basis of Bolshevik policy in the next round of negotiations<sup>6</sup>. He did not write about the subject again until 14 February. In the meantime the talks at Brest Litovsk had been resumed. These took place on 30 January, when the wave of anti-war strikes and demonstrations which had swept through Germany and Austria during January and which had lent some colour to Bolshevik hopes of an imminent world revolution, was beginning to recede. But there was cause for optimism from another direction: in the Ukraine, where it seemed possible that a

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<sup>5</sup> Price. My Three Revolutions. p.110.

<sup>6</sup> See above Chapter 5 F/N 16.



Soviet-style government might be about to wrest control from the purely nationalist, autonomous government, the Rada<sup>7</sup>. By now both the Rada and the Ukrainian Soviet had representatives at the peace talks, but the Central Powers recognised only the Rada as having the right to speak in the name of the Ukraine. On 9 February the Rada signed a separate peace with the Central Powers. The German military influence, taking advantage of the failure of the strike movement at home and drawn by the prospect of Ukrainian corn, now greatly increased the territorial demands to be made on Russia as a condition

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<sup>7</sup> In 1917 the population of the Ukraine was one fifth of that of the whole of Russia and its major source of corn, coal and iron. Its industrial manpower was mainly imported, its peasantry not so much anti-Moscow as anti-landlord (mainly absentee Poles) and its nationalist movement largely led by intellectuals isolated from either of the other main groups. All three came together for the first time after the March Revolution to create a Ukrainian Rada, or Council which initially had no formal political character but gradually acquired one. In June 1917 the Rada proclaimed an autonomous Ukrainian Republic, which the Provisional Government had little alternative but to recognise. After the November Revolution a Ukrainian People's Republic was proclaimed, although - again originally - with no immediate secessionist objectives. At the same time the emergence of a Ukrainian Soviet, encouraged by Petrograd, resulted in confusion, anarchy and ultimately civil war. The origin of these developments is described by Price in his Reminiscences, pp. 160-163, and by E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, pp. 289-307. More recent studies of the Ukraine during this period include Steven L. Gunther: 'The Popular Base of Ukrainian Nationalism in 1917' (Slavic Review 38 (1979) pp. 30-47); Taras Hunczak (ed.) The Ukraine 1917-1921: A Study in Revolution (Harvard 1977); Michael Paly: 'The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno 1918-1921. An Aspect of Ukrainian Revolution' (Slavonic and East European Review (56) 1978 pp. 307-308).

of peace<sup>8</sup>. A territorial sub-committee was created to discuss them but, not surprisingly, could not agree. On the day after the Rada's defection (9 February) Trotsky announced "We are going out of the war but we feel ourselves compelled to refuse to sign the peace treaty". The Germans interpreted this as giving them the right, under the terms of the armistice of 15 December 1917 to renew hostilities after a seven-day period of grace. They counted this period as having begun on 10 February but omitted to inform the Soviet government of the basis of their calculations until 16 February, when they announced that they would be resuming their offensive in two days. While the citizens of Petrograd celebrated what they thought was peace and soldiers left the trenches, the Germans prepared to strike, and on 18 February began an unhindered advance on Petrograd and Kiev. That evening the TsIK decided by a majority of one vote to send word to Berlin that the Soviet government was willing to sign peace on the terms presented to them on 10 February, and a message to that effect was radioed to Berlin during the night of 18/19 February.

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<sup>8</sup> By the original terms proposed by the Germans at Brest Litovsk, Russia would have lost Poland, Lithuania and Courland. On 21 February 1918, while those terms were still being discussed, Germany sent what was in effect an ultimatum demanding further territorial concessions: Livonia and Estonia; the evacuation of Finland and the Ukraine and Russian recognition of their independence; in addition: the demobilisation of the Russian Army and the Red Guards; the disarmament of all Russian warships; and the restoration of the terms of the trade treaty of 1904 (subsequently amended to the terms of the treaty of 1903, which were even more favourable to Germany). An outstandingly detailed and clear account of the negotiations at Brest Litovsk is given by Richard K. Debo: Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia 1917-18 (Liverpool 1979). Sir John W. Wheeler Bennett: Brest Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March 1918, first published in 1939 and reprinted in 1963, is also well worth reading.



Of the first three telegrams that Price sent in February 1918 only one was about the peace negotiations<sup>9</sup>. From its content it was obviously written after the Rada had signed a separate peace but before the news of the German ultimatum had reached Petrograd. Dated "Thursday (Delayed)" this would appear to place it as having been written on 14 February, but it was not printed until 7 March, when the information contained in it was thoroughly misleading. The first section was a short essay on the question whether food from the Ukraine was more likely to go north or west. Price described the conflicting interests in the Ukraine and accounted for the Rada's hurry to sign a separate peace by the fact that pro-Soviet forces in the Ukraine were gaining ground. Price stated that the Allied governments had been mistaken in supporting the Rada and had "backed the wrong horse". He went on to refer so obliquely to Trotsky's method of bringing the Brest Litovsk negotiations to an end that it would seem that Price, like many Russians, actually thought the war was over. He merely referred in passing to "the refusal of the All-Russia Soviet Government of Petrograd to sign an Imperialist peace with the Central Powers". What interested him, and what he proceeded to write about, was the alliance now forming between "the Austrian, German and Rumanian governments, the Ukrainian Rada and General Alexeiv against the Russian Revolution."<sup>10</sup> This was, indeed, precisely the area from

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<sup>9</sup> Manchester Guardian 7.3.18. Dated 'Petrograd Thursday. Delayed' (14 or 21 February 1918). 'What They Fight for in the Ukraine'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>10</sup> Rumania entered the war on the side of the Allies in August 1916. By the end of 1917 the Germans controlled a large area of Rumania but there were many Russian troops in the territory still under the control of the Rumanian Government. In January 1918 it was learned in Petrograd that the Rumanian High Command was secretly negotiating with Germany for the possession of (Russian) Bessarabia. In reprisal the Bolshevik Government ordered the arrest of the Rumanian Ambassador,

which at that time the main threat to the Bolshevik government was likely to arise, due in no small measure to the support of the British government for Alexeiv. From now on it is reasonable to assume that Price's cables began to be "looked at sharply" (see below p. 290). By coincidence it was also at this time that Price began to keep copies of all the cables he sent to the Manchester Guardian. Thus from 20 February 1918 it is possible to compare the original text of what he wrote with what was actually published, and to distinguish between cuts which can reasonably be attributed to the hand of a sub-editor and those which show signs of political censorship. The whole question of British censorship, with special reference to press reports from Russia will be dealt with in Chapter 7. What follows immediately will be confined to what readers of the Manchester Guardian actually saw over Price's signature in the spring and early summer of 1918.

Price began his first article<sup>11</sup> about the resumed negotiations at Brest Litovsk (written on 20 February 1918 and printed only three days later) by noting - incorrectly, as a comparison with his own despatch of 28 January shows - that the decision to accept the peace terms of the Central Powers had not come as a total surprise. Trotsky, wrote Price, had already been authorised to sign an "unfortunate peace" if all other solutions should fail". But he went on to give an accurate summary of the continued split in both the party executive and in the Central Executive Committee as between

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Count Diamandi, although he was soon released as the result of Allied pressure. However, Rumanian troops did occupy Bessarabia, and on 28 January 1918 the Bolsheviks broke off diplomatic relations.

<sup>11</sup> Manchester Guardian 23.2.18. Dated Petrograd Friday. (20 February). 'Failure of Bolshevik Hopes'. Signed M. Philips Price.



those who favoured revolutionary war and those who recognised the need for a separate peace. He showed how the strike wave in Germany and Austria during January had at first helped Trotsky in his attempt to get the best possible terms, but that their defeat had enabled the Central Powers to stiffen their demands. Price interpreted the Russian capitulation as a recognition by "the Russian revolutionaries" that "they cannot emancipate mankind from nationalist wars by the development of the class struggle" and went on to make it clear that by this he meant the development of the class struggle outside the boundaries of Russia. He described the grim conditions prevailing in North Russia; the "sole hope is the fear which the Germans must have in occupying such a country". Price concluded by noting that the treachery of the Rada had given the Central Powers a pretext not only to interfere in the internal affairs of Russia in order "to prevent the agitation from spreading into Central Europe", but also to help themselves to Ukrainian corn.

On 22 February Price, who had not previously mentioned the German advance begun on 18 February - presumably because he had not known about it - wrote another long article which was printed in the Manchester Guardian on 25 February<sup>12</sup>. In it he referred for the first time to preparations for the defence of Petrograd and noted that the Germans were apparently ignoring the Russian reply to their ultimatum because they hoped to occupy more territory first, and above all territory in the Ukraine. Price again described the economic background to the political and military situation in the

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<sup>12</sup> Manchester Guardian 25.2.18. Dated Petrograd Friday. (22 February). 'Russia and Ukraine: Influences of Hunger and Plenty'. Signed M. Philips Price.

Ukraine in considerable detail. He also drew attention to the consequences for Poland of the terms of the German peace treaty with the Rada, which by ceding the province of Cholm in the Ukraine would effectively encircle Poland. "But if the Revolution is in danger in the west" Price continued "it is advancing victoriously in the east." It was, of course, in the south-east that civil war, counter-revolution and preparations for Allied intervention were all already in the making. But on 22 February 1918 the view from Petrograd was clouded by hope and ignorance, as Price described the impending defeat of General Alexeiv near Rostov, the suicide of General Kaledin, the defection of the Don Cossacks to the Soviet and the re-establishment of Soviet control on the Caucasus. On the basis of this position, he concluded, the "safe background in the east is evidently influencing the Soviet Government in Petrograd to patch up peace in the west with the Central Powers".

This leisurely, almost complacent interpretation of affairs was shattered within five days. on 23 February Pravda published a series of theses by Lenin in which he set down the arguments in favour of concluding peace with Germany. These had formed the basis of his thinking since he first wrote them down to clarify his own mind in January, but he had acquiesced in Trotsky's "no war no peace" formula for the sake of making, as he himself put it, a good peace with Trotsky. Price summarised them two days later in a despatch which appeared in the Manchester Guardian on 27 February, but within hours of their appearance in Pravda on 23 February events had overtaken arguments when the German reply to the Soviet government's radio message of 18/19 February reached Petrograd. The ~~punitive~~ terms of 10



February were again savagely increased and the Soviet government was given 48 hours in which to take them or leave them. Half of that time had already been used up in transit. After a series of preliminary party meetings, the TsIK met at the Taurida Palace on the night of 23 February. Price was present and wrote two accounts of the meeting, one for the Manchester Guardian (written next day and printed on 26 February) and one later in his Reminiscences (published in 1921). Both are of considerable historical interest since it seems that no official record of this meeting was ever published, although other memoirs exist and Lenin's speeches are on record<sup>13</sup>. The account in the Reminiscences<sup>14</sup> is fuller and more personal than that in the Manchester Guardian<sup>15</sup> but the two do not differ in any material respect. Both give pride of place to the arguments with which Lenin supported his case for signing the peace "in order" Price quoted him as saying "to obtain breathing space to recuperate for a further struggle". In his account for the paper Price had only room to single out the counter-arguments of Radek and Ryazanov who were for continuing the "revolutionary war" at all costs. In the Reminiscences he also reported Alexandra Kollontai's opposition to

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<sup>13</sup> E.H. Carr: The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-23 Vol. 3, p.40, F/N 3. "No official record of this session of VTsIK was ever published; the text of Lenin's speech is in Sochineniya xxiii 280-283, a graphic account of the meeting in M. Philips Price, My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution (1921) pp. 247-249." K.L. Seleznev: History of the USSR 3 (Moscow 1974). 'He (Price) noted down Lenin's important speech of 23 February 1918 to the meeting of the United Bolshevik and Left S.R. fractions of the Supreme Central Executive Committee about the question of the signing of peace; no other records of this speech have been discovered.' Seleznev himself gave the following reference for this statement: E.V. Klopov. Lenin at the Smolny. Moscow 1965. pp. 431-433.

<sup>14</sup> Price. Reminiscences. pp. 246-248.

<sup>15</sup> Manchester Guardian 1.3.18. Dated Petrograd Wednesday. (27 February) 'Defense of the Russian Revolution'. Signed M. Philips Price.

Lenin<sup>16</sup> and he described Lenin's confident manner of speaking and general demeanor in greater detail. Price's account of the outcome of the debate was, of course, the same in both versions but in his Reminiscences he conveyed a greater sense of the bitterness of the struggle between the opposing points of view, even if only in generalisations, than he did in his article for the Manchester Guardian. On the other hand the latter also contained some 500 words of speculation as to what would happen next, including the

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<sup>16</sup> ALEKSANDRA MIKHAILOVNA KOLLONTAI (1872-1952). Born Domontovich, Aleksandra enjoyed an unusually good education and then married her cousin, Vladimir Mikhailovich Kollontai. She bore one son and, although the marriage did not last, she always retained the name Kollontai. The debate on Brest Litovsk was neither the first nor the last time that Kollontai found herself in opposition to the party leadership, but a more frequent cause of disagreement was the official party line on the feminist question. Although she agreed with the party that the pre-revolutionary feminist movement in Russia was primarily a middle-class movement (and she had nothing to do with it) she ardently believed that the liberation of women purely as the by-product of the liberation of all people in a Marxist revolution was not going to be enough. She fought long and hard to get political education for working women on to the Bolshevik agenda. After the November revolution Kollontai was appointed Commissar of Social Welfare and secured more legal rights for Soviet women, in the few months she was in office, than were available to any other women in the world. Having resigned after Brest Litovsk and withdrawn from party work, she was allowed in the autumn of 1918 to organise a national conference of women workers which resulted in the establishment of Zhenotdel, the Department of Work Among Women Workers and Peasants, of which she became (after the death of its first head, Inessa Armand, in 1920), the director. It may be presumed that she was, in the interval, somewhat underemployed, and that this, together with her considerable reputation as a writer, may account for her election to the Anglo-American Group in January 1919 (see Chapter 10 p. 326). In 1921, her combative instincts unabated, she joined the Workers' Opposition movement, and in February 1922 was removed from Zhenotdel. She was sent to Norway, originally in a junior position on the Soviet trade delegation, but spent the next 23 years gaining considerable international respect as a diplomat, mainly in Scandinavian countries. Although many of her friends perished in the purges, she did not renounce the party and was able to spend the last 7 years of her life in retirement in Moscow. For further reading see (i) Kollontai's own works: Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai (ed. Alix Holt) (Westport, Conn., 1977); Love of the Worker Bees (ed. Cathy Porter) (1977); (ii) biographies: Barbara Evans Clements: A Bolshevik Feminist: The Life of Aleksandra Kollontai (Bloomington and London 1979); Beatrice Farnsworth: Alexandra Kollontai (Stanford, 1980); Cathy Porter: Alexandra Kollontai (1980).



possibility of the construction of "a new political centre for obtaining peace" under the aegis of a revived Constituent Assembly. But he recognised that the Soviet Government had immense power in terms of the class struggle and - significantly, in terms of Price's own thinking - that this was the struggle that was "now the central factor of the Russian Revolution".

The vote to capitulate was taken at 5 o'clock in the morning of 24 February and Price described in his Reminiscences that he returned home "at 6 o'clock on a bitter winter's morning and slept from a combined feeling of weariness and hunger". It seems reasonable to presume that he did not file his copy until much later that day, and possibly not until after he had talked to Arthur Ransome<sup>17</sup> and Raymond Robins<sup>18</sup>, which he described doing in his account of this

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<sup>17</sup> ARTHUR MITCHELL RANSOME (1884-1967). Ransome wrote an autobiography which was edited by Rupert Hart Davis and appeared only after his death. In 1984 Hugh Brogan's Life of Arthur Ransome was published, giving a much fuller account of Ransome's activities in Russia than Ransome was able or prepared to give himself. A letter from Ransome in the Stow Hill papers indicates that in 1919 he was "working on a big history of the revolution on which I expect to spend the next five years of my life". But sadly he did not fulfil that expectation. An extended footnote appears as Appendix IV and attempts to give an account of the curious relationship that existed between Price and Ransome.

<sup>18</sup> RAYMOND ROBINS (1878-1951). In early life Robins' activities ranged from coalmining to the Congregationalist ministry. He was qualified as a lawyer, and worked for 14 years as a social worker in the Chicago slums. In politics he was a member of the Progressive party and a personal supporter of Theodore Roosevelt, on whose recommendation President Wilson appointed him to be a member of the American Red Cross mission in Russia in the summer of 1917. By the autumn of that year he had been put in sole charge of it. Quick to recognise the irreversibility of the November Revolution, he worked tirelessly to promote the recognition of the new regime and for economic co-operation with it. As the official U.S. Ambassador Francis became increasingly locked into a role which was at best neutral and at worst hostile, Robins was nonetheless encouraged by him to act as an unofficial intermediary between the U.S. Government and the Bolsheviks, although little notice was taken of Robins' advice in Washington. He was in constant touch with Lockhart and the policies which they advocated were clearly the result of consultation

period in My Three Revolutions. Price recalled that he ran into them in the lobby of the Taurida Palace and that they all agreed "that now was the time when the Western Allies might use the situation to bring Russia round to offer resistance in some way to the Germans. The hatred of the Prussian military system knew no bounds now in Russia and some way must be found to turn it to the advantage of the Western Allies."<sup>19</sup> Perhaps this was why, in the concluding paragraph of his despatch to the Manchester Guardian on that day Price argued that the Allies should now "redouble all efforts to secure the sympathy of the Russian people in their hour of sore trial", counting on their anti-German feeling to "make a rapprochement between Russia and Western Europe more possible now than ever, provided that the whole policy of the Allies towards Russia is radically revised and made more in sympathy with the new spirit in Russia".

Owing to the dislocation caused by the swift advance of the German army, the Soviet peace delegation took four days to get to Brest Litovsk, where the final stages of the surrender began to be enacted on 28 February. The Germany army, having set 3 March as the date on which the peace was to be signed, continued their advance to the bitter end. Price wrote (on 1 March) an account printed only three days later in which he reported that preparations for the defence of

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and co-ordination. After his death his papers were presented to the University of Wisconsin and are housed in the Archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. There is unfortunately as yet no serious published account of Robins' life. In 1920 a book entitled Raymond Robins Own Story was written by William Hard and published in New York. The facts in it tally, where it is possible to compare them, with those in the Raymond Robins papers, but the style of the book is so enthusiastic as to make an unsatisfactory source of documentary information.

<sup>19</sup> My Three Revolutions. P. 107.



Petrograd were proceeding "with feverish haste"<sup>20</sup>. "The Revolution", as he still described the Government, while ready to sign a humiliating peace would "perish rather than allow Prussian Imperialists to prescribe the form of government under which the Russian proletariat shall live." It was now being widely felt, wrote Price, that Russia was being invaded for political, not strategic reasons. He went on to note that the Austrian army had not yet moved. This was thought in Petrograd to be because of "grave internal complications" involving the conflicting nationalist aspirations of Ukrainians, Poles and Czechs. He also reported that the Czech volunteers in the Ukraine had gone over to the support of the Ukrainian Soviet<sup>21</sup>. Price concluded by pointing out that Allied diplomacy appeared to have missed a golden opportunity of isolating the Prussian oligarchy by not taking advantage of the separatist and democratic tendencies now manifesting themselves in the eastern provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Soviet Government, on the other hand, was "fully alive to these possibilities".

In his article of 1 March Price also described the continued advance, virtually unopposed, of the German army in the Baltic provinces. They were he reported, apparently leaving the peasants alone in the occupied territories but arresting members of soviets and other revolutionary organisations and shooting Red Guards "on sight". This, Price considered, confirmed his view that the Germans were

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<sup>20</sup> Manchester Guardian 4.3.18. Dated Petrograd Friday. (1 March). 'Russian Revolutionary Tactics'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>21</sup> For an account of the origin and development of the Czech involvement in Russia in this period, see below pp. 246-247.

pursuing purely political objectives. He went on to describe developments in the south west where, he admitted, "the national complication...is impossible to disentangle". The anti-Soviet Ukrainian Volunteers advancing on Kiev included Galicians and were officered by Germans, while the Czechs were supporting the Ukrainian Soviet. Poles who in the Baltic provinces were supporting the Germans for class reasons were in the Ukraine supporting the Soviet for nationalist reasons. The Rada was thoroughly unpopular both among the Ukrainian peasants (because of their land policy) and the soldiers (because of their anti-democratic policies). In the same article Price also reported the fulfillment by Lenin of his promise to the TsIK to consult by telegram the soviets outside Moscow and Petrograd on the question of continuing the war<sup>22</sup>. "It is clear" wrote Price "that Lenin, in his policy of acceptance of the German terms, expresses the real desire not only of the soldiers but of the peasant masses, who are worn out by suffering and hunger as much as other elements of the country." Price ascribed to the peasant "the most truly Russian element in the Revolution" the Tolstoyan spirit of non-resistance. The urban proletariat, on the other hand, with "fiery Marxism" was still "ready with arms to defend freedom or die". By an inversion of the norm Lenin, the Marxist, was now voicing the pacifism of the peasants while the Left S.R.s, the traditional party

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<sup>22</sup> On 23 February 1918, in a conciliatory gesture towards Left Bolsheviks who disagreed with him about the absolute necessity for accepting the German terms of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, Lenin undertook to consult the Moscow and Petrograd Soviets before ratification. In fact he did better, and sent identical messages to every soviet and revolutionary organisation throughout Russia in which he stated the German terms, outlined the conflicting views regarding their acceptance, and asked for the opinion of all the bodies consulted as to whether the peace, once signed (which was by then inescapable) should be ratified. When these replies came in they showed 262 in favour of ratification and 233 opposed to it. See Richard K. Debo: Revolution and Survival pp. 144-147 and 173.



of the peasants, stood for the position of the urban proletariat. But the difference, Price concluded, was really one of tactics. Lenin only want to sign peace "in order to continue the underground struggle politically and morally".

A peace treaty between Russia and the Central Powers was signed on 2 March but in the north the Germany army continued to advance until they reached the line Narva-Lake Peipus-Mogiliev. It was decided to transfer the government to Moscow and the evacuation of Petrograd was accomplished in the first two weeks of March. Price, who was unable to get space on any of the official evacuation trains, wrote only one more despatch from Petrograd before making his own arrangements. On 3 March, with the Germans still advancing, he reported that Petrograd was outwardly calm, but that urban workers were "pouring into the Red Army"<sup>23</sup>. (This was not printed until 6 April and again gave a misleading impression of the state of affairs in north Russia.) Price described having gone down the railway towards Pskov and seeing trains packed with recruits. He reported that preparations were also being made "to retire, if necessary, into the interior of Russia, resisting the invaders step by step". He no longer oversimplified the intentions of the Germans and now said that they were not purely political. They were going to try to occupy all the chief industrial centres of north Russia, and by last-minute demands made at Brest Litovsk on behalf of Turkey <sup>24</sup> to gain control

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<sup>23</sup> Manchester Guardian 6.4.18. Dated Petrograd Sunday. (3 March). 'Russia's Unratified Peace'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>24</sup> At the first meeting of the parties to the final stage of the negotiations at Brest Litovsk, the Germans simply announced that on top of all the other additional demands which they had made on 21 February, Russia was to surrender Kars, Ardahan and Batum to the Turks.

of the mineral wealth of the Trans-Caucasus also. Price reported that rumours were circulating in Petrograd that Japan was negotiating with the Allies to agree to her occupying the Siberian railway "thus creating the impression that the powers of Western Central Europe are tacitly agreeing among themselves for the partition of Russia". But, he concluded, the ideals of the Revolution would never be more than temporarily eclipsed. "The tragedy of the Revolution is that while the mind of the Russian people is ready for it, the material resources are not at hand to realise it, since the war ruined the economic life of the country and left it helpless to foreign tyrants."

Price wrote two articles in February 1918 which did not directly bear on the peace negotiations or the German aggression, but which threw an interesting light on the internal situation in Russia at that time. One of them was a report of an interview with the former Prime Minister (now Minister of Food) of Finland, Olaf Tokoi, who he had already interviewed once in July 1917 (see above p. 89) and who he interviewed again on 4 February 1918. His account of the interview was printed five days later<sup>25</sup>. Tokoi described the predominantly bourgeois complexion of the Finnish Diet which had been elected in the autumn of 1917, its socially repressive nature, and the irresponsible way in which it had allowed the propertied classes to send their money out of the country, mainly to Sweden and Germany. The sons of the rich had also been sent to Germany and had returned to Finland "with arms and ammunition to put down the Finnish revolution" said Tokoi. But Finland asked only for ammunition and

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<sup>25</sup> Manchester Guardian 9.2.18. Dated Petrograd Tuesday (5 February). 'The Class War in Finland'. Signed M. Philips Price.



food from the Petrograd government. "We can deal with our bourgeois guards ourselves." The White Guards were, he said, being driven northwards and the railways and industrial centres of South Finland were in the hands of the Red Guards. Price reported that he had asked Tokoi what had become of the Diet, and that Tokoi had replied "it no longer functioned" but that fresh elections would probably be held during the year. Price added a rider to his account of the interview in which he predicted that the same kind of conflict would take place in Finland as had taken place in Russia between the Constituent Assembly and the Soviet, but "the Finnish Parliamentary tradition is very strong...so that the abolition of the Diet and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship will be a more difficult task than in Russia".<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Price was correct about the difficulty of establishing a proletarian dictatorship in Finland. The "bourgeois" (or White) guards to whom Tokoi referred were German-trained Finns who had taken part in the German advance to Riga during the summer of 1917 and proceeded to stir up hostilities within Finland against left-wing elements inside the country. A "Guard of Popular Liberty" (the Red Guards) was formed to counter their activities and a small group of Finnish Bolsheviks attempted to seize power by setting up a Finnish Soviet in January 1918. The Petrograd Government, having recognised Finnish independence under the non-socialist government of Svinhufvud in December 1917, now also recognised the Finnish Soviet without withdrawing recognition from the other. When Price interviewed Tokoi a state of civil war already existed in Finland. Two months later (3 April 1918) German troops invaded Finland and combined with the White Guards under Mannerheim to overthrow the Finnish Soviet after ten days. A state which was neither war nor peace now came about between Finland and Soviet Russia. Territorial concessions on the Pecheneg Peninsula made to the Finnish Soviet were of course retained by the Whites. The Whites, however preferable their politics might have been, were nonetheless perceived by the Allies to be agents of Germany. The presence of White Guards on, and German submarines off the Pecheneg peninsula was one of the main pretexts for the reinforcement in May 1918 of British troops in Murmansk. Price describes this not very clearly in his Reminiscences (pp. 300-302).

The last of the articles which Price wrote in February 1918 was written on 16 February and printed five days later<sup>27</sup>. This was towards the end of a brief period of euphoria in the streets of Petrograd between the day that Trotsky left Brest Litovsk for the last time and the arrival of the German ultimatum. Price described how the Soviet government was consolidating its position in the country by transferring power to local soviets in "the remoter districts" where "the masses...had not reached the same level of revolutionary consciousness as in the industrial centres". As the result of this consciousness-raising policy many improvements were "automatically" following. The railways were beginning to work again and food to be distributed. Banks and government offices were being run by an "intellectual staff" created by the Bolsheviks. The only cloud on the horizon was on the Don, where Alexeiv was forming an army of officers and cadets, the sons of the propertied classes, and counter-revolutionary agents. But he was not getting the support of the Cossacks.

Everything pointed to "a period of slow, steady reconstruction". Even the Kadet party, Price wrote, applauded the success of the Bolsheviks, because they saw in them grounds for hope that a government would one day develop which would be "sufficiently powerful...for subjugating Russia once more to the capitalist system". Price ended by alluding briefly to some of the other subjects which had been discussed by the Third Congress, including the reform of the judicial system and to the Land Law which it passed before it dispersed. "All this shows that the Russian people are

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<sup>27</sup> Manchester Guardian 21.2.17. Dated Petrograd Saturday (16 February). 'Russian Restoration'. Signed M. Philips Price.



entering upon an intensely interesting social and economic experiment, and the Soviet Government of Petrograd is the instrument created to carry out their desires and aspirations. As such it is the only government which can guide the destinies of the country."<sup>28</sup>

Three weeks after writing those words the government was in the process of moving to Moscow and, as has been noted, Price was unable to get on to any of the official evacuation trains. Hearing that there was space on trains going to Vologda and food to be had there, he decided to go there for a few weeks, until Moscow had settled down as the new capital. Vologda stood at the intersection of the north-south- and east-west railway systems and was therefore ideally situated for escape if the Germans continued to advance; for this reason most of the Allied diplomatic corps had already gone there. But by going to Vologda, inevitable as it almost certainly was, Price missed the last major meeting to be held in Petrograd: that of the Seventh (or Extraordinary) Party Congress (at which among other

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<sup>28</sup> In his Reminiscences (pp. 253-259) Price described in some detail the work of the Land Commission set up by the Third Congress, of whose discussions he was probably the only outside observer. The form in which the Land Law of 1918 emerged represented a tactical victory for the Left S.R.s which, Price thought, was deliberately contrived by Lenin who did not want to alienate them at that stage by insisting too strongly on the Bolshevik formula of state farming. But it was a strategic victory for the Bolsheviks nonetheless, as they succeeded in inserting clauses which provided at least in principle for the establishment of state farms in certain circumstances. Price was, however, generally impressed with the Land Law because "it clothed with some substance the rather nebulous utterances which generally characterised the Left S.R.s" and managed to embody practical proposals which ensured that the principle of the equalisation of land allotment could be translated into action according to the immense variations in conditions which prevailed throughout the territory under Soviet control.

things that Party changed its name from Bolshevik to Communist)<sup>29</sup>. He missed the 4th All-Russia Congress of Soviets in Moscow (14 March) which was called to ratify the Treaty of Brest Litovsk. He also missed the chance of being involved, as were Robins and Ransome, in the last unavailing efforts of a handful of English-speaking observers to prevent the ratification of the treaty and stave off intervention.

Price left Petrograd on 4 March 1918 and was in Vologda next day. During the relatively short rail journey he watched the evacuation trains "laden with the treasures of museums, the gold reserves of the banks, the valuable metal stores of the great factories" on the move and stations crowded with refugees and demobilised soldiers<sup>30</sup>. Some units of Red Guards, despite government orders, were continuing to wage guerilla war against the Germans and occasionally commandeered trains for their own purposes. But Price reached his destination without incident, found himself a room at Vologda and made it his base for the next five weeks. During this time he appears to have written only three articles copies of all of which he kept. He wrote on the top of the first "Copy of a telegram dispatched from Vologda by courier March 12". The others bear no such legend, and it is, indeed, puzzling that a courier should have been needed at all, since

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<sup>29</sup> The 7th Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party met in Petrograd on 6 March. Its chief business was the question of the ratification of the terms of the Treaty of Brest Litvosk, the vote being 30 to 12 in favour, with four abstentions. Discussions continued, however, and on 8 March Lenin apparently surprised the delegates with his proposal, which was also endorsed, that to disassociate themselves from the fatally compromised Social Democratic parties of France and Germany the Russian party should thenceforth be known as the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks. Richard K. Debo Revolution and Survival pp. 171-175.

<sup>30</sup> Price, Reminiscences p. 259.



there is no indication that telegraphic communications between Vologda and the rest of the world were ever disrupted. The fact that Price wrote so little during this period is not so surprising, since it had always been characteristic of him when travelling to travel first and write afterwards. Scott, perhaps not realising that his correspondent was in Vologda as much from necessity as from choice referred to him in a short leader on 18 March (see below) as "our Petrograd correspondent who is travelling in the provinces". There are four entries in Price's engagement diary for the Vologda period one of which indicates that he left Vologda for several days, and a description of another journey appears in his Reminiscences<sup>31</sup>. His articles for the Manchester Guardian certainly took a more wide-angled view of Russian affairs than might have been expected from a man cut off from the main stream of Russian politics in a small

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<sup>31</sup> Price's engagement diary shows that while he was at Vologda he attended meetings of both the local and the provincial Soviets. His accounts of these meetings appear only in his Reminiscences (Chp. 7) and describe how small had been the impact of the new Land Law in the Vologda area. During the last week of March 1918 he had attended two meetings of the Vologda Zemstvo "whose members admitted openly that they did not recognise the Soviet authority and were going to carry on as if the November Revolution had not taken place". When some of the more cautious Right S.R. members of the Zemstvo had suggested that the Land Law could hardly be so ignored, the landlord members replied that they would soon be back on their estates, and would then "settle accounts with the Soviets". Price went on to recount that this particular body was dissolved by the Vologda Soviet while he was still in the town, but even so, Vologda had remained "a little revolutionary island in an anarchic sea of peasant apathy". Even where rural soviets existed, they tended to be dominated by Left S.R.s, whose interpretation of the Land Law was far from identical with that of the Bolsheviks. In the same chapter he described being taken a day's journey along the railway towards Archangel to observe what should have been the foundation of a farming commune by an "idealistic Left S.R.". But the peasants had already divided the land between them and were now reluctant to see the village turned into a commune. Not a single Bolshevik was present at the meeting he attended, although the younger, more recently demobilised peasants favoured the idea of a commune, and their notions prevailed. Having formed the commune, Price described how the Left S.R.s, who dominated the meeting, then refused to apply to the Bolshevik-controlled Soviet in Vologda for much-needed cash, seeds or stock.

provincial town.

The first of the Vologda articles, written on 12 March (two days before the ratification of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk) describes "the shifting of the centre of political gravity in the country eastwards towards Moscow and the Upper Volga provinces"<sup>32</sup>. But if anything Price thought the revolution was now taking deeper root than before. "What happened in Petrograd in October is happening now in the provinces" he wrote. Vologda itself was being run by a Soviet of workers, soldiers and peasants, and public opinion there was divided about the peace on exactly the same lines as in Petrograd. But, Price went on, the Russian proletariat was "setting its teeth". Recruitment was being "seriously taken up" for a Red Army which was to stand equally against counter-revolution at home and Imperialist aggression "whether from Western or Central Europe or the Far East". Under these circumstances, Price concluded, the forthcoming decision of the 4th Congress would have little effect on the development of the Revolution. The Bolshevik government would continue to wait for revolutionary forces in Germany to "acquire more impetus than they have at present, and meanwhile to arm to the teeth to assist their comrades in Central Europe against the tyrants who dictated the Brest Litovsk treaty at the point of the bayonet".

Scott, in a short leader already referred to which was published on the same day as this article (18 March) also saw in the return of the capital to Moscow the symbol of "a policy of concentration and reorganisation". But Scott added a note of caution. The German

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<sup>32</sup> Manchester Guardian 18.3.18. Dated Vologda Tuesday (12 March 1918). 'Russian Revolution and Peace'. Signed M. Philips Price.



peace had resulted in cutting off from Great Russia most of the people of non-Russian stock who traditionally provided "the revolutionary and progressive element in the Russian state". Scott then advanced the theory that an underlying cause of the expansionist policies of the old Russian Liberals had been the belief that the prospects for political freedom would be increased proportionately as the number of non-Great Russians diminished as against the numerical predominance of Great Russians. "Well," concluded Scott rather dramatically, "at Moscow the Great Russian will be able to show whether he is capable of liberty. It is an interesting experiment."

Price wrote nothing more for the Manchester Guardian until the last few days of his time at Vologda, when he wrote two articles in three days. The first, written on 12 April, was not printed until 2 May and marked "Delayed in Transmission"<sup>33</sup>. By now the delay would almost certainly have occurred in the office of the Official Press Bureau in London. A remarkable printers' error occurred in the first sentence. In Price's original copy of the cable he began by stating that the signature of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk had caused 'revolutionary leaders replace irresponsible demagogy by statesmanship substitute for statesmanship stop'. The typesetter can hardly be blamed for not knowing which version to choose, but the effect of his choice, ("for" instead of "by") was not apparently picked up by any sub-editor, and contradicted everything that Price had been saying about the Bolsheviks for the past two months. However the rest of the article left no room for doubt, as Price went on to show an increasing grasp of the basis of Bolshevik policy.

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<sup>33</sup> Manchester Guardian 2.5.18 Datelined 'Vologda. April 12. Delayed in Transmission'. 'Bolshevik Policy'. Signed M. Philips Price.

civil war, he now argued, had been an inevitable consequence of "sweeping away the political rubbish left by Tsarism". But the Bolshevik press, he noted, was now full of articles emphasising the need for reconstruction and "impressing on the proletariat its responsibilities as well as privileges". This policy had caused even the Kadets to come round, and their paper Ré<sup>ch</sup> now took the line that only the Bolsheviks could "drag Russia out of its present condition", as Price put it. The Mensheviks alone feared that a proletarian dictatorship would generate a bourgeois dictatorship. Price recorded that Lenin's personal influence was growing among the urban proletariat. He illustrated another point: that the practice of replacing zemstvos by Soviets was spreading in the provinces. He had, he wrote, recently attended a meeting of the Soviets of the Northern Provinces at Vologda, and he saw "peasants from distant arctic regions who declared that they recognised the Soviet as the sole authority in Russia."

The third telegram which Price sent from Vologda suffered an even greater delay in transit, sent on 14 April but not printed until 19 July<sup>34</sup>. In it Price returned to the struggle between zemstvo and Soviet as the basis of elected democracy in Russia. Government by Soviet had, he said, taken root quickly in North Central Russia but "national complications" had caused delays in the Don, the Ukraine and Asiatic Russia. These delays had been used by the Central Powers "to realise plans for the partition of Russia" and consequently "the hatred of revolutionary Russia against the Central

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<sup>34</sup> Manchester Guardian 19.7.18. Dated 'Delayed Telegram Vologda April 14'. 'Russia and the Allies: Internal Interference Resented'. Signed M. Philips Price.



Empires knows no bounds". If the Allies had any sense they would have made use of this emotion; instead they were planning their own form of intervention in Eastern Siberia. Price described in considerable detail, which he must have obtained from the Russian press, the origins of the counter-revolutionary movements led by Horvat and Semenov, supplied with arms by the Japanese and now invading Transbaikal from their base in Manchuria<sup>35</sup>. He also noted

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<sup>35</sup> Price bracketed together the names of Semenov and Horvath in a manner not wholly warranted by their activities then or later. The connecting link between them was the Chinese Eastern Railway. General Dmitri Leonidovich Horvath (1858-1937) had been the first General Manager of the railway, which ran through territory which was technically part of China but had been, under the Tsars, administered virtually as a Russian protectorate governed from Harbin. After the November revolution Horvath prevented the seizure of the railway by the newly-formed Harbin Soviet by allowing Chinese troops into the railway territory to restore order. From February to April 1918 he was in Peking, discussing the preservation of Russian interests on the railway, as he saw them, and these discussions undoubtedly involved representatives of Allied powers. In April he returned to Harbin, reorganised the railway and raised a Far Eastern Volunteer Corps. After the Czechs began to advance along the Trans-Siberian Railway in May he proclaimed himself Provisional Ruler of Russia. His only real authority remained, however, in the region of the Chinese Eastern Railway. He agreed to serve under Kolchak in the Omsk Directorate, but after Kolchak's capture and death return to Peking, where he died. No major works have been written about him. Grigorii Mikhailovich Semenov (1890-1946) was a much more flamboyant character. A TransBaikal Cossack Ataman, he announced in January 1918 that he intended to seize the junction of the Chinese Eastern and Trans-Siberian Railways as a base for driving the Bolsheviks out of Siberia and moving down the railway to capture Irkutsk and Krasnoyarsk, with the ultimate objective of joining forces with Kaledin. Throughout January 1918 the British Government had been considering ways of persuading the Japanese to intervene in the Far East and when Semenov, backed up by the British Military Attache at Peking, asked for money and supplies to do more or less exactly what the British wanted the Japanese to do for them, they were ready to give him what he wanted. They did not know, at first, that the Japanese were also supplying him with money and arms, on a far greater scale and with quite different motives: to implement their own plans for the control of Manchuria and Eastern Siberia. Gradually the British Government came to realise that Semenov was little more than a bandit with notoriously cruel habits, and an agent of the Japanese. They gradually withdrew their support. After the Soviet government had regained control of the Far East Semenov fled and lived the rest of his life in Japan, China, and finally Manchuria, where he played a minor political role in the 1930s. He was captured by the Red Army in 1946 and shot. References to Horvath



that "the Bolshevik press refers in much milder terms to America". But Bolshevik policy, he concluded, seemed to be to gain a respite in which to prepare for a future revolutionary war by utilising "the mutual jealousies of the three financial world-groups of America, Western Europe and Central Europe".

After his return to Moscow on 17 April 1918 Price discussed his experiences at Vologda with the American journalist Albert Rhys Williams<sup>36</sup>. He told Williams that, in his view, "the time was ripe...for Lenin's 'second revolution' to take place; nothing else could change the relation between city and town and by no other means he could see would the needed grain and other farm products flow to the hungry city workers". He also apparently told Rhys Williams - what he does not appear to have written anywhere himself - that the Left S.R.s in the villages were, as Rhys Williams then put it, "under the guise of a patriotic hatred of the Germans...steaming up the

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are nominal in the main histories of this period, but reference to Semenov are frequent, if scattered. See Richard H. Ullman: Anglo-Soviet Relations 1917-1921 Vol. I (1961) Intervention and War pp. 98-100, 138-143; Vol. II (1968) Britain and the Russian Civil War pp. 38-40, 233 and 252; see also J.A. White: The Siberian Intervention (Princeton 1950) pp. 195-199. Louis Fischer in The Soviet in World Affairs (Vol. I, 1930 p. 106) mentions a pamphlet by Tchicherin: Two Years of Soviet Foreign Affairs (Moscow 1920) which refers to Tchicherin's knowledge of Allied support for Horvath and Semenov.

<sup>36</sup> ALBERT RHYS WILLIAMS (1883-1962) was a Non-Conformist Minister in Boston with a strong interest in American Labour and Socialist affairs. He was in Europe on leave of absence in 1914, and became a journalist in consequence of the outbreak of war. He was in Russia from June 1917 to September 1918, during which time he, like John Reed, wrote for the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda, which at that time was directing its messages mainly towards the Germans. After his return to America he wrote and spoke throughout the country against the Intervention, and continued to write about Soviet Russia (to which he returned a number of times, the last being 1959) throughout his life. His books include Through the Russian Revolution (New York 1921), The Soviets (New York 1937) and Journey into Revolution. Petrograd 1917-1918 (Chicago 1969), which was seen into print after his death by his widow Lucita.



peasants to oppose the Bolsheviks - in each case to protect their petty-bourgeois followers against the growing organisation of the poor peasants by the Bolsheviks". On the same occasion Price also apparently described the hostile reception with which the first detachments of city workers had been met when they came to the villages in the Vologda area to exchange food for clothing. In some villages the poorer peasants had already begun to organise in April 1918, and had forced the middle peasants to give up at least some of the land they had taken in 1917<sup>37</sup>. But the signs were that peasant uprisings against the soviets were inevitable. "Price and I agreed" wrote Rhys Williams "that things looked dark indeed."<sup>38</sup> 39

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<sup>37</sup> The desperate food situation in Petrograd in the early months of 1918 led to desperate measures. Armed detachments were sent to the villages to attempt to extract grain by force but they failed, as did barter experiments between towns and villages. When Price referred in his talks with Rhys Williams to the second stage of the revolution, he was referring to Lenin's 'Two tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution', which envisaged that in the first stage the proletariat and peasantry would unite, but that in the second it would be necessary to split the peasantry, and for the industrial proletariat to work with the 'semi-proletarian' poor peasants against the 'semi-bourgeois' rich peasants or kulaks. In May 1918 TsIK approved a decree conferring powers on the People's Commissariat of Supply (Narkomprod) to extract concealed grain from the rural bourgeoisie. This was to be a crusade on behalf of the industrial, socialist proletariat. On 11 June 1918 another decree established elected 'Committees of Poor Peasants' (for which any peasant except a kulak was to be eligible), which were to be responsible not only for the extraction of grain but for its distribution. Lenin himself described this move as the first time that the countryside began to experience the November revolution (Sochineniya xxiii 393) and as a turning point in the revolution. It was also to provide the agricultural base of war communism. The Committees also had the effect of denting the hitherto continued predominance on land committees of Left S.R.s, and of assisting the transition from individual peasant farming towards collectivisation. Having fulfilled their function of splitting the rural proletariat and improving the supply of food to the towns, the Committees of Poor Peasants were, later in 1918, relegated to the role of 'ginger groups' within the local Soviets. E.H. Carr. The Bolshevik Revolution Vol. II, pp. 49-55, 147, 154, 157-159.

<sup>38</sup> Rhys Williams : Journey into Revolution (pp. 272-274). Rhys Williams went on (p.274) to quote a passage from Price's Reminiscences (p.260) in which he had described the apocalyptic spirit of the times. 'The spirit of rebellion still stalked the



Price left Vologda on 16 April 1918 and arrived in Moscow next day. The only entry in his engagement diary for that month shows that he went to a performance of "The Cherry Orchard" on 28 April. His few surviving letters to his family from the spring and early summer of 1918 all compare favourably the living conditions in Moscow with those he had left in Petrograd, and the fact that he went to the theatre for the first time in 1918 illustrates the point. It would have taken him a little time to relocate himself and discover the whereabouts of his friends and contacts, and he wrote nothing for ten days. His first despatch to the Manchester Guardian from Moscow was written on 26 April. He left no other record of his movements or activities in the second half of April except for a reference to the fact that he visited the Moscow headquarters of the Anarchists the day after the Red Guards had driven out its occupants, and that was

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land...Cyclopean fires, smouldering for centuries beneath the surface, were burning themselves out. The primitive instinct for revenge on age-old oppressors was strong, and did not shrink from theft, murder, rape and outrages on the now defenceless bourgeoisie...these symbols of rebellion were also the symbols of the very lack of discipline which made the proletarian dictatorship impossible in the long run, and against which the Bolsheviki had to commence a now relentless struggle." In quoting from Price, and duly attributing the passage, Rhys Williams omitted the words printed in italics without any indication that he had done so. His book was published in 1969. Price wrote the words in 1920.

<sup>39</sup> An undated article by Price appeared in the December 1918 edition of U.D.C., "long delayed in transmission but much of it is still of topical and vivid interest". Judging from the subject matter it appears to have been written at about the same time as his conversations with Rhys Williams. It began with an account of Lenin's reasons for signing the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and went on to itemise the weaknesses of the Bolshevik Government and the reasons for them. Only two factors, Price thought, were at work on its side. One was that "the financial oligarchies of the rest of the world" were "bleeding each other to death"; the other was that capitalist interests in Russia were unable to offer any serious opposition to the Bolsheviki "unless supplied by foreign bayonets". Price concluded that there was less to fear from an armed intervention than from the effects of famine and anarchy on a State without an apparatus of government.



in his Reminiscences<sup>40</sup>. It is significant, indeed, that whereas he devoted a whole chapter of the book to the challenge from the Left which the Soviet government was now experiencing, he barely touched on the subject in the articles which he now wrote for the Manchester Guardian<sup>41</sup>. This can hardly have been because he was not aware of it at the time, and is more likely to have been because his main pre-occupation now was the developing threat of Allied intervention. His last cable from Vologda, written on 14 April, had been devoted almost entirely to this subject and its publication was to be held up until 19 July. As will be shown, the censor's hand began to fall with increasing heaviness upon his material, and it fell most heavily - whether by cutting, delaying or suppressing - on passages dealing with the prelude to intervention.

In his contemporary letters, in decades of oral reminiscence and in his book My Three Revolutions written half a century later, Price gave the strong impression that throughout the spring of 1918 he had talked, thought, written and acted in some kind of concert with Arthur Ransome and Raymond Robins; and that the three of them had agreed in their different ways to use what influence they had to the same end. This was, of course, to persuade the Western Allies to take advantage of the enormous hostility prevalent in Russia in the aftermath of Brest Litovsk by providing economic help and not by themselves intervening, or allowing the Japanese to intervene militarily. Yet there is no reference to Price either in Ransome's

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<sup>40</sup> Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution p.270.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid Chp. XVIII 'The Breathing Space - Bolshevik Challenge to Left and Right'.

autobiography<sup>42</sup> nor in the Raymond Robins papers<sup>43</sup>. The conscious co-operation of the three men may have been a figment of Price's imagination, although there is no doubt that they knew each other well enough. Another explanation may be that although they all sincerely desired the same end and worked for it, Price had by now already moved so far to the Left as to have been an embarrassment to the other two, at least in retrospect. Robins' attitude, certainly, was entirely pragmatic; he was a convinced capitalist but he wanted Russia back in the war against Germany. Price, on the other hand, had at that time lost the last of his reservations about the Bolsheviks, both in terms of political theory and in practice. The fact remains that, whether acting in concert or not, Price now proceeded to write a series of articles for the Manchester Guardian which were too perceptive for the comfort of the Foreign Office. Most of those he wrote in May 1918 were published, and some that he wrote in June, but all were censored, and with increasing severity. Just before the end of June he was silenced altogether, although he continued to write and cable articles (and fortunately to keep copies of them) until the eve of his departure from Russia at the end of November 1918.

In order to understand why and how Price came to be silenced it will be necessary to outline the development of British foreign policy towards Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution, and to show how the Official Press Bureau in London was used in support of that policy.

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<sup>42</sup> The Autobiography of Arthur Ransome edited, with Prologue and Epilogue Rupert Hart Davis. Jonathon Cape. 1976.

<sup>43</sup> Raymond Robins papers. Archives Division, State Historical Society Wisconsin. Micro 567 and 579



## Chapter 7. Prelude to Intervention

(i) The British Government and Russia

On 19 December 1917 Arthur Ponsonby M.P., an active member of the U.D.C. who was also a former career diplomat<sup>1</sup>, told the House of Commons that on three separate occasions before the war he had endeavoured to call the attention of Members to the danger of relying on "reactionary autocratic elements" in Russia<sup>2</sup>. "The whole of our policy during that time" he said "and for many years past has been, unfortunately, made for us by two men, Lord Hardinge and Sir George Buchanan... From first to last, unfortunately, our policy in connection with Russia has been dictated - and alas! is still being dictated - by two men who know nothing about the needs of the British Empire... We have, from first to last for the last twelve years, relied on Lord Hardinge and Sir George Buchanan for our information about Russia, for all our dealings with Russia and at the present time we are still, unfortunately, relying on them to represent us and... to be the authors as well as the administrators of our Russian diplomacy." Another M.P. with scarcely less experience of the ways of the Foreign Office, Col. Josiah Wedgwood declared after the end of the war that the Foreign Office had "always wanted a firm hand to control its reactionary tendencies... Looking back on the history of the relations of our Foreign Office with the Russian Revolution, hon. Members will see that we have every ground for supposing, if there is a choice between right and wrong, that they will go wrong."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The plethora of advisers - and critics - on the Government's Russian policy is such that in order not to interrupt the sense of the paragraphs in Chapter 7, all biodata relating to them has been placed, in alphabetical order, at the end of the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard. 19.12.17. Col. 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 16.4.19. Co. 2972.

Lord Hardinge and Sir George Buchanan were, however, not the only people involved in creating British policy on Russia, although Ponsonby was not entirely exaggerating the situation. If there was one thing Lloyd George was not short of it was advisers on Russia, but unfortunately they did not always, or even often agree. As he complained to C.P. Scott<sup>4</sup> "I never knew a subject on which the best opinion differed so completely".

It might have been expected that Lloyd George's chief adviser on Russia in 1917-1918 would have been his Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour. But Balfour was not a member of the War Cabinet, though allowed and indeed often summoned to attend its meetings. But so also were both his cousin and Parliamentary Under Secretary Lord Robert Cecil (who happened to be Minister of Blockade as well) and his Permanent Under Secretary, Lord Hardinge. Cecil's influence was further enhanced when he was made Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in July 1918: a critical time in Anglo-Russian affairs. Cecil disliked both Lloyd George and Sir George Buchanan personally, and the Cabinet tended to take Cecil's advice in preference to Balfour's. On the other hand Balfour, who tended to be active only in subjects which interested him - and Russia was one of them - sometimes took his revenge by drafting his own telegrams. At the top level, Lloyd George also listened to the Secretary of State for War, Lord Milner, to General Smuts, to the Secretary of the Cabinet Sir Maurice (later Lord) Hankey and to his Private

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<sup>4</sup> Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928 (Edited with an introduction and commentary by Trevor Wilson. 1970) The book shows how much Scott was consulted and respected in Westminster and Whitehall, even by those who disagreed with him.



Secretariat, known as the Garden Suburb, at Downing Street, the influence of which was strongly resented at the Foreign Office. The specialist on foreign affairs at the Garden Suburb was Philip Kerr (later Lord Lothian). Thus Lloyd George had at his disposal the means by which he could, as The Nation was to express it some years later conduct his own foreign policy without the inconvenience of Foreign Office intervention<sup>5</sup>. He was, of course, notoriously given to making decisions on any and every subject and telling his specialist advisers about them later<sup>6</sup>.

Nonetheless the Foreign Office was not entirely disregarded, and in the course of the war it generated a number of specialist departments most of which had something to say about Russia. The first of these to be created was the War Department which, by the time of the Russian Revolution had been moved into the area of responsibility of the Ministry of Blockade. That Ministry had itself grown out of another specially formed for war purposes: the Contraband Department (the others being the Foreign Trade, War Trade Intelligence and Finance Departments). The two most concerned with Russian policy formation were the Russia Department of the Foreign Office and Russian Section of the War Department of the Ministry of Blockade. Lord Hardinge was the Permanent Under Secretary in charge of both. His Assistant Under Secretary in the Foreign Office was Sir Ronald Graham, but in the Ministry of Blockade it was Sir George Clerk who was also, to complete the picture of confusion, head of the Russia

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<sup>5</sup> The Nation 14.10.22.

<sup>6</sup> See R.M. Warman: "The Erosion of Foreign Office Influence in the Making of Foreign Policy 1916-1918", Historical Journal Vol. 15 (1972) pp. 133-159; Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert (Ed.s) The Diplomats 1919-1939 (Princeton 1953); and John Tilley and Stephen Gaselee The Foreign Office (The Whitehall Series, 1933).

Department of the Foreign Office. The comments and initials of these men criss-cross the memoranda on Russia which shuttled between the two Departments, not to mention those of individuals in Military Intelligence and the Official Press Bureau (see below p. 211), and it is not always obvious which Department they were representing at any given time, or indeed, whether that mattered. In the lower echelons, J.D. Gregory, who also appears to have had a position in both the Russia Department and the Russian Section, stands out as having been particularly busy and in the Russian Section the most prominent initials were usually those of T.H. Lyons and E.H. Carr. In addition, most of the memoranda dealing with Russia were commented upon by the ubiquitous Stephen Gaselee (later Sir Stephen), a member of the Foreign Office News Department who was liaison officer with the Ministry of Blockade, the Official Press Bureau and the Political Intelligence Department, the functions of which will also be dealt with below. But in the context of naming the advisers of whose abundance Lloyd George complained, it seems appropriate to note here rather than later that P.I.D.'s main experts on Russia were Rex Leeper, Professor J.Y. Simpson, Professor Bernard (later Sir Bernard) Pares and Arnold Toynbee.

In addition to the men in Whitehall there were, of course, the men on the spot, headed by Sir George Buchanan. Despite his fondness for monarchs and monarchy Buchanan was not entirely unrealistic and broke all the rules of diplomacy by trying to persuade the Tsar to pay more attention to liberal public opinion<sup>7</sup>. Ponsonby was, however,

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<sup>7</sup> Sir George Buchanan described these meetings, which took place in November 1916 and January 1917, in Chapters 20 and 22 of his book My Mission to Russia (1923). It was on the second occasion, when he had urged the Tsar to take steps to recreate confidence in the



perfectly right in thinking him essentially reactionary in his political ideas. Considerable notice was taken of the views of three other British diplomats in Russia, although their advice was not necessarily taken. These were the Hon. Francis Lindley, who was first Counsellor at the British Embassy at Petrograd then, from January 1918, Commissioner in Russia and finally Consul General for Russia at Archangel from June 1918. The Consul General in Moscow, John Oliver Wardrop, sent in lengthy reports. Finally there was Robert Bruce Lockhart, at the time of the March revolution merely vice-Consul in Moscow, who became British Special Agent in Russia in January 1918.

The military advisers to whom most attention was paid in Whitehall were probably Major General Alfred Knox, Chief Adviser on Russian Affairs at the War Office, and Major General F.C. Poole, Head of the British Supply Mission to Russia at the time of the March revolution and eventually commander of the Allied forces in North Russia.

Poole, initially the most realistic of the military, had eventually to be relieved of his command because of his political ineptitude. A man whose views were studiously ignored was Commander Harold Grenfell, British Naval Attaché at Petrograd since 1912, who made the mistake of openly supporting - or at least appearing to understand - the revolutionary elements in the Baltic Fleet. He was quickly recalled to London.

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country, that he reported the following dialogue: "'Do you mean that I am to regain the confidence of my people or that they are to regain my confidence?' 'Both, Sir' I replied..." On 15 May 1917 Milner wrote to Buchanan: "It must be some personal satisfaction for you to feel that you have been absolutely right about this Russian situation, and that if the former rulers of the country had only had the wisdom to take your advice, the catastrophe would certainly have been postponed and perhaps altogether averted." Milner papers: The

From August 1914 onwards British policy to Russia appeared to be dominated solely by strategic considerations: how many German troops could the Russian Army keep occupied on the Eastern Front? All the early examples of censorship of news from Russia that can be found point in that direction (see below p. 229). Thus any indication that the Tsar's government was becoming unstable was suppressed, and other news from Russia was, as far as possible, so selectively presented as to be positively misleading. This was particularly damaging in the case of the Milner Mission to Russia in January 1917 (see Appendix V). It was therefore symptomatic as much of ignorance as of indifference that, when news of the abdication of the Tsar was formally given in a statement in the House of Commons by Bonar Law, the House was so empty that a group of M.P.s had twice to prevent it from being counted out<sup>8</sup>. And it was certainly evidence of continuity of foreign policy when, on March 19 1917 the Prime Minister attributed the first Russian Revolution to "discontent at the inefficiency of the Government in its conduct of the war". "It is satisfactory to know" Lloyd George went on "that the new Government has been formed for the express purpose of carrying on the war with renewed vigour."<sup>9</sup> Although a formal motion of congratulation to the Russian people was proposed by Bonar Law on 22 March, praise for the Provisional government from the Front Bench in Westminster was faint. Ponsonby was later to describe the reception given to the Russian revolution in Britain as "so chilling as to spread a feeling of amazement in Russia".<sup>10</sup> It was also remarkable,

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Great War. Private Letters, Vol. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Hansard. 15.3.17. Col. 419-422.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid 19.3.17. Col. 1538.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 19.12.17. Col. 2000.



as Ponsonby pointed out at the time<sup>11</sup> that whereas criticism of the Tsarist government had hitherto been played down, in March 1917 "our Press, no doubt under instructions, emphasise the keen desire of the new Government in Russia to prosecute the war with increasing vigour...That is not my reading of the event." In May 1917 Asquith, the former Prime Minister, referring to the formula of no annexations and no indemnities, begged in vain for a message to be sent to the Provisional government and the Petrograd Soviet assuring them that the British government supported their joint "statement of the terms for which they and we are fighting this war".<sup>12</sup>

Pressure was instead put on the Russian High Command to launch its ill-fated July offensive. British irresolution over the sending of a delegation to the Stockholm Conference and the subsequent humiliation of Arthur Henderson in August 1917 did nothing to improve matters. The British did not overtly support the attempted Kornilov coup in September, but little effort was made to conceal a certain sympathy for it in official circles. The last straw was widely believed by those M.P.s who took an interest in Russia to have been the insistence of the Western Allies that the Allied Conference due to be held in Paris in October 1917 should discuss only military matters and not war aims. Soskice gave this as the "last but not least" of the reasons for Kerensky's downfall<sup>13</sup>. If the Allies had been

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<sup>11</sup> Hansard 22.3.17. Col.s 2085-2091.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 16.5.17. Col.s 1675-1679.

<sup>13</sup> In an article published in the Manchester Guardian on 15 December 1917 Soskice gave four reasons for Kerensky's downfall: (i) the Kornilov mutiny had paved the way for the Bolsheviki; (ii) Kerensky was afraid that a general massacre of officers might take place; (iii) the officers of the Petrograd garrison were apathetic to the point of disloyalty in November 1917, and (iv) the attitude of the Allies and their neglect of public opinion in Russia. He added that a clear declaration by the Allies of their war aims

willing to make a clear declaration of their war aims, Soskice believed, Kerensky's hand might have been strengthened. "The declaration that was needed was one demonstrating with absolute clearness that the Allies were fighting not for territorial gain but for the triumph of democratic principles in Europe." But that was not a declaration that the Western Allies, bound at that time by a tangle of secret commitments, were in a position to make.

For the better part of two weeks after the Bolsheviks took power no reliable news from Russia reached London. In the temporary policy vacuum that inevitably ensued the Cabinet learned on 21 November, that the King of Rumania had proposed that if the Allies could help, remnants of the collapsing Rumanian army would be prepared to try to join up with the Don Cossacks in southern Russia and possibly even with the British in Mesopotamia<sup>14</sup>. The war in the West was going badly for the Allies and they wanted to keep Rumania in the war. If they were to translate this proposal into action they would have to deal with General Kaledin, the Ataman of the Don Cossacks<sup>15</sup>. The

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"might have strengthened Kerensky's hand considerably".

<sup>14</sup> Michael Kettle: The Allies and the Russian Collapse (1981) pp. 118-119.

<sup>15</sup> ALEXEI MAXIMIVICH KALE DIN (1861-1918) was the son of a Cossack officer and rose rapidly in a military career. In May 1916 he succeeded General Brusilov as Commander of the 8th Army. Initially he supported the Provisional Government, but became increasingly alienated from it in the course of its various moves to democratise the army. He was elected Ataman of the Don Cossacks in June 1917 and as Ataman his record was far from anti-democratic, his conservatism being confined to military matters. He did not welcome Alexeiv and Kornilov when they arrived in the Don after the November revolution but was unable to create an alternative power base himself. When the Red Army began to recapture the Don early in 1918 he reluctantly appealed to the Volunteer Army for help, but when it, too, was driven back to re-form in the Kuban Kaledin resigned as Ataman and shot himself. His career is dealt with in the context of that period only by Peter Kenez: Civil War in South Russia: The First Year of the Volunteer Army. (Berkeley 1971).



War Cabinet decided to ask General Berthelot, the head of the French Military Mission in Rumania, to look into the feasibility of this idea. In the meantime the former Russian Chief of Staff, General Alexeiv, had arrived on the Don with the intention of forming a volunteer army to oppose the Bolsheviks. Kaledin did not make him welcome, and Alexeiv was only eventually and reluctantly allowed to base himself in an area which was traditionally a Cossack sphere of influence. But the Allies, clutching at a Rumanian straw, decided that Kaledin was the key man for their purpose of keeping some kind of Eastern Front in being. On 3 December the War Cabinet agreed that the Treasury should meet "any reasonable demands for money" from the forces which they thought were now coming together in south Russia, and which included the old Caucasus Army, which had remained loyal to the Provisional government<sup>16</sup>. Although Sir George Buchanan had by now twice cabled London advising the British government to release Russia from her obligation not to sign a separate peace this was not and was not seen to be the same thing as advising them to recognise the Bolsheviks<sup>17</sup>, and Cecil was instructed by the Cabinet to inform him that British policy was to support "any responsible body" in Russia that would "actively" oppose them<sup>18</sup>. This directive preceded by some three weeks the official Allied formulation known as the Accord Français Anglais and indeed actually went beyond it, as Lord Hankey, Secretary of the War Cabinet, later pointed out. In his words, a "British policy of secret support to partisans in the political life of Russia" had already begun early in December

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<sup>16</sup> War Cab. 299. CAB 24.43, GT 3705. See also Kettle, The Allies and the Russian Collapse p. 142.

<sup>17</sup> CAB 286. Buchanan's telegrams nos. 1878 and 1881.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid 24.43.

1917<sup>19</sup>. And now the "partisans" in the south were reinforced by the arrival in the Don area of Generals Kornilov and Denikin and the former Kadet Foreign Minister Miliukov.

On 10 December, at the suggestion of the Prime Minister Balfour wrote a memorandum for circulation to his Cabinet colleagues before a meeting which was to take place the following day and which he was not going to be able to attend<sup>20</sup>. In it he summarised his own view of what British policy objectives in Russia should now be. These were (i) the safety of the British Embassy and of British subjects in Russia; (ii) the interests of the Rumanian army; (iii) the minimisation of any advantages which the Germans might hope to derive "from the dissolution of the Russian Army as a fighting force". With regard to the first, Balfour realistically observed that there was very little the British government could do except avoid "the active malevolence of the Bolshevik party". He stated that he entirely disagreed with those of his Cabinet colleague who already regard the Bolsheviks as "avowed enemies". Although he personally thought them "crazy", "fanatics" and "dangerous dreamers", he also recognised that they "would genuinely like to put into practice the wild theories which have so long been germinating in the shadow of the Russian autocracy". In his view it was in the best interests of Britain to avoid an open breach with the Bolsheviks. (In this connection he advised that Tchicherin and Petrov should be deported back to Russia, noting that he was "imperfectly acquainted" with the reasons for their detention in the first place.) He had, he said, already

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<sup>19</sup> CAB 24.43. Hankey, in a memorandum of 23 February 1918 used the words in a recapitulation of foreign policy decisions taken since the fall of Riga on 3.9.17.

<sup>20</sup> David Lloyd George War Memoirs Vol. 5 pp. 2573-2578.



"instructed Sir George Buchanan to abstain completely from any action which can be interpreted as undue interference with the internal affairs of the country to which he is accredited, and I am unable to think of any other step which would help to secure his safety". As to the Rumanian Army, there was nothing to be done since "for the moment no such forces appear to exist".

Balfour then turned to the question of the advantages that Germany stood to gain by Russia's going out of the war. The first of these was the redistribution of troops to the Western Front about which, he said, the British could do nothing "and I say no more about it". The second was the acquisition by Germany of resources in Russia which would in effect break the Allied blockade. This, in his view, was a much more serious threat. The disorganisation of transport in Russia would probably make it difficult for Germany to get much in the way of cereals. But he was concerned about oil. "We want to know what means of transport there is in the Black Sea available to the Germans and how far the anti-Bolshevik elements in the Caucasian regions can be utilised to interfere with the supply on land."

That was as far as Balfour was prepared to go at this time in laying down, let alone endorsing a blueprint for Allied intervention in Russia. He concluded that nothing could be more fatal "both to the immediate conduct of the war and to our post-war relations" than a policy calculated to drive Russia in the hands of Germany. "A mere Armistice between Russia and Germany may not for very many months promote in any important fashion the supply of German needs from Russian sources. It must be our business to make that period as long as possible by every means in our power."

Lloyd George, after including the Balfour Memorandum in its entirety in his War Memoirs, added "I strongly supported the sagacious counsel given in this document" but, he went on, Balfour's views were not acceptable to several members of the Cabinet, and Lloyd George's support, if strong, remained silent, or at least ineffective. Yet at this time many of the advisers of whose abundance he had complained were like-minded in at least one respect: they believed that the Bolsheviks were effectively in control and there was no point in needlessly antagonising them<sup>21</sup>.

On 26 December another memorandum<sup>22</sup> was circulated to the Cabinet which had been prepared by Milner and Cecil on their way to Paris and discussed by them with Clemenceau and Pichon on 23 December. This came to be known as the Accord Français Anglais. The memorandum began by proposing sensibly enough that the Allies should "get into relations with the Bolsheviks through unofficial agents, each country as seems best to it". Sir George Buchanan should be sent on leave

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<sup>21</sup> Sir George Buchanan cabled on 5 December that it was "useless" to found exaggerated hopes on the promises of emissaries from the Cossacks (CAB 27/189). Sir George Clerk, commenting on 14 December on a memorandum from John Buchan (FO 371.3018 p.05) about the views relayed to him at second hand of Col. Robins in Petrograd, noted "whatever happens to Lenin and Trotsky the Bolsheviks will have the control for some time at all events, if not for ever...should we not therefore make the best of it if we can and strengthen all the passive factors against our enemy, whatever our feelings about Russia's betrayal of the Allies". General Poole wrote from Russia on 19 December (CAB 27/189) advocating de facto recognition of the Bolshevik government. Without that, he wrote, "we are practically powerless as everybody is too afraid of them to work for us without a government order. If only we could go round to Trotsky we could square it all in ten minutes. It is pure folly to count on any more fighting on the part of what people at home now call the South Eastern Federation of Russia. If we count on this we are counting on a broken reed I fear."

<sup>22</sup> The statement that Milner and Smuts drew up this memorandum on their way to Paris is contained in CAB 234, War Cab. 306.



for reasons for health; he was now a liability being too "indelibly associated" with the Kadets to be acceptable to the Bolsheviks. And the British should "represent to the Bolsheviks that they had no desire to interfere in the internal politics of Russia; "any idea that we favour a counter revolution is a profound mistake". But the Allies should keep in touch with the "semi-autonomous provinces" of Russia in which alternative governments were already taking shape, above all with the Ukraine, if only because Rumania was dependent on that area for food. While not condoning Russian "treachery" in opening peace negotiations with the Central Powers, the Allies should endorse the principles of self-determination and of no annexations or indemnities. In southern Russia the Allies must do what they could to save Rumania and to prevent Russian supplies from reaching Germany. The "remnant" of the Armenians must be protected, united if possible with Georgia in an autonomous state, not only to protect the Allied flank in Mesopotamia, Persia and the Caucasus, but also to prevent the development of a Pan-Turanian movement under German influence which would be more dangerous to the Allies even than German control of the Baghdad Railway.

The memorandum then considered the means by which these objectives were to be realised, expressed in a few words which sealed the fate of Anglo-Russian relations for decades. First, money was needed: to reorganise the Ukraine, pay the Cossacks and Caucasian forces and bribe the Persians. "If the French could undertake the finance of the Ukraine we might find money for the others. It is understood

that the United States will assist."<sup>23</sup>

Next, agents and officers must be found "to advise and support the provincial officers and their armies". But this must be done "as quickly as possible so as to avoid the imputation - as far as we can - that we are preparing to make war on the Bolsheviki". And, again, there was to be a division of labour. The French would "deal" with the Ukraine while the British "would take the other south-east provinces."

On 2 January 1918 Buchanan, by now aware that he would shortly be coming home, complained in a telegram to the Foreign Office that it was difficult for him "to proclaim our strict neutral attitude while we were actively supporting Cossacks and Ukraine. All I advocated was frank explanation with Bolsheviks, and I see no reason whatever why when we establish unofficial relations with the Bolshevik Government of the North we should not appoint unofficial agents at other centres of activity".<sup>24</sup> In this cable Buchanan epitomised the less simplistic view of the Bolsheviks which the diplomats tended to hold as compared with the politicians. The former were prepared to

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<sup>23</sup> On 2 January 1918 Cecil wrote a letter to O.T. Crosby an official at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, in which he summarised the decisions which had just been reached in Paris regarding the division of spheres of influence in south Russia as between the British and the French. He added "It had been intimated to us confidentially that President Wilson is in favour of the provision of Allied support for the above elements, and that while he has no power to lend money direct for such unorganised movements, he is willing to let France and England have funds to transmit to them if they consider it desirable. You will realise that if anything is to be done it will be necessary for us to act with all expedition, and that the possibility of indirect assistance from the United States is one which will have a very immediate bearing upon the whole question."

(FO 371.3283)

<sup>24</sup> FO 371.3296.



support alternative governments while not denying the possibility that the Bolsheviks might prove capable of consolidating their position. By now, however, the Military Advisers to the Supreme War Council in Paris were adding their voices to those of the politicians<sup>25</sup>. In their Joint Note V of December 1917 they advised that "all national groups who are determined to continue the war must be supported". They pointed out the danger to the Allies if the Germans obtained control of the Black Sea as the result of a separate peace with Russia, which would enable them to get Russian wheat through Odessa and Batum. They proposed more direct communication between the Allies their "friends" in Russia, either by way of Vladivostock and the Siberian Railway or by operations in Turkey which might open a direct road to Tiflis and lead to a separate peace with Turkey and the opening of the Dardanelles.

Robert Bruce Lockhart was at this time on his way to Petrograd. The decision to appoint him as British Special Agent had been taken over the heads of permanent officials at the Foreign Office by Lloyd

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<sup>25</sup> During the autumn of 1917 Lloyd George had taken the initiative in persuading the Western Allies to create, for the first time, some form of organisation which would co-ordinate the strategy and tactics of the British, French and Italian High Commands. This resulted in an agreement, on 7 November 1917, for the setting up of a Supreme War Council with Permanent Military Representatives from each power, usually sitting at Versailles. The Military Representatives were to receive from their governments and military authorities all proposals, information and documents relating to the conduct of the war, to hold a watching brief over the disposition of Allied forces, and to profer advice in the shape of Joint Notes. The Americans were to attend as observers. The setting up of the Supreme War Council was described by Lloyd George in Chapter 67 of his War Memoirs. Most of the decisions of the Supreme War Council, whether or not based on the Joint Notes of the Military Representatives, are to be found in CAB 25.121 and CAB 25.127, CAB 28.3, CAB 28.4 and CAB 28.5. By no means all of the Joint Notes have survived. Ullman, who quotes Joint Note V (Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol. I, p.56) found his copy in the U.S. National Archives, Modern Army Branch.

George and Milner personally. Lockhart himself realised later that the permanent officials "resented having stray missions headed by a junior Vice-Consul, foisted upon them" and came to feel, with hindsight, that he should perhaps have adopted a more "placatory" approach<sup>26</sup>. He believed that his failure to do so was detrimental not only to his career but to the prospects of success for the policy in Russia that he initially advocated. As it was, he lost no time in striking out on a new line, and within a week of arrival had cabled a recommendation that the British should offer at least partial recognition of the Bolsheviks before Trotsky return<sup>ed</sup> to Petrograd from Brest Litovsk<sup>27</sup>. On 6 February Lockhart cabled again: "In my opinion Russia is even at the moment more powerful Ally to us than she has yet been owing to influence Bolsheviks are exercising in Germany."<sup>28</sup> But when the War Cabinet came, on 8 February, to discuss Lockhart's first telegram Balfour opposed taking his advice on the grounds that the Bolsheviks were not in full control and that even partial recognition was hardly compatible with British support of the Ukrainian separatists and the Don Cossacks. Lloyd George disagreed, with the usual lack of result. His own opinion of Lockhart, he said, would cause him to hesitate before rejecting any advice he offered. But Cecil replied "My view is that we have taken too much the views of the man on the spot. It was a mistake not to back Kornilov."<sup>29</sup> By now Cecil was clearly emerging as the hawk in

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<sup>26</sup> R.H. Bruce Lockhart Memoirs of a British Agent (1932) p. 207.

<sup>27</sup> FO 371.3298.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid 371.3316.

<sup>29</sup> CAB 233, War Cab. 340.



the War Cabinet where policy on Russia was concerned, although he was willing to make allowances for Lockhart's youth<sup>30</sup>. He had created a new committee under his own chairmanship at the Foreign Office: the Russia Committee, and saw to it moreover that this was where the real formulation of policy took place. The War Office, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Blockade and the Treasury were all represented, though not always by the same men<sup>31</sup>. Against this lobby Lockhart stood no chance. Nevertheless Lockhart continued throughout March and April 1918 to send cables to the Foreign Office giving advice in a sense diametrically opposed to that of the Russia Committee. They were written in a pleading, almost emotional style which, unfortunately made it all the easier for them to be written off in Whitehall as the hysterical outpourings of an inexperienced and impressionable young man.

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Jones, then Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, recorded the following fragment of dialogue between Milner and Cecil which he overheard after a Cabinet meeting on 10 April 1918. Milner: "Lockart does not keep our end up with Trotsky." Cecil: "He is a very young man where everyone is a little mad." (Whitehall Diary (1969) pp.48-52). Jones' unofficial records of Cabinet meetings on Russia at this time are illuminating. He recorded Lloyd George as having said, on 8 February 1918: "The criticism of the Bolsheviks always comes from those 3,000 miles away from them." Jones also gave an account of the line-up within the Cabinet. "Milner and Cecil utterly disbelieve in Trotsky while the PM holds that there is something to hope from the Bolsheviks. The Government's advisers are similarly divided, General Knox being on Cecil's side, Lockhart on the PM's side, and General Poole leaning to Lockart's side." (Ibid pp. 59-61).

<sup>31</sup> War Cab. 308. A rare copy of the Minutes of a meeting of the Russia Committee (the 59th, on 8.8.18) is to be found in FO 371.3327. It shows that the Chairman was Lord Robert Cecil, and the members present were Sir George Buchanan (former Ambassador to Petrograd), Sir George Clerk (Foreign Office), Mr. Dudley Ward (Treasury), and Lt. Col. the Hon. S. Peel (War Office). The Secretaries were Major F.H. Kisch (shown as also representing the D.M.I.) and E.H. Carr. Among the matters discussed on this occasion was how much support the Allies could give to the creation of "a Russian government in the Far East". See also Kettle: The Allies and the Russian Collapse p.174.

Throughout this time the only forces even theoretically capable of contesting Bolshevik control of Russia were in the South East, as identified in the Accord Français Anglais. The Allies were, however, quick to take hold of the idea that the best, indeed the only way to get reinforcements or supplies anywhere near them was via the Siberian railway. A proposal that the Siberian railway should be seized from the Vladivostock end by either Japanese or American troops was first made by General Foch at an Allied conference in Paris in the first week of December 1917<sup>32</sup>. Although the nearest point of contact on the railway with the Don Cossacks was at the end of a spur line from Cheliabinsk to Samara, and Samara was 600 miles from the Cossack centre at Novocherkassk, the pros and cons of intervention by or not by the Japanese, with or without American participation or approval, were discussed interminably and inconclusively by the Allies among themselves for the next four months, each in turn blowing hot and then cold.

On 1 March Lockhart met Lenin for the first time, and Lenin told him that the Bolsheviks were prepared "to risk co-operation with the Allies".<sup>33</sup> Lockhart at once cabled London saying that there were "still considerable possibilities of organising resistance to Germany".<sup>34</sup> On 5 March Lockhart and Robins saw Trotsky together, and Trotsky outlined to them the sort of terms which might induce Russia to remain in the war<sup>35</sup>. These included non-intervention: whether by the Japanese in the east or the British in the north.

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<sup>32</sup> CAB 283, War Cab. 294. See also Kettle: The Allies and the Russian Collapse p. 209.

<sup>33</sup> Lockhart, Memoirs p.339.

<sup>34</sup> FO 371.3285.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol. 1, p. 123; Kettle The Allies and the Russian Collapse p. 262.



Both men subsequently cabled their governments recommending acceptance of the conditions, and there seems to be no doubt that they were deliberately co-ordinating their actions at this point. The fate of Robins' cables is obscure; the only thing that seems fairly clear is that they were ignored<sup>36</sup>. Lockhart appealed:

"Empower me to inform Lenin that the question of Japanese intervention has been shelved...that we are prepared to support the Bolsheviks insofar as they will oppose Germany and that we invite his suggestions as to the best way in which this help can be given."

In a second cable he said:

"I shall send you immediately full particulars of agreement I have come to with Trotsky in eventuality of your being able to stop Japanese intervention. I have achieved far more than I thought possible. Why will you not give me a chance to prove my conclusions when you risk nothing by determination which at present is totally unnecessary."

On this cable Hardinge minuted: "It is difficult to comment on a hysterical telegram of this kind" and Balfour added: "Mr. Lockhart is an able man but he never answers an argument and his suggestions are always negative. His faith in Trotsky is touching."<sup>37</sup>

Neither Robins nor Lockhart received any reply to their messages. On 14 March Robins had tea with Lenin, who commented: "You will not hear. Neither the American government nor any of the Allied governments will co-operate, even against the Germans, with the

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<sup>36</sup> George Kennan (Russia Leaves the War Vol. 1 (1956) Chp. 24 'Robins and Ratification' and Ullman (Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol. 1 p. 127) suggests that Robins overestimated the importance of his endeavours to bring about direct contact between Washington and Moscow. The picture that emerges from the Raymond Robins papers in the Archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (P45935 and P45937) is one of a sincere, probably genuine, but certainly frustrated attempt to do so.

<sup>37</sup> FO 371.3290.

Workmen's and Peasants' Revolutionary Government of Russia."<sup>38</sup> The next day, on the very steps of the platform at the meeting of the Fourth Congress called to decide upon the ratification of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, Lenin saw Robins and asked him for the last time if either he or Lockhart had heard anything from their respective governments. On being told that neither of them had, he said: "I am now going to the platform and the peace will be ratified."<sup>39</sup>

Lockhart still did not give up. One of the pretexts being advanced by the British to support a Japanese landing was the alleged arming by the Bolsheviks of German prisoners-of-war in Siberia. Lockhart did his best to discount the rumour by arranging, with the full support of Trotsky, for an investigation of the camps by a British and an American officer. They found "no trace" of armed prisoners<sup>40</sup>. Later in March Lockhart reported that he had discussed with Trotsky the possibility that the Allies might send troops to Siberia, and these might include Japanese troops provided they were

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<sup>38</sup> See Kennan, Russia Leaves the War p.513; Debo, Revolution and Survival p. 237; and Louis Fischer The Soviets in World Affairs: A History of Relations Between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World, Vol. 1 (1930) p.74

<sup>39</sup> See Kennan, Russia Leaves the War p. 513 and E.H. Carr, Bolshevik Revolution Vol. 3 pp. 47-48.

<sup>40</sup> Captain William Hicks was one of the officers personally chosen by Lockhart to be a member of his mission. He had already been to Russia (as a poison gas expert) and knew a little Russian as well as fluent German. Lockhart sent him, together with Captain W.B. Webster of the American Red Cross mission in Russia, to look for evidence that the Russians were arming German prisoners of war in Siberia, as alleged. His report to the effect that they were not doing anything of the kind was transmitted by Lockhart to London, and the discomfiture of the Foreign Office is evident in FO 371.3290. One immediate reaction was a telegram from the War Office ordering Hicks to return to Britain at once. It needed the private intervention of Sir George Clerk to get the order countermanded. (Lockhart, Memoirs, p. 252) The armed prisoners myth is briskly disposed of by J.A. White The Siberian Intervention pp. 233-236.



not the only troops involved<sup>41</sup>. On 1 April he sent to London again, asking whether, if he could obtain an undertaking that the Bolsheviks would declare war on Germany in the next six weeks and invite the co-operation of the Allies, they would agree to "suspend action in Japan". (Cecil noted on the cable: "An undertaking...is in itself useless and may be dangerous.")<sup>42</sup> As late as 21 April Lockhart was still trying to persuade London that joint action against Germany was possible. Trotsky and Tchicherin, he said, agreed with most of the British ideas (by which he probably meant his own) and the only real difficulty was Japanese participation. But they also realised that if they declared war on Germany straight away they would be crushed before Allied help could arrive. "Would the British Government be prepared to play the card of recognition?"<sup>43</sup> But in the same cable he asked for a time limit for intervention by consent, for if that consent were not given, "Allies will have to intervene in any case". Lockhart was beginning to change his mind.

While Robins and Lockhart were trying to bring their respective governments round to a more realistic and more constructive attitude towards the Bolshevik government, Price was in Vologda. Although Vologda had become a kind of asylum for refugee Allied Embassies, Lockhart and Robins had managed to remain with the government and to move with it to Moscow. Nonetheless there was obviously a considerable amount of diplomatic activity in Vologda and Price cannot have been totally oblivious to it, although he appears for the moment to have been more interested in the activities of the Vologda

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<sup>41</sup> FO 371.3285.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 371.3290.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 371.3288.

Soviet. He had yet to see Robins for the last time (after his own return to Moscow), and it is difficult to believe that Robins did not then tell Price about his own and Lockhart's efforts to avert intervention in the form it finally took. Indeed Price had considerable respect for Lockhart, as he recorded in My Three Revolutions, and this too can only have been due to an awareness of what Lockhart had been trying to do<sup>44</sup>. But by the time of his return to Moscow Price was probably more committed to the defence of the Bolshevik government even than he had been when he left Petrograd. He would quickly have found out how Allied policy had developed. And he was about to become - as a reporter- one of the victims of that policy. It remains to be shown how the British Foreign Office made use of what Price was to describe as "one of the most deadly weapons wielded by the ruling classes of all countries...their power to censor the press."<sup>45</sup>

(ii) The Censorship of the Press in Britain, 1914-18

During the nineteenth century war correspondents became reluctantly accepted by the military as part of the apparatus of war. But experience accumulated in the course of the Crimean, Franco-Prussian and Boer Wars that telegrams sent by war correspondents to their papers at home also found their way into enemy hands and sometimes disclosed vital military information<sup>46</sup>. In the first decade of the twentieth century the Service Departments in Whitehall considered from time to time the creation of some mechanism for controlling

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<sup>44</sup> My Three Revolutions p.127.

<sup>45</sup> This was the opening sentence of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia, the pamphlet written by Price in August 1918. See Chp. 10 p.322 et seq.

<sup>46</sup> HO 139.17. Army Memorandum on Censorship, Cmd 7679. HMSO 1915. See also Sir Edward Cook The Press in Wartime (1920) pp. 39-40.



press reporting of military and naval operations in any future war. Nothing was actually done until 1912 when, as the result of negotiation between the press and the Service Departments a Committee known as the Admiralty, War Office and Press Committee was set up<sup>47</sup>. Its function was to oversee the working of a voluntary agreement by which the press undertook "to respect warnings" given by the Service Departments "and to withhold from publication information of which the exclusion from the papers appeared to the departments concerned to be desirable in the national interests".<sup>48</sup>

#### The Official Press Bureau

When war broke out on 4 August 1914 the Service Departments in Whitehall for several days refused absolutely to give any information whatever to the press. In the absence of news rumour naturally flourished, and on 8 August the Home Secretary, (The Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna M.P.) announced the establishment of an Official Press Bureau under the direction of F.E. Smith M.P. (the future Lord Birkenhead), adding that the public now had "a reasonable right to expect that no news will be published in the press except such news

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<sup>47</sup> Hansard 31.8.14., Col.451. The Milner Papers at the Bodleian contain a letter written in September 1918 by the Director of Military Intelligence, Major General Sir G.M.W. MacDonagh, asking Milner to use his good offices to get him posted away from intelligence duties, in which he had been involved since 1909. He pointed out that he had been the War Office representative on the committees of the Imperial Defence Committee which "assembled and worked out the details of our present Aliens' policy, censorship etc...The Defence of the Realm Act and Regulations are based on a paper by me on Martial Law. I had, therefore, some responsibility for getting our intelligence service ready for war." (The Great War, Private Letters 1918, Vol. 7). A very detailed recent account of preparations for censorship in wartime is given by Nicholas Hiley: 'Counter Espionage and Security in Great Britain during the First World War.' English Historical Review Vol. 101 (1986) pp. 635-670.

<sup>48</sup> HO. 139.17. Hansard 8.8.14. Col.s 2202-3. Cook: The Press in Wartime pp. 39-40.

as is furnished through this Bureau."<sup>49</sup> On 27 August the Prime Minister, enlarging on the functions of the Bureau, stated that "the principle upon which information is given to the public is that all information which can be given without prejudice to the public interest shall be given fully and at once...The Director of the Bureau has access for consultative purposes to the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, and in matters of special doubt to myself."<sup>50</sup> On 10 September the Home Secretary announced that he had assumed departmental responsibility for the Bureau<sup>51</sup>. But Sir Edward Cook, one of the future Directors of the Bureau, wrote in 1919 that he doubted if the Cabinet had ever formally decided what the precise duties and limits of the Bureau were. Having been created the Bureau was, in his view, "left to work out its scope and methods as experience might suggest".<sup>52</sup> He went on to note that the existence of the Bureau was not mentioned in any Act or Regulation until April 1916. Sir Stanley Buckmaster, who succeeded F.E. Smith as Director on 30 September, gave his own view of the limitation of the powers of the Bureau to the House of Commons on 26 November 1914 when he said: "This office does not withhold and according to my views of its powers cannot withhold, any news excepting pursuant to the Defence of the Realm Act and to the rules and directions laid down by one of the Departments of State...It has been and will continue to be by the policy to publish everything that can be made public without danger to the state."<sup>53</sup> Buckmaster held the office until he in turn was succeeded by a joint Directorate of Sir Edward

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<sup>49</sup> Hansard 8.8.14. Col.s 2202/3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid 27.8.14. Col.s 150-151.

<sup>51</sup> HO 139.17. Hansard 10.9.14. Col. 646.

<sup>52</sup> Cook: The Press in Wartime p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> HO 139.17. Hansard 26.11.14. Col.s 1310-1311.



Cook and Sir Frank Swettenham in May 1915. Buckmaster amplified his relatively libertarian view of the role of the Bureau in what appears to have been an internal memorandum dated 15 December 1915<sup>54</sup>.

"There is no censorship on internal political criticism and censorship of all matter is exercised with an anxious desire to allow as free a publication as is consistent with public safety." But whatever the notional restraints upon the activities of the Bureau, it quickly became evident that the real force behind it was the defence of the Realm Act; and that this Act, together with the government's definition of public safety at any given moment, could be used to impose a degree of political censorship which went far beyond any possible consideration of military security.

The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). August 1914. 4 and 5 Geo.V.c.29

The first draft of the Act was prepared before the war by the committee of Imperial Defence and the War Office for use in case of emergency. It was introduced into the House on 7 August and passed through all its stages without discussion. Regulations continued to be added to it and consolidated versions of the Act and its attendant Regulations produced at intervals throughout the war. The original Act had consisted of only three clauses, enabling the King in Council to make regulations designed to prevent communication with or assistance to the enemy, to take whatever measures were needed to secure the safety of troops, ships and military installations, and to prevent any activity likely to cause disaffection or to prejudice His Majesty's relations with foreign powers. But by 28 February 1917 there were 400 pages of Consolidated Regulations, many of them with a

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<sup>54</sup> HO 139.17.

large number of sub-sections which covered most aspects of public life in a country at war. The Regulations by which the press was most affected were those dealing with the unauthorised collection and communication of information or reports (Sections 18-27A); and after 1917, Regulation 9A (control of meetings) and 51 and 51A (powers of search, interrogation and arrest and seizure of prohibited documents) which were also invoked against the press.

### Cable Censorship

At the outbreak of war Britain either already had, quickly acquired control of or simply cut all the submarine cable systems available to the Central Powers.<sup>55</sup> The speed with which this was done was prompted as much by economic considerations - blockade - as military necessity. The blockade of the Central Powers was organised by a

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<sup>55</sup> H.W. Carless Davis: History of the Blockade: Emergency Departments (H.M.S.O. 1920). Germany possessed four cables which passed through the North Sea or the Straits of Dover, and all were cut by the British within hours of the outbreak of war in August 1914 leaving Germany the use only of cable routes which connected with those of British cable companies or which converged on British stations. In fact the British Government had already (3 August 1914) issued a notification that telegraphic and radio-telegraphic communication throughout the British Empire was suspended, acting within reserved powers contained in the International Telegraph and Radio-Telegraph Conventions. Neutrals were allowed, as an act of grace, to continue to use the cable services controlled by the British provided their telegrams were sent in English or French and on the understanding that they would be subject to censorship by the Allies. However both the Swedish and (until shortly before her entry into the war) American cable companies allowed Germany the surreptitious use of their own cable facilities, using a code which the British soon discovered how to decypher. (See B.W. Tuchman: The Zimmermann Telegram (1959).) On two occasions involving this practice the British used "D" notices (588 and 591) to restrain the press from drawing embarrassing conclusions about the fact that the government knew that it was going on, but did not want to let the Germans know that they knew. Communications between Britain and Russia depended heavily upon Sweden and the Swedes could, and sometimes did, take diplomatic advantage of this fact by holding up transit cables.



committee known initially as the Contraband Committee, on which both the Admiralty and the Foreign Office were represented, but which soon became known as the Contraband Committee of the Foreign Office. In March 1916 the Contraband Committee was upgraded to become a special wartime Department of State, and Lord Robert Cecil, already Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, became in addition Minister of Blockade. Thus cable censorship and foreign policy were effectively - if not officially - connected from the very beginning<sup>56</sup>.

Cable censorship was actually done by a staff under the direction of the War Office and originally located at the Central Telegraph Office. On 25 October 1914 the Cable Censors were moved into the same building into which the Press Bureau had itself moved on 17 September: The Royal United Services Institution. The Cable Censors retained a direct line of Communications - a "tube" - with the Central Telegraph Office and censorship policy was determined by the War Office, but the operational management of the cable censors passed to the Press Bureau. The Cable Room received all inward, outward and transit press cables, as well as such inland press telegrams as the Post Office considered to be connected with the war, and all wireless messages (after the Admiralty had finished with them, see below). In the Cable Room, according to Cook, a press

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<sup>56</sup> H.W. Carless Davis, History of the Blockade pp. 6-7. The Official History of the Blockade made no secret of the fact that the Contraband Committee, because of its unique overview of trade patterns in Europe, began to draw conclusions and to make policy recommendations which "exercised a considerable influence on the opinion of those who helped the Foreign Office in shaping policy".

message "met with such fate as it might"<sup>57</sup>

Although only cabled press material was subject to compulsory censorship, material arising from other sources could be submitted for voluntary censorship to the so called Military Room of the Press Bureau<sup>58</sup>. Everything that was published without having been so submitted rendered the editor, or whoever was considered responsible for publication, liable to prosecution if the matter in question was held to have offended under one of the DORA Regulations. Although nominally under the control of the Home Office the Bureau was in practice in closer and more continuous touch with the Service Departments than with any other government department except - in the

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<sup>57</sup> Cook: The Press in Wartime pp. 32-53. Postal censorship was not a part of the duties of the Press Bureau. Like cable censorship it was seen at first purely as a matter of military necessity but gradually became an instrument of policy. As in the case of cable censorship, several government departments were involved. In practice postal censorship was operated by the Postmaster General on behalf of the War Office, and he was responsible for opening, detaining, delaying and submitting to the military authorities "such classes of letters as the Home Secretary might direct". (History of the Blockade.) Intercepted letters were undoubtedly used by the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. In November and December 1917 Price observed three times in letters to members of his family that they did not appear to have received his recent letters. "I don't know whether the German submarines send them to the bottom of the North Sea or whether I express my opinions on the current topics too frankly to suit the authorities." (A.M.P. 30.11.17.) A year later (see below Chapter 11 p. 397) several of his letters turned up in P.I.D. Intelligence summaries.

<sup>58</sup> In the early days of the war, editors submitted as little as possible for voluntary censorship, but as time went on they tended increasingly to play for safety, and by the time Swettenham and Cook wrote their report to the Cabinet (March 1917) they noted that there was "less reason for complaint on this score". (HO 139.17). The services of the Military Room of the Press Bureau were also available to publishers of books, and in December 1915 the Directors wrote to the Publishers' Association reminding them of this fact. As the result, the manuscripts of over 1,000 books were subsequently sent in for voluntary censorship. See INF 4 1/B and Cook The Press in Wartime p. 56.



case of Russia - the Foreign Office. In 1917 the Bureau's most important contact at the War Office was with MI7, which had been created as the result of a reorganisation of the Imperial General Staff in December 1915 and the creation of the Directorate of Military Intelligence under Major General George McDonagh. The Directorate consisted of 8 sections one of which, MI5, was under Brigadier General George Cockerill, whose operational responsibilities included the Press Bureau, postal and cable censorship and the Secret Services<sup>59</sup>. But it was another section MI7(a), which had responsibility for creating, with the Bureau, the general policy on censorship and "for indicating to the Press Bureau categories of news the suppression of which is desired by some branch of the War Office"<sup>60</sup> The Bureau also deferred to the Directorate of Naval Intelligence, in which Admiral William R. Hall ran what was described by Cook as an imperium in imperio in Room 40, where wireless intercepts were decoded and analysed. The role of the Admiralty in the area of censorship became most important, so far as news from Russia was concerned, in the spring and summer of 1918,

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<sup>59</sup> Cockerill had worked with McDonagh (see above F/N 47) and see also Nicholas Hiley, 'Counter Espionage in Great Britain during the First World War'. English Historical Review 101 (1986) pp. 635-670.

<sup>60</sup> The overlapping and rivalry among the various departments within military intelligence, not to mention that between military intelligence and the secret service, between the secret service and the police, and between the military intelligence agencies and the political intelligence agencies is described by Nicholas Hiley: 'Counter Espionage and Security in Great Britain during the First World War'. Swettenham and Cook deplored the situation in their report to the Cabinet of March 1917 (HO 139.17). John Buchan, then Director of the Department of Information of the Foreign Office, did his best to make sense of it in a report to Sir Edward Carson which was circulated to the Cabinet in September 1917 (INF 4 1/B). See also INF 4/9: 'The Organisation of the Services of Military Secrecy, Security and Publicity' (October 1917) and WO 32/10776: 'Historical Sketch of the Directorate of Military Intelligence during the Great War, 1914-1919' (1921).

when all cable links with Russia were broken and all news both going or coming out from Russia could only be sent by wireless<sup>61</sup>.

"D" Notices, Instructions and Advice

In addition to the Cable Room and the Military Room the Bureau also contained what Cook euphemistically called an Advising Department<sup>62</sup>, to which in his account of the Bureau he did not assign a room but which, wherever it was physically located, performed one of the most critical - and criticised - functions undertaken by the Bureau. The advisory function could be and often was presented as a way of protecting editors from the consequences of their own follies or indiscretions. It was also a means of conveying to them intimations or "hints" as to government policy on any matter. At first this was

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<sup>61</sup> The increased use of wireless telegraphy was a direct consequence of the cutting of cable lines, and the Directorate of the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty was quick to realise the political implications of this fact. Room 40 of the Admiralty was initially set aside as a place in which the naval cryptographers could work, since the British by one means or another had obtained the key to all the German codes before the war was a year old. Hall was put in charge of Room 40 from the start, but he did not acquire his virtually independent control of it until May 1917, when it became a separate section of Naval Intelligence: ID25. By now Room 40 had succeeded in involving itself in what had hitherto been the War Office preserve of mail censorship, and had created a War Trade Intelligence Department of its own as well as separate departments dealing with diplomatic and Mediterranean traffic. Hall was promoted Rear Admiral in October 1917, possibly as the result of pressure on the Admiralty by the Foreign Office, which had greatly benefited from the high degree of co-operation between Room 40 and Russian Naval Intelligence before the Bolshevik revolution. This may account for what might otherwise be considered the unusual extent of naval involvement in subsequent British counter-revolutionary activities, the full history of which is unlikely ever to be revealed. The first of Room 40's files reached the PRO in 1976 (ADM 137.3956-3962) and another set arrived in 1980 (ADM 137.4057-4189). There have probably been other releases since that time, but they are likely to have been considerably pruned. For further reading, see Christopher Andrews The Making of the British Intelligence Community (1985) pp. 86-95 and 106-109, Cook The Press in Wartime pp. 39-40; and Patrick Beesly Room 40 British Naval Intelligence 1914-1918 (1984).

<sup>62</sup> Cook: The Press in Wartime p.57.



done by means of personal interviews with editors, but it was soon found less time-consuming to send out notices, prefixed by various letters of the alphabet, of which by far the most important in the context of the censorship of news from Russia was undoubtedly the "D" notice. It has not been possible to discover when the first "D" notice was issued. The first that has been found, "D"24, is undated but from its content appears to have been issued in the late winter of 1914/15. Few "D" notices were sent on the initiative of the Press Bureau itself, most at the request of one or other Department of State, and surviving copies are scattered throughout the archives of those Departments. The fullest set known to exist are in four bound volumes at the Imperial War Museum but these deal almost entirely with military subjects. The first number in this archive is "D"279 and is dated 24 September 1915. By the end of the war over 700 "D" notices had been issued, but even Cook did not know the precise number. In addition to "D" notices the Bureau also sent out "B", "C", "G" and "W" notices but, again, very few have survived. It is the merest inference from very slender evidence that "C" notices may have been intended more for information than direction and that "W" notices related to wireless intercepts. There is too little available on "B" and "G" notices to justify hazarding even a guess as to the objects they were intended to serve, and Cook provided no enlightenment.

In addition to the notices the Bureau also sent out, from time to time, confidential letters of explanation and advice to editors, who were grouped for this purpose in lists: the "40", the "100" and the "140". From such evidence as remains, it would appear that the more

confidential the advice, the shorter the list<sup>63</sup>. Such letters, according to Cook, were sent to an editor "not as presuming to dictate to him but in order to make sure that the message should receive special attention"<sup>64</sup>. "D" notices, on the other hand, received a very wide distribution, being sent by messenger to London editors and by post to no less than 1,580 editors of provincial papers. When "D" notices related to matters covered by DORA they were called "Instructions" and were often "couched in more or less mandatory terms"<sup>65</sup>. In themselves they had no binding force, but disregard of them was held to aggravate an offence under the Act. If the offence was considered serious the case was sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions for him to determine whether a prosecution was "advisable". In 1915 one prosecution a month, on average, was proposed, but the Bureau was asked on average three times a week to "admonish" offending editors<sup>66</sup>. Prosecution was considered "advisable" in only a very few cases because, as Cook pointed out<sup>67</sup>, "though a case might in part be heard in camera yet the nature of the charge and perhaps other particulars would have to be mentioned in public. Hence arose the anomaly that the more serious the

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<sup>63</sup> HO 139.31.

<sup>64</sup> Cook The Press in Wartime p.152.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid p.58.

<sup>66</sup> INF 4 1/B. FO 371.4363.

<sup>67</sup> Cook The Press in Wartime pp. 83-84. In addition to getting off without a prosecution, an offender might also gain an unfair advantage over his rivals. The fact that "D" notices did not have the force of law resulted in some newspapers publishing material which their more scrupulous rivals dutifully suppressed. In the words of John Buchan (INF 4 1/B): "Unless the offender had committed a very serious breach of the Regulations he would receive no punishment but an admonishment from the Director of the Press Bureau, whereas the newspaper which observed the regulations lost a valuable piece of news and suffered for its rectitude." Buchan went on to note regretfully that "the representatives of the Press showed a strong aversion to any legal sanction being given to the notices issued by the Bureau or to any system of punishments (such as the withholding of official information) for Press Offenders."



indiscretion was, the more reasons there might be for letting it go unpunished."

### Information and Intelligence

Yet another function of the Official Press Bureau was performed by the Issuing Department. The Bureau was responsible for putting out news in the form of communiques, bulletins, wireless intercepts and briefing material. In his speech to the House of Commons on 26 November 1914 already noted, F.E. Smith described the Issuing Department as the outlet "for all information relating to the war which any of the Departments of State think it right to issue". The Bureau had no power to collect news or to compel its publication, but the Issuing Department was lined with telephones with direct lines to newspapers and news agencies, many of which kept representatives on duty there round the clock.

The Bureau thus naturally intersected functionally with the various departments which eventually came together in February 1918 as the Ministry of Information under Lord Beaverbrook. The Foreign Office had had its own News Department since the beginning of the war. This was later renamed the Department of Information of the Foreign Office and later still the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office (P.I.D.). P.I.D. was initially subsumed within the Ministry of Information when it was created as a Department in its own right, independent of all other Departments. But within three months P.I.D. had been transferred back to the Foreign Office, presumably because its sources of information and its influence were considered too valuable and too confidential to risk association with a

department which, by definition, was concerned with the dissemination of news for public consumption.

P.I.D. obtained its information from War Office and Admiralty Intelligence Services, the Secret Service, reports from British Embassies and Consulates, private correspondents and correspondence, British propaganda agents overseas, and the foreign press. Its reports and briefings based upon these sources were written primarily for the benefit of the Foreign Office but were, in fact, more widely circulated. They were seen by the War Cabinet, the War Department of the Foreign Office, the Intelligence Department of the War Office, the American Ambassador in London and the Agents General of the Dominions. P.I.D.'s influence was considerable, and the interdependence of P.I.D. and the Press Bureau, in terms of the use it made of material intercepted by one or other departments of the Bureau, can be clearly documented in the case of Price (see below pp. 397-400).

#### Censorship of Material dealing with Foreign Affairs

For the first seventeen months of its existence the Official Press Bureau was responsible for the censorship of material dealing with foreign affairs on behalf of the Foreign Office. But in December 1915 Cecil, who believed that overt censorship in foreign policy matters did more harm than good and said so on every possible occasion, finally succeeded in bringing the Cabinet round to his point of view. He argued that facts withheld from the press would come out in the end but probably in a distorted form; that the attempt to suppress them would simply make the press bad-tempered;



and that disaffected newspapers would use any such opportunities as weapons with which to attack the government. He maintained that editors should be allowed to publish what they liked on the clear understanding that responsibility for not infringing the provisions of DORA lay with them <sup>66</sup>. Accordingly at midnight on 19/20 December 1915 the censorship by the Press Bureau of incoming matter relating to foreign affairs came to an end: in theory. The censors were, however, instructed by the Directors of the Bureau to make copies of any telegrams, whether inward or outward bound, if they contained any statement "which in the opinion of the censor is highly mischievous" (Directors' emphasis)<sup>67</sup>. The instructions did not specify what was to be done with these copies, but the fact that liaison officers from the Foreign Office not only continued to frequent the Bureau but continued to express their opinion on intercepted material, suggests that the Foreign Office continued to be involved in the censorship of material dealing with foreign affairs. Gaselee later disclosed that the Press Bureau simply continued to send the Foreign Office "copies of dangerous or doubtful telegrams and it was often possible, in the case of inward messages, to telephone any given newspaper that they were about to receive a message on this or that subject but that it would be better that they should not publish it, or a part of it, for the following reason, the true state of affairs being..."<sup>68</sup> In any

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<sup>66</sup> HO 139.35. War Cab. 286.

<sup>67</sup> HO 139.2.

<sup>68</sup> John Tilley and Stephen Gaselee: The Foreign Office (The Whitehall Series. 1933). Gaselee wrote Chapter XII: "The Foreign Office the Press and the News Department". His admission (p. 282) concerning the practice of telephoning newspapers is corroborated in last of the four volumes of Instructions to the Press preserved at the Imperial War Museum. This consists mainly of scrawled and often indecipherable notes gathered from various provincial newspapers which show every sign of having been taken down over the telephone. Some of them clearly relate to "D" notices which received a general circulation but some do not, and could well be the result of the kind

event, Cecil's appointment soon after this as Minister of Blockade ensured that he could effectively do what he liked with the contents of the Cable Room.

In April 1916 a slip was devised, in co-operation with the Director of Public Prosecutions, to be affixed to all telegrams and articles about which the censors felt any doubt. The slip read:

"With regard to the enclosed message we think that, though its publication might be deemed ill-advised, there is no sufficient reason for us to interfere with its publication should you, having regard to the national interest, decide to take that course."<sup>69</sup>

The message was clear enough if the method was not. Swettenham and Cook were not at all happy with this arrangement. In their report to the Cabinet in March 1917 <sup>70</sup> they stated, in this connection, that

"...we never did and we do not now agree with the change..Whilst the press are told that Foreign Affairs are not censored but left to the discretion of editors, messages and articles which unquestioningly deal with foreign affairs in whole or in part are often referred to the Foreign Office. Some are censored or stopped there on military or other grounds which are not nearly so obvious as their bearing upon foreign affairs...In other cases, where the Foreign Office deems that publication would be detrimental to the national interests, the Directors are asked to write to a certain number of editors deprecating publication."

The Directors considered that this state of affairs was "unsuccessful and misleading" and it is difficult to conceive whom Cecil thought he was deceiving by this charade.

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of informal practice described by Gaselee.

<sup>69</sup> HO 139.2.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 139.17.



(iii) Parliament and Censorship

The great majority of Members of Parliament appear to have acquiesced with little difficulty - even if they were not deceived - in the operation of the formidable apparatus of control available to the Government through the Press Bureau. But some did not, and it can be no coincidence that the most persistent questioners were all, by 1917, either members of the U.D.C. or Irish M.P.'s. In the summer of 1914 M.P.s had merely grumbled at the inefficiency of the Bureau, but as time went on and the Bureau became more effective, the questions in the House became more searching. Cook in his book The Press in Wartime stated rather vaguely that it had been laid down at a very early stage that the Press Bureau was not to censor Parliamentary reports, but that editors sometimes asked for advice about publishing printed notice questions.

"Means were often found within the House itself for the withdrawal of dangerous questions, and this was a matter upon which the Bureau was asked for advice". But he added, "...the role of whipping boy was cheerfully accepted, but we did chafe a little at the privilege of Parliament."<sup>71</sup>

The Bureau clearly also gave advice unasked. On 13 December 1917 one of Sir Edward Cook's Letters to Editors read:

"Dear Sir, We have been asked to transmit to you the following:- the Government desires that no reference should be made to Mr. King's speech in the House of Commons today, for reasons which will be known to editors. The subject which he raised might have a prejudicial effect upon the safety of British subjects in Russia."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Cook The Press in Wartime p.124.

<sup>72</sup> Imperial War Museum: Instructions to the Press. The subject of King's speech on 13 December 1917 (Hansard Col.S 1483-1487) will never be known because as he rose to his feet Cecil had recourse to the stratagem of spying strangers, and the House went into Secret Session. Earlier the same day King had twice tried to ask questions regarding the Government's policy towards Russia during the previous two months and had been told by the Home Secretary that it was not in the public interest to raise the matter. He then tried to raise the subject in a debate on a Vote of Credit and was appealed to by the

Even Cook's statement that Parliamentary reports were not censored is cast into doubt by "D" 681 which stated:

"A question will be put today in the House of Commons asking whether certain Russian ports on the White Sea are occupied by British troops. It is requested in the National interest that the Press will not discuss this matter or give prominence to the question and answer."

The pretext for "D" 681 was the question put by the Labour M.P. Frank Jowett, on June 1918, who wanted to know whether certain Russian ports on the White Sea were at that time occupied by British troops. Cecil replied that it was not in the public interest to answer questions relating to the disposition of any of H.M. forces<sup>73</sup>

Fortunately for the press a handful of M.P.s made good use of their privileges, however much Cook may have chafed under them, and after the Coalition government came into power in 1916 those who concerned themselves with the freedom of the press rose to their feet increasingly often. On 27 March 1917 the Irish M.P. John Dillon raised a debate on a Resolution that

"the greatly increased stringency of censorship which has come into force during the last six months, the one-sided and unfair method in which censorship is applied, and the practice of directing the Press as to the views and opinion which they should cultivate amongst their readers are injurious to the State and ought to be discontinued."<sup>74</sup>

In his speech Dillon accused the Government of suppressing

"...the publication of facts with regard to the truth which would tend to make the public take the view that the Government do not desire them to take and it does not prevent the publication of untruths so long as they tend to create public opinion in favour of the Government."

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Speaker to refrain on patriotic grounds. He persevered, however, and had begun to make a speech bitterly critical of the influence of Hardinge and Buchanan on government policy when Cecil called out "I spy strangers" and the galleries were cleared.

<sup>73</sup> Instructions to the Press. Imperial War Museum. Hansard 6.6.18. Col. 1745.

<sup>74</sup> Hansard 27.3.17. Col. 3 295-311.



Moreover, Dillon went on, it was no longer simply a question of censoring special items of news; newspapers got orders to suppress all news whatsoever in respect of certain subjects. He cited the state of the British expeditionary force at Salonika and the success of the German submarine campaign as examples of this type of news blackout. Not quite a year later (11 March 1918) the Liberal M.P. for N.W. Lanark, William Pringle, gave chilling examples of press campaigns against individuals which, he implied, had been instigated by the Press Bureau and then used by Ministers as excuses for getting rid of them. The fates of Arthur Henderson and Admiral Jellicoe were adduced as cases in point<sup>75</sup>. And on 18 June 1918 A.J. Sherwell, the Liberal M.P. for Huddersfield observed:

"I do not think the Government yet appreciate the great disquietude which has been created by the withholding of information of all kinds from the nation...and notably within the last few months."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Hansard 11.3.18. Col.s. 108-110. Arthur Henderson had been violently attacked by the press as unpatriotic over his role in the negotiations for the Stockholm Conference (Chap 3, F/N 32). Admiral Sir John (later Earl) Jellicoe was another victim. His biographer believed that Jellicoe's personal aversion from publicity had led him to under-estimate the power of the press and to have done nothing to get the Admiralty to correct the misleading impression it had given in its first communique about the Battle of Jutland. This had led to a "campaign of innuendo, criticism, mistrust and suspicion which dominated the press for weeks to come". Jellicoe was dismissed six months later, and wrote in his diary: "The assumption in my mind is that Lord Northcliffe was pressing the Prime Minister to get rid of me, the Prime Minister was pressing Geddes (the First Lord of the Admiralty). I know from Carson that Northcliffe had frequently pressed both him and the Prime Minister during his tenure of office to get rid of me." Admiral Sir R. Bacon: The Life of John Rushworth Earl Jellicoe (1936).

<sup>76</sup> Hansard 18.6.18. Col.s 263-4.

Another instance of censorship to which a number of M.P.s took strong exception was the attempt to withhold information about the Reichstag Resolution of 19 July 1918 <sup>77</sup>. In a debate on the Consolidated Fund a week later Ramsay MacDonald noted that the Resolution

"was only given prominence in the early edition of one evening newspaper and subsequently relegated to a very obscure corner."

Trevelyan added:

"...very few newspapers, except the Manchester Guardian as far as I saw, even stated what the resolution was. It was hidden from the British public."

He had found, he said, that many of his fellow members had never heard of it. Ponsonby added:

"It appeared in leaded type on Monday afternoon of last week in one evening paper at 3 o'clock, but by 5 o'clock it was in none of the evening papers and the next morning it was tucked away in two newspapers in abbreviated form."

The bureaucracy of press control had got out of hand, he went on.

"Goodness knows what goes on. I am sure the Government do not...The result is that the Government live in a fool's paradise and do not know what the people of the country are thinking at all."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> On 19 July 1917 Mathias Erzberger, a right wing radical Catholic Deputy, leader of the Centre Party in the Reichstag, introduced a Resolution which, although fiercely opposed by the Junker party, was carried by 214 votes to 116. The Resolution included the words: "The Reichstag desires a peace of conciliation and a lasting reconciliation of all peoples" and insisted that Germany was not led by any desire for conquests. But it concluded that Germany would fight "until the Allies stop threatening her and her allies with conquests". In his War Memoirs (Vol. 4 Ch. LXII pp. 2043-2055) Lloyd George did his best to discount the significance both of the Resolution and of the ensuing debate in the House of Commons. Erzberger (1875-1921) had previously been noted for his opposition to unrestricted U-Boat warfare. Klaus Epstein, in his account of Erzberger in Neue Deutsche Biographie (Vol. 4, 1957) stated that in April 1917 Erzberger met a Russian agent (whether of the Provisional Government or of the Soviet is not made clear) in Stockholm, and discussed with him the possibility of a separate peace. Erzberger was made a member of Prince Max von Baden's government in October 1918 and led the German delegation to the Armistice talks at Compiègne. He held a number of high offices under Scheideman and Bauer before being murdered by two naval officers in August 1921.

<sup>78</sup> Hansard 26.7.18. Col.s 1479-1495.



(iv) Press, Parliament and the Russian Revolution

The earliest surviving evidence to have been found of the way in which the Press Bureau manipulated news from Russia is an undated "D" notice, D24, which read:

"Russian exertions in advance on East Prussia and Austria. Press directed to give prominence to."<sup>79</sup>

This seems likely to refer to the Russian campaign in the autumn of 1914. The next surviving reference (253) is in strong contrast:

"Russian army. Nothing to be published re want of arms and ammunition"<sup>80</sup>.

Since the first surviving notice to have been found with a date, D195, was issued on 2 April 1915, D253 probably refers to conditions in the winter of 1915/16 on the Polish or Galician fronts, since on the Caucasus front the Russian army was at that time giving a very good account of itself. The next surviving mention of Russia is one of the Directors' Letters to editors, written on 3 January 1917. The editors were informed that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs felt sure that they would

"appreciate the importance of avoiding, in any comments they may publish on the past career of Rasputin, any reference to the highest personage in Russia."<sup>81</sup>

On 17 February Joseph King, the Liberal M.P. for North Somerset and champion of every libertarian cause to receive an airing in the House of Commons during the war<sup>82</sup> attacked the Government for withholding "for weeks" news of Miliukov's speech in the Duma in November 1916 (see Chapter 2 F/N 23). "The amount of restriction put upon the information coming from Russia" he said "is really appalling." The suppression of Miliukov's speech was the subject of an altercation

<sup>79</sup> HO 139.48.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Hansard 17.2.17. Col.s 1282-1289.

between John Dillon and Cecil on 6 March 1917, when Cecil denied that there had been any interference by the censor but could not explain the absence of any reports of the speech<sup>83</sup>.

Politically selective censorship of news from Russia was particularly evident in the period immediately before the March revolution. Its main objective appears to have been to prevent British newspaper readers from finding out what Lord Milner said in Russia (See Appendix V "The Milner Mission"). One of the few reporters who managed to get anything back - he was said to be favourite in Russian Court circles - was the Morning Post correspondent who wrote home that in the course of his speeches in Russia Lord Milner had done his best to disabuse Russian Liberals of any idea that "the people of England sympathised with the democrats, the liberals of Russia"<sup>84</sup>. Dillon, in the speech already quoted from (6 March) noted that reports of Milner's speeches in Russia had been almost totally suppressed in Britain and that, when he had first tried to ask a question about them in the House he had received "a preposterous answer to the effect that the Foreign Office knew nothing about it". The Liberal M.P. W. Llewelyn Williams later described the same speeches as a turning point in Anglo-Russia relations. "From that moment the liberalising and revolutionary forces in Russia have distrusted this country and the Allies generally."<sup>85</sup>

Another victim was John Dillon's namesake (no relation), the Daily Telegraph's expert on the Balkans and Russia, Dr. E.J. Dillon. In a

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<sup>83</sup> Hansard 6.3.17. Col.s 189-90.

<sup>84</sup> Morning Post 1.3.17.

<sup>85</sup> Hansard 18.6.18. Col.s 222-28.



debate on the Consolidated Fund on 20 February reference was made by three M.P.s, John Dillon, Joseph King and Robert Outhwaite, to the fact that Dr. Dillon's despatches were increasingly less often to be found in print<sup>86</sup>. But, added Dillon, this was not really surprising.

"They were full of information, information which I am not very surprised that the Government should be annoyed about, because it often showed that the Government were wholly misinformed as subsequent events have proved...But now - it is almost incredible - the whole of the press of this country and all the magazines have been forbidden to publish anything from Dr. Dillon...On what ground has the censorship been tightened up in this extraordinary and utterly indefensible way, and particularly tightened up against Dr. Dillon, who is one of the best informed men in Europe?"

He was answered by Outhwaite, "not in the least surprised" at the suppression of Dr. Dillon's articles, since <sup>he</sup> had been one of the first to give out the uncomfortable truth that in April 1915 the British Government had entered into a commitment "which gave Constantinople to Russia and to show how it would prejudice our interests in the Near East". A final instance of the attempt to silence Dr. Dillon is equally remarkable. On 19 January he wrote a letter to the editor of the Daily Telegraph in which he said:

"Russia is on the verge of revolution. For two years the country has been in a condition of ferment. The revolutionary elements are all set to act, just as a mine might explode if the spark were applied."

The only reason the mine had not exploded, Dr. Dillon went on, was the effective suppression of all forms of dissent by the Tsarist government. The letter was eventually allowed to be printed two

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<sup>86</sup> Hansard 20.2.17. Cols. 1281-1299.

months after it was written and ten days after the outbreak of the revolution which it had predicted<sup>87</sup>.

As news of the March revolution began to filter into Britain, the War Office decided on 14 March that

"for the present a strict censorship should be imposed on any details that might escape the Russian censorship and that the Secretary of state for Foreign Affairs should initiate the necessary action."<sup>88</sup>

On the same day an Instruction was issued to the censors:

"Russian internal troubles: nothing relating to any internal trouble is to be passed. Any cable on such matter should be shown to the Director for reference to the Foreign Office. As soon as anything on the subject appears in the German Wireless the Foreign Office should be informed."<sup>89</sup>

On the same day the British Ambassador in Petrograd twice cabled in London asking that it should be made known in Britain that the British community were safe and well, and being shown "striking consideration...both troops and public". But as one of the clerks in the Russian Department, Laurence Oliphant, minuted on the second of these cables:

"The War Cabinet having decided that events at Petrograd are not to be mentioned in the Press, such an announcement will, if published, require careful 'dressing'."

Lord Hardinge added:

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<sup>87</sup> Daily Telegraph 19.3.17. The final turn of the screw on Dr. Dillon was yet to come. On 10 May 1917 Dillon wrote to a friend, a Mr. Frewen, and told him that a message had been passed to him by "an important personage" asking him "either to spread cheerful tidings about Russia in private or to say nothing at all." Dillon had concluded his letter: "...it is symptomatic of the temper of the governing class that, not content with the censorship of the written word, they should strive to exercise control over our private conversations." Mr. Frewen forwarded Dillon's letter to Milner who had the grace to reply agreeing that this had, indeed, been a deplorable episode. (Milner Papers: The Great War, Private letters 1917, Vo.6).

<sup>88</sup> CAB 232.34.



"It seems to me that a decision should be taken by the War Cabinet as to the continued suppression by the Censor of news from Petrograd. A large number of tel.s have arrived and are held up. Continued suppression of news may react disadvantageously for the Government."

A final note on the cable recorded that "The Prime Minister's consent to releasing the telegrams was subsequently obtained."<sup>90</sup> On 15 March Buchanan cabled again suggesting that all cables to and from the United Kingdom should be censored since there was now no censorship in Russia. On this Hubert Montgomery, one of the Foreign Office Liaison Officers with Press Bureau noted on 16 March: "We have arranged with the Press Bureau to refer any doubtful messages to us."<sup>91</sup> On 20 March the Directors of the Bureau wrote one of their private and confidential letters to editors to the effect that the Foreign Office had asked them to say

"that they feel sure that Editors will appreciate the need of great care and discretion at the present moment in the publication of matter relating to Russian affairs."<sup>92</sup>

How this advice was interpreted is indicated by Sardonyx of the New Statesman in the first edition of that journal to be published after news of the revolution had been confirmed:<sup>93</sup>

"Quite a large section of the English press have been nervously busy during the past week advising the Russian nation not to embrace democracy too suddenly and above all not to sever relations altogether with the Romanov dynasty."

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<sup>89</sup> FO 371.2995.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> HO 139.39.

<sup>93</sup> New Statesman 24 March 1917. Sardonyx was almost certainly Arnold Bennett. The marked contributors copy in the New Statesman's library has his signature scrawled in the margin. One letter, the "B" is shaky, but the rest are clear. (Bennett shared the column with J.C. Squire, who called himself Onyx, and who was an old Cambridge friend of Price's.) Sardonyx returned to the British cult of the Romanovs on 12 May 1917 when he referred to the "sinister effect in Petrograd of Northcliffe's utterances in favour of the ex-Tsar and the all-too chivalrous silences in favour of the ex-Tsartise "

In a letter to Charles Trevelyan his father, Sir George, remarked:

"I have just received the Nation for March 15, the Ides of March, the day the Czar abdicated. From the first word to the last there is no mention in it - of such a country as Russia. Such are the surprises of this epoch."<sup>94</sup>

On 23 March Buchanan forwarded to the Foreign Office a message from Lockhart, then still Vice-Consul at Moscow, in which he complained:

"the curtain of incense smoke which certain English writers have systematically spread before the eyes of the British public has already done sufficient harm";<sup>95</sup>

and again on 30 April:

"I cannot help feeling that a large section of the English public has entirely misunderstood the psychology of the Russian revolution. This is especially the case with regard to the English press and more particularly the Times...and as the vast majority of the Russians seem convinced that the Times is the official organ of the Government a most unfortunate impression has been created." <sup>96</sup>

"Spreading incense smoke" was a perceptive and quite an accurate way of describing what the Times was doing between March and June 1917. Very little that was overtly hostile to the Revolution was printed, but what was printed was nonetheless misleading. For instance, it was surely misleading to have given the Tsar most of the credit for the revolution in that he had the decency to abdicate before very much blood was shed<sup>97</sup>. And the despatches of the Times correspondent, Robert Wilton, during this period were misleading and liable to create misunderstanding in the minds of readers in the sense that he consistently portrayed the new government as one composed entirely of honest liberals who were continually being hampered in their efforts to create a new democratic regime by the

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<sup>94</sup> CPT papers 76. University of Newcastle upon Tyne Library.

<sup>95</sup> FO 371.2998.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 371.2996.

<sup>97</sup> The Times 15.3.17. Leading article.



interference of the Petrograd Soviet. The Provisional governments were given every benefit of the doubt; the Left were portrayed more as irritants than a factor to be taken seriously, and Wilton never missed an opportunity to attach the word "Jew" to any socialist name. "All the German gold in the world" said H.H. Lees Smith in the House of Commons on 7 June "has not done as much harm in Russia to the cause of freedom as the insulting series of articles in the Times directed against the revolution<sup>98</sup>. Read in 1987 what appeared in the Times in the spring and early summer of 1917 seems less insulting than insufferably patronising. The key words in Lees Smith's speech were surely "in Russia". The Times appears totally to have misunderstood the situation, and thereby increased the alienation of the Russian moderate Left which had begun at the time of the Milner Mission. British diplomats in Russia at that time knew very well that the situation was a great deal more serious than the British press, or rather the Press Bureau, wanted the British public to understand<sup>99</sup>.

Price was less moderate in his choice of language about the Times than Lockhart. In a memorandum to Trevelyan written on 11 April and published in the July edition of U.D.C. he said:

"I am doing all I can to tell the soldiers' and workers' leaders here about the nature of the abominable Northcliffe press in England...I have written an article in one of the Russian papers about it...I only hope that they will turn the Times correspondent out of Petrograd."

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<sup>98</sup> Hansard 7.6.17. Col.s 294-5.

<sup>99</sup> Philip Knightly: The First Casualty (1975) pp. 141-142, 144-146, suggests that Wilton was more sinned against, by Printing House Square, than sinning, and that his often very accurate warnings and despatches were ignored. His anti-Bolshevik bias was obvious, but in that he was not unique among correspondents. It was not until the summer and autumn of 1918, when Wilton was not in Russia, that the Times began to show signs of hysteria.

The Liberal M.P. Robert Outhwaite went so far as to imply that the Northcliffe press enjoyed some form of immunity from the attentions of the Press Bureau when he asked the Foreign Secretary if he was

"aware that when attacks are made on the Russian Government in these newspapers he is not aware of them, but that when any attack or criticism is made by any other organ the Public Prosecutor takes action."<sup>100</sup>

In two long letters to The Nation Michael Farbman recapitulated the occasions of the disappointment of Russian liberals in the British press<sup>101</sup>. British newspapers, he said, had failed to take up the cause of those Russians who had protested against the Russification of Poland and the maltreatment of Polish Jews in 1915. They had remained silent when corrupt or inefficient Ministers in the Tsarist government were eventually sacked. They had failed to report speeches in the Duma critical of the Tsar, notably Miliukov's speech of 1 November 1916 which, wrote Farbman,

"to the best of my recollection...has not yet appeared in the London daily press, although it was published in France and throughout the world."

All this restraint, went on Farbman, was explained as being non-intervention in the affairs of another nation but "the curious thing is that with the Revolution, this attitude has been abandoned". He added that his own outgoing cables (as London Correspondent of Novaya Zhizn) appeared to have been as badly affected as incoming news.

"Every quotation from a conservative newspaper or speech that illustrates dislike of the Revolution has been let through by the British censor. All reference of an opposite kind has been deleted as if automatically and inevitably...How then is the British Censorship to be explained. I put it again to English Liberals. It is blundering or is it a tendency?"<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Hansard 12.11.17. Col.S 10-11.

<sup>101</sup> The Nation 24.3.17 and 10.11.17

<sup>102</sup> It is difficult not to hear an echo in Farbman's question of Miliukov's famous attack on Stürmer in the Duma when he ended every count of the indictment with the question "Is it stupidity or is it treason?"



Evidence that British Censorship was, indeed, tendentious continued to accumulate. Labour Leader noted on 29 November that it had been obliged to take its text of Trotsky's appeal for a general peace from the columns of Humanité. On 19 January 1918 The Nation alleged that news from Brest Litovsk was being doctored. The Press Bureau had held back Trotsky's declaration that the negotiations were being interrupted for ten days in order to allow other Allies to join in them.

"Eventually, five days late, one paragraph of this long message was released, but one paragraph only."

On 26 January 1918 the Irish MP Arthur Lynch asked the Home Secretary whether it was

"correct to say that whereas his department keeps back telegrams from M. Trotsky yet it allows currency to be given to the wildest rumours detrimental to the present rulers of Russia."

Sir George Cave's only answer was: "I do not know anything about that."<sup>103</sup>

In Labour Leader for 29 August 1918 T.P. Conwil Evans pieced together a remarkably accurate picture of the way the Press Bureau used both the cable censorship and its so-called advisory functions to tilt the news from Russia in any direction favoured by the government.

"Careful readers of English newspapers will have noticed that for the last five or six weeks only official news has been allowed to appear from day to day. There have been no independent despatches from special correspondents of particular newspapers, but only official reports issued by the Press Bureau, or despatches sent by such agencies as Reuter - that agency which (one learns from the recent debate on the Ministry of Information) was subsidised last year to the extent of £126,000 of public money."

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<sup>103</sup> Hansard 28.1.18. Col.s 1277-8.

Evans went on to point out that the British press was in any case heavily dependent upon foreign newspapers for its information about Russia. These were usually weeks old before they arrived in Britain. News taken from these sources and combined with official press releases designed to release as little information as possible led to the creation of an ever more confused and distorted picture of events in Russia. A further point was raised by the New Statesman on 21 December 1917, when it referred to for the first time to self-censorship. It is, of course, impossible to determine the degree to which this factor operated, but it would appear that not even a liberal journal like the New Statesman was immune. In an unsigned article entitled 'Drifting into Another War' the writer referred to

"the self-imposed silence with regard to the British Government's attitude towards Russia"

which the New Statesman had been keeping, and called on Labour to insist on a change of policy which would enable the positive results of Bolshevik policy to be made known.

(v) The Press Bureau and Leading Articles, with special reference to Scott

In his book The Press in Wartime Sir Edward Cook made the point that it was in leading articles that statements likely to prejudice His Majesty's relations with foreign powers were most likely to appear, and that

"such articles were seldom, if ever, subject to any censorship. The possible prejudice would be greater if they were supposed to have passed an official censorship and less if they were known not to have done so."<sup>104</sup>

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104 Cook The Press in Wartime P. 124.



Writing in 1919 Cook might well have been thinking about the way in which the editor of the Manchester Guardian had contrived to turn this convention to advantage. Enjoying, in every sense of the word, his role as one of Lloyd George's confidantes<sup>105</sup>, Scott must have been reluctant to prejudice that relationship. He would have received the same "hints", "D" notices, Instructions and telephone calls as every other editor. Yet he was never prosecuted under DORA for the aggravated offence of ignoring one of them. When he went to see Lloyd George he met all the other policy makers: politicians, generals, admirals and high-ranking civil servants. He knew perfectly well what the official line on Russia was yet he consistently opposed it in his leading articles and went his own way. In a letter to Soskice just after the November revolution Scott wrote: "the censorship here seems to me to be partly misguided, partly just stupid."<sup>106</sup> A year later, on 27 December 1918, in a leading article protesting at continued censorship of foreign press cables after the end of the war, Scott declared that there had been

"a persistent, though hardly avowed, positive effort to cultivate, both by the suppression and by the colouring of news, a particular kind of opinion. Russian news has been throughout the war the classic object of this process of distortion. In the days of the Tsar the English people were allowed to hear only that all was well with Russia, so that the Revolution came to them as a complete and wholly inexplicable surprise."

It seems possible that one reason that Scott was in a position to flout the authorities with such conviction was the access he had, limited as it was, to the information which Price had been sending him. For when, on 29 November 1917 the War Cabinet had considered

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<sup>105</sup> Scott's evident enjoyment of his relationship with Lloyd George is apparant in the pages of The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928.

<sup>106</sup> Stow Hill papers, House of Lords. DSI. Box 4. MG/5.

sir Frank Swettenham's advice to the effect that the only way to deal with messages from Russia - "chiefly Bolshevik propoganda" - was to authorise the Press Bureau to pass, stop or censor them all, the Cabinet had agreed, but subject to the proviso that the Bureau

"should be allowed to show the messages to the newspapers to which they were addressed, at their discretion."<sup>107</sup>

It was undoubtedly the vigilance of Scott's Lobby Correspondent, Harold Dore<sup>108</sup>, who took full advantage of that "discretion", which enabled Scott at least to get some idea of what Price was trying to

<sup>107</sup> HO 139.35.

<sup>108</sup> HAROLD DORE (1878-1943) After a short apprenticeship as a contributor to the Bury Times Dore, who was born in Lancashire and educated at Manchester Grammar School and Brasenose College Oxford, was taken on as a "learner" by the Manchester Guardian in 1904. He soon took over the 'Miscellany' column and when he was transferred to the London Office in 1911, he took it with him. In September 1914 he became Lobby Correspondent. Described in the Manchester Guardian's obituary as a "strongly Left Wing Liberal" who was "on the unpopular side of most controversies", he was gently chided by Scott in December 1916 for letting his "strong personal leanings" show in his work. It may well have been these "leanings", however, which motivated him to make such excellent work of memorising and summarising for Scott Price's cables, which he was allowed to see but not to copy at the Official Press Bureau. Scott's letter referred to above concluded: "I hope that in this and other ways it may be possible for us to get into closer harmony." This was probably an oblique reference to Dore's already established tendency to alcoholism. In September 1919 he was, by his own account, spending nearly half his salary on drink. He was knocked down by a car twice, in 1922 and again in 1930. But his work was clearly so highly regarded by three successive editors, C.P. Scott, E.T. Scott and W.P. Crozier, that his medical expenses after both accidents were paid by the Manchester Guardian, which also paid for him to go for a cure to a German watering place and later to the Hospital for Nervous Diseases. In 1931, at the suggestion of J.R. Scott (the managing director of the paper) he exchanged the post of Lobby Correspondent for that of Parliamentary Sketch Writer, on the grounds that it would involve less physical strain. In 1936 he was given a pension but continued to contribute occasional articles until at least 1940. David Ayerst described him as "a quizzical, loveable little man with unmanageable pince-nez glasses and a consuming passion for English grammar." He also had, as emerges very clearly from his personal correspondence with C.P. Scott, a consuming passion for the Manchester Guardian, and without it his life appeared to become meaningless. (David Ayerst, Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper (1971) p. 377; John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Scott papers A/D44/1-83).



send from Russia in the summer of 1918. One well-documented example of this process has survived (see below pp.312-315), but there is reason to believe that there were other occasions of which no trace remains<sup>109</sup>.

Scott's leading articles during the period of the Brest Litovsk negotiations have already been noted (see above pp. 128-135). At that time Price's reports were getting through almost intact and the leading articles are virtually interwoven with them. By the time of the Intervention none of the reports were getting through and Scott was dependent on his Lobby Correspondent's ability to read, memorise and summarise them. His leading articles of this period cannot be readily integrated into the text of this thesis, but are referred to again in Chapter 11 (pp. 394-397). How much Price contributed to the knowledge and insight which they display can only be inferred.

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<sup>109</sup> As noted in F/N 108 above, Dore was sometimes incapacitated, and it is therefore a possible indication of the importance which Scott attached to receiving his summaries of Price's despatches that, when necessary he used other people to take Dore's place. On 19 May 1932 there appeared in the 'London Letter' of the Cork Examiner a short account of a lecture recently given by Price in London, on the subject of the Russian Revolution. The author of the column had obviously been to hear it, and used his short account of the lecture as a peg on which to hang his own - entirely accurate - version of Price's conflicts with the Press Bureau. He went on to describe, at some length, an occasion when Scott had sent for him and asked him to go to the Press Bureau, read one of Price's cables or wireless messages, and give him an account of it. He had pleaded a poor memory but Scott had been adamant, and the writer recalled with pleasure that he had been able to reconstruct a 400-word long account of a 500-word long cable. The London Editor of the Cork Examiner at that time was Louis McQuillan, a former official of the old Irish Parliamentary Party. His successor (from 1951) was James Whelan, who frequently did extra work for the Manchester Guardian. It seems highly likely that in so doing he was carrying on an existing link between the two newspapers. I am indebted for this information to former members of the staff of the Cork Examiner, Walter McGrath and James Whelan himself, and also to the good offices of the Cork City Library.

Biographical Notes of the chief British political and military advisers on Russia, 1917-1918, and of the main critics of British policy in Parliament

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HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH (1852-1928), First Earl Oxford and Asquith.

A Gladstonian liberal, Asquith was elected M.P. for East Fife in 1886, remaining in the House of Commons until 1924, when he accepted a peerage. He was Home Secretary from 1892-1895, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Campbell-Bannerman government from 1906-1908, and became Prime Minister in 1908, appointing Lloyd George Chancellor to succeed him as Chancellor. He remained Prime Minister for the next nine years, going to the country twice in 1910 over the related issues of the 1909 Budget and the reform of the House of Lords. In 1912 he attempted to introduce Home Rule, and it was because of the Curragh Mutiny that he was acting as Secretary for War in August 1914 as well as Prime Minister. He remained in that position throughout the first Coalition Ministry but late in 1916 the Unionist members of the Cabinet transferred their support to Lloyd George. Throughout his political life he remained committed to Home Rule; he also refused to support a Liberal-Conservative coalition to keep Labour from forming a government in 1924. Though no radical, his attitude to Russia in debates in the House of Commons in 1917-1918 are in line with his generally progressive brand of liberalism. J.A. Spender wrote the account of his life for the Dictionary of National Biography; Roy Jenkins wrote his biography, Asquith, in 1964. Asquith himself published two books: Fifty Years of Parliament (2 volumes, 1926) and The Genesis of the War (1923).

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR O.M. (1848-1930), First Earl of Balfour.

First elected to Parliament in 1874, his first governmental post was as Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1887. In 1902 he succeeded his uncle, Lord Salisbury, as Conservative Prime Minister but resigned the post in December 1905. Although opposed to the 1909 Budget he resigned from the Conservative Shadow Cabinet when his advice not to press opposition to a division was rejected. He was made First Lord of the Admiralty in the 1915 Coalition government after which he became Foreign Secretary. He was known to be privately unhappy with the final draft of the Versailles Treaty and resigned from the Foreign Office in October 1919, but remained in the Cabinet as Lord President of the Council, which post he again occupied in Baldwin's administration from 1925-1929. His own Chapters of Autobiography, edited by E.C. Dugdale, were published in 1930, and Dugdale published a full life: Arthur James Balfour, First Earl of Balfour in 1936. More recently a new biography by Max Egremont has appeared: Balfour: A Life of Arthur James Balfour (1980).



SIR GEORGE WILLIAM BUCHANAN Bart. (1854-1924).

Buchanan entered the diplomatic service in 1876. A posting as Charge d'Affaires in Darmstadt ensured that he became personally acquainted with members of most European royal families who came there on holiday before 1914: a fact which influenced his attitude to royalty later in his career. As Ambassador to Russia from 1910-1918 he attained a position of great personal influence with the Tsar. Although realistic in the advice he sent to London from Petrograd early in 1917 he did not believe that the Bolsheviki could succeed in holding on to power. He was a strong advocate nonetheless, after his return to England in January 1918, of action designed to ensure that they lost it sooner rather than later. His last posting was to Rome in 1919; he retired in 1921. His book, My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories, was published in 1923 and if allowance is made for his personal royalist bias, it also contains a valuable account of Russian politics during his period as Ambassador to Petrograd.

STANLEY OWEN BUCKMASTER (1861-1934), First Viscount Buckmaster.

Buckmaster was called to the Bar in 1884. An ardent Liberal, he was first elected to Parliament in 1906. In 1913 he was appointed Solicitor General and, shortly after the outbreak of war, Director of the Press Bureau, a post he held only until, in the Coalition Ministry of May 1915, he was offered the Lord Chancellorship. Before the end of the war he returned to the law and spent the rest of his life as a Lord of Appeal and a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

EDWARD HALLET CARR (1892-1982)

Unfit for military service, Carr entered the Contraband Department of the Foreign Office in 1917, where he was a junior member of the small team concerned with Russian affairs. Although he himself claimed to have become convinced at an early stage that the Bolsheviki would be able to retain power, this claim is not always born out by his youthful Minutes in the Foreign Office archives at the P.R.O. Nonetheless his interest in Russia developed rapidly. He remained in the Foreign Service until 1936, having learned Russian when he was posted to Riga in 1925. He began to study nineteenth century Russian intellectuals and wrote biographies of Dostoevsky, Marx and Bakunin. In the early 1930s and until the Stalinist purges he became convinced that Soviet economic ideology was the answer to the decay of capitalism. From 1936-1947 he was Woodrow Wilson Professor of International Politics at University College, Wales, and published The Twenty Years' Crisis in 1936 which he himself described as strongly influenced by Marxist thinking. In 1940 he became a leader writer for the Times and was Assistant Editor from 1941-1946. He then concentrated his energies on the history of Soviet Russia which he had begun to write in the last winter of the war, and which appeared in 15 volumes in between 1950 and 1982, latterly assisted by Tamara Deutscher. In 1955 he was elected a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge and in 1956 a Fellow of the British Academy, from the



(Carr, cont'd.)

Proceedings of which this note is taken: (R.W. Davies: Proceedings of the British Academy Vol. 69 (1983) pp. 473-511). See E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923, 3 volumes (1950-1953); The Interregnum 1923-1924 (1954) Socialism in One Country, 1924-1926, 4 volumes (1958-1964); Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926-1929 (Summary) (1979); The Twilight of the Comintern 1930-1935 (1982).

The Right Hon. SIR GEORGE CAVE (1856-1928), First Viscount Cave of Richmond

A barrister by profession, Cave was first elected M.P. for the Kingston Division of Surrey as a Unionist in 1906 and held the seat until 1918. Prior to this he had also obtained valuable experience in local government as Vice Chairman of Surrey County Council in 1893. He was appointed legal adviser to the Prince of Wales in 1914 and made Privy Councillor in 1915. He was Solicitor General from October 1915 to December 1916 and Home Secretary, with a seat in the Cabinet, from 1916-1918. Elevated to the House of Lords in 1918 he was appointed Lord Chancellor in 1922, a post he held, except during the 1924 Labour government, until a few days before his death. He was also Chancellor of the University of Oxford from 1925-1928.

EDGAR ALGERNON ROBERT GASCOYNE (1864-1954) Viscount Cecil of Chelwood

Son of the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, Cecil was called to the Bar in 1887 and entered Parliament for the first time in 1906. He was Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1915-1918, combining that post with that of Minister of Blockade from 1916-1918; in 1918 he became also Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It was widely recognised that he often did not see eye-to-eye with his cousin, the Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour. In strong contrast with the extraordinarily hard line which he was to take over Russia, he had begun as early as 1916 to circulate within the Cabinet memoranda on proposals for the avoidance of future wars. In the Baldwin government he was given a watching brief for the League of Nations, first as Lord Privy Seal and then as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. In 1927 he resigned from the Government because of the Cabinet's refusal to endorse proposals for U.K.-U.S. naval parity, and never again held government office although he continued to hold influential posts concerned with the League of Nations under both Labour and Conservative governments. He organised the Peace Ballot in 1934 and in 1937 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. See Viscount Cecil of Chelwood: A Great Experiment (1941) and All The Way (1949).

Sir GEORGE RUSSELL CLERK (1874-1951)

Clerk entered the Foreign Service in 1898 and after service abroad was made head of the newly-created War Department of the Foreign Office in 1914. He was also Assistant Under Secretary to Lord Hardinge in the Ministry of Blockade and head of the Russia Department of the Foreign Office. In 1917 he accompanied Lord Milner



(Clerk, cont'd)

to Russia. After the war he became the first British envoy to the newly created Republic of Czechoslovakia. In 1926 he was appointed Ambassador to Turkey, in 1933 to Belgium and in 1934 to France. He retired in 1937. His comments on Minutes and Memoranda in the Foreign Office Archives at the P.R.O. are very much those of a career diplomat supporting an established policy line, and do not suggest that he had any very strong views of his own.

Sir EDWARD TYAS COOK (1857-1919)

A strong Liberal from boyhood, Cook was President of the Oxford Union in 1879 and entered the profession of journalism as a contributor to the Pall Mall Gazette, becoming a member of its staff in 1883 and editor in 1890. He resigned as editor in 1892 when the journal was sold to the future Viscount Astor, and helped to found the Westminster Gazette. In 1895 he edited the Daily News and in 1901 became a leader writer for the Daily Chronicle. Between 1903-1911 he edited a standard edition of the works of John Ruskin. In 1915 he was appointed Joint Director (with Sir Frank Swettenham) of the Official Press Bureau and died only a month after the post came to an end in 1919. His bland account of the work of the Official Press Bureau (The Press in Wartime) is in striking contrast to the tenor of his earlier work. J. Saxon Mills published a biography in 1921 (Sir Edward Cook: A Biography).

JOHN DILLON (1851-1927)

Elected M.P. for Tipperary in 1879, Dillon took an active part in Irish Party politics after the Liberal pledge to introduce Home Rule in 1906. He made common cause with the anti-war Liberals, strongly attacking the British naval building programme and the foreign policy of Grey and Hardinge, which he denounced for making "England the ally of Russia and the enemy of Freedom in the West" (letter to C.P. Scott, 3.2.1911). He refused to consent to the government's partition proposals in 1916 and was briefly Chairman of the Irish Party in 1918. In the General Election of 1918 he was defeated by De Valera. He combined strong libertarian and anti-censorship views with an equally strong anti-Bolshevik stance, and was critical of those Irish politicians who looked to Russia for support. See F.S.L. Lyons, John Dillon (1968).

EMILE JOSEPH DILLON (1854-1933)

After studying linguistics under Renan, Dillon obtained his doctorate in oriental languages but was fluent in many modern European languages as well. He began to contribute articles on Russian affairs to the Fortnightly Review while working as a tutor in Russia, and lectured on comparative philology at the University of Kharkov before the Revolution. From 1887-1917 he was correspondent in Russia for the Daily Telegraph and he continued to write articles, sometimes under a pseudonym, for the Contemporary Review, the Fortnightly

(Dillon, cont'd.)

Review and the National Review. His life of Tolstoy was published in 1934.

Sir STEPHEN GASELEE (1882-1943)

Except for the years 1916-1920, Gaselee's life was mainly devoted to scholarship and librarianship, but during those years his multifarious activities as a Liaison Officer in the Foreign Office involved him closely in the decision-making process where British policy in Russia was concerned. In 1920 he was made Librarian and Keeper of Papers at the Foreign Office: a position which he held until his death.

Sir RONALD WILLIAM GRAHAM (1870-1949)

A career diplomat from 1892, Graham's foreign postings included Teheran, St. Petersburg and Egypt before he returned to the Foreign Office in 1916 as Assistant Under Secretary. He continued in the service from 1919 until his retirement in 1933, succeeding Sir George Buchanan as Ambassador in Rome as his final posting.

J.D. GREGORY

Held to be one of the pre-war "brilliant men" in the Foreign Office, Gregory's obituary in the Times does not state his date of birth. By 1911 he was already a senior enough figure in the Consular Department to be in a position to befriend Lockhart when he entered that service. After postings in Poland, Rumania and the Mission to the Holy See during the war, Gregory became an Assistant Clerk in the Russian Section of the War Department of the Ministry of Blockade in 1917. His book On the Edge of Diplomacy (1929) revealed his belief that the Bolshevik Revolution was "a master blow dealt by Germany at her foes". Gregory went on to argue that Britain was bound to support her non-Bolshevik "friends", thus becoming "logically arrayed" against the Bolsheviks.

COMMANDER HAROLD GRENFELL (1870-1948)

Harold Grenfell entered the Royal Navy in 1883 and served as Naval Attache to the British Embassy in Petrograd from 1912-1917. A fluent Russian speaker, his assessments of the situation in Russia were not welcome in Whitehall, but Milner asked to see him in January 1917 and "seemed interested" in his views. Unfortunately nearly all Grenfell's personal papers were destroyed after his death, but a few surviving letters to his mother, together with his marginal comments in his own copies of Buchanan's My Mission to Russia and Lockhart's Memoirs make it clear where his sympathies as well as his intelligence lay. In the turbulent and dangerous state of the Russian Baltic Fleet in April 1917 he personally visited "8 or 9" of the ships and spoke to the men in Russian, pointing out that without order their new freedom could not be defended. In a tribute to



(Grenfell, cont'd)

Grenfell published in the Times after his death Lord Strabolgi (formerly Commander Kenworthy) wrote that it had been a well-concealed fact that, as the result of Grenfell's speeches the Baltic Fleet had gone out to sea again and engaged the German Navy in the Gulf of Riga in such a way as usefully to hold up the German advance eastwards in the summer of 1917. After this episode Kerensky, as Grenfell later discovered, personally asked for him to be allowed to remain in Russia, but he was recalled to London on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution. From December 1918 to June 1919 he was posted Head of the British Naval Mission to Finland, but resigned his position when Britain ordered a naval squadron to Helsingfors as a base for operations against the Soviet government. In the 1920s and 1930s he was continuously active, as a civilian on the British Left and gained the respect of all who worked with him. In 1939 he rejoined the Navy to work in the Hydrographic Department, where he found that he was literally the oldest serving officer in the Royal Navy. Such of his papers and books as remain are in the possession of his son Vladimir.

ARTHUR HENDERSON (1863-1935)

Henderson entered politics via trade union activity. He attended the meeting of socialists and trade unions which, in 1892, set up the Labour Representation Committee. He was elected as an ILP candidate for Barnard Castle in 1903 and became Secretary of the Labour Party in 1911. In August 1914 he replaced Ramsay MacDonald, who opposed Britain's entry into the war, as Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party. After holding various minor government posts in the Coalition government he became a member of Lloyd George's first War Cabinet in December 1916 with the office of Minister without Portfolio. In the early summer of 1917 he was sent by Lloyd George on a fact-finding mission to the Provisional government in Russia with a secret understanding that if he thought it desirable or necessary he should replace Sir George Buchanan as Ambassador; but each man made a good impression on the other, and no changes were made in British representation until January 1918. He resigned from the Cabinet over the issue of British participation in the proposed Stockholm Conference in August 1917 (See Chp. 3 F/N 32). In 1918 he guided the reform of the Labour Party's constitution and became successively Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary in the first Labour government in 1924, during which time Britain resumed diplomatic relations with Russia. He led the Labour Party in opposition to MacDonald in the 1931 crisis, and presided over the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva. In 1934 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Mary Agnes Hamilton published his biography, Arthur Henderson, in 1938.

MAURICE PASCAL ALERS HANKEY (1877-1963), First Baron Hankey.

After serving in the Royal Marines from 1885-1902, Hankey transferred to Naval Intelligence and in 1908 was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence. In 1914 he was made Secretary of the War Council and, when the War Cabinet Secretariat was established in 1916, became Chief Secretary to the Cabinet. He



(Hankey, cont'd.)

retained this position, together with those of Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence and Clerk to the Privy Council until his retirement in 1938. Before Hankey created the machinery of the Cabinet Secretariat, the only official record of Cabinet meetings had been the Prime Minister's letters to the Sovereign. There is no biography of Hankey; his entry in the Dictionary of National Biography was written by George Mallaby.

CHARLES HARDINGE (1858-1944), Baron Hardinge of Penshurst.

Hardinge joined the Foreign Service in 1880 and served in several European capitals before first going to St. Petersburg as Secretary of the Embassy in 1898. He returned there as Ambassador in 1904. In 1906, after a brief period of service as Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office he was appointed Viceroy of India, remaining in that post until 1916, when he returned to his previous position in the Foreign Office. He remained in Whitehall until 1920, when he took up his last foreign posting as Ambassador to Paris before retiring in 1922. His book, Old Diplomacy, was published posthumously in 1947.

Admiral JOHN RUSHWORTH JELlicoe (1859-1935), First Earl Jellicoe.

As Third Sea Lord in 1908 Jellicoe was responsible for the pre-war British naval construction programme. On 4 August 1914 he was appointed Commander in Chief, the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow, from where the blockade of Germany was mounted. The German fleet made no move until May 1916 when it attempted to attack a detached British naval force scouting near the Skagerrack. The outcome of the resulting naval battle of Jutland, was allowed to appear inconclusive largely as the result of inferior public relations by the Admiralty and Jellicoe, who refused absolutely to speak on his own behalf, was pilloried by the press and criticised by the politicians. Although subsequently responsible for setting up the convoy system to counteract the U-Boat war, Lloyd George readily succumbed to pressure from the Northcliffe Press to have him dismissed in December 1917. These and other details of his life and career are given by Sir Regional Bacon: The Life of John Rushworth, Earl Jellicoe (1936).

THOMAS JONES (1870-1955)

Born in a mining village, Jones joined the ILP and the Fabian Society in 1895. His work as first Secretary of the National Health Commission (Wales) brought him to the notice of Lloyd George, who made him Assistant Secretary (1916) and then Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet, which office he held until 1938, when he retired in the same year as his chief, Lord Hankey. Jones was active in a wide range of voluntary organisations set up for the relief of distress during the Depression of the 1930s; among his later official posts were those of the first Deputy Chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain and President of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, from 1945-1954. His biography, Lloyd George, was published in 1951. His



(Jones, cont'd.)

political diaries from 1916-1930 were edited by Keith Middlemas and published in two volumes as Whitehall Diary (1969).

PHILIP HENRY KERR (1882-1940), Lord Lothian.

Philip Kerr was the youngest member of Milner's kindergarten, and as private secretary to Lloyd George from 1916-1921 was also a member of the group known as the "garden suburb", the Prime Minister's private secretariat housed in the garden of 10 Downing Street. Kerr succeeded to the title in 1930, and represented the Liberal party in the National Government of 1931 as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and then as Under Secretary of State for India. From 1939-1940 he served as British Ambassador to Washington.

JOSEPH KING (1860-1943)

King left instructions in his Will for all his private papers to be destroyed, and as a result it has proved impossible to find out very much about the facts of his life. Educated at Uppingham and Trinity College Oxford, he went on to study at Giessen and Berlin University, and clearly retained an interest in Germany, since his writings include a book: The German Revolution: Its Meaning and Menace (1933). After unsuccessfully contesting various seats in the elections of 1892, 1904 and 1906 he was finally elected Liberal MP for North Somerset in January 1910. He held the seat until 1918, when he joined the ILP, but never succeeded in re-entering Parliament. King was the main spokesman in Parliament for the Russian Political Prisoners and Exiles Relief Committee set up by Tchicherin in London in the summer of 1915, ostensibly to collect money for relief but in fact an anti-Tsarist agitational body. This was almost certainly one of his main sources of information about current events in Russia; another was the UDC, of which he early became a member. He wrote a number of pamphlets in 1919 and 1920 for the UDC and the ILP including The Russian Revolution, Bolshevism and Bolsheviks, Russian and her Allies, Soviets in Russia and Elsewhere, and Why does the Killing Go On in Russia?. His courage and persistence in questioning the spokesmen of the Coalition government in the House of Commons on the related questions of British policy in Russia, and censorship, were truly remarkable, and if a monument to him is to be found, it is in the columns of Hansard.

Sir REGINALD LEEPER (1888-1968)

Born in Australia, Leeper completed his education at New College Oxford and in 1916 joined the Intelligence Division of the Department of Information of the Foreign Office. In 1917 he moved to the newly-created Political Intelligence Department. He learned Russian from Litvinov and in 1917-1918 was undoubtedly one of the best-informed of the younger advisers on Russian affairs in the Foreign Office. He joined the permanent Foreign Service in 1920 and after various postings abroad became head of the Foreign Office News Department in 1933. In 1939 he was put in charge of a revived Political



(Leeper, cont'd.)

Intelligence Department where he developed the Political Warfare Executive, a group which specialised in propaganda warfare. It is tempting to speculate that he may have learned something about the efficacy of this weapon from the Bolshevik propaganda which he studied as part of his duties in 1918. In 1943 he was appointed Ambassador to Greece, in which capacity he became involved in another British intervention seeking -more successfully than in Russia - to prevent the establishment of a Communist government. His last Ambassadorial post before his retirement in 1949 was to the Argentine.

HASTINGS BERNARD LEES SMITH (1878-1941)

Educated for the army, Lees Smith changed direction and went to Queens College Oxford. He was later to become one of the founders and Chairman of the Executive Committee of Ruskin College. Elected Liberal MP for Northampton in January 1910, he enlisted as a Corporal in the RAMC in 1915. He joined the Labour Party in 1919 and became MP for the Keighley Division, Yorkshire from 1922-1931 and again from 1935 until his death. He was Postmaster General in the 1929 Labour government, and President of the Board of Education after Trevelyan's resignation in 1931. He was also Acting Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party from 1931 until his death.

Sir FRANCIS OSWALD LINDLEY Bart. (1872-1950)

Lindley entered the diplomatic service in 1896 and after various postings in Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East became Counsellor at the British Embassy at Petrograd in 1915. On Buchanan's return to Britain in January 1918 and before Lockhart's arrival he was in charge of British interests in Russia, and a somewhat uneasy dyarchy subsequently existed between Lindley and Lockhart, a situation which was not improved when Lindley was appointed in June 1918 as HM Commissioner to take general charge of British interests in Russia. His instructions were to supervise Lockhart's work but to allow him to retain the measure of initiative originally entrusted to him (FO 371.3299). Lindley's reports from Russia reveal his total hostility to the Bolshevik government. Between the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Britain and Russia in 1918 and his retirement in 1934, Lindley continued to serve mainly overseas, his last two postings (Portugal and Japan) being as Ambassador.

Sir ROBERT HAMILTON BRUCE LOCKHART (1887-1970)

Lockhart entered the diplomatic via the consular service, and was sent to Moscow in January 1912, where he was Acting Consul General until his appointment as special British Agent in Petrograd in January 1918. In his Memoirs he expressed the belief that his appointment over the heads of the career diplomats had made enemies for him in Whitehall. The book gives an engaging account of his experiences in Russia in 1918; and taken in conjunction with such of his memoranda as survive in the Foreign Office archives at the PRO there can be no doubt of the sincerity of his efforts, for several



(Lockhart, cont'd.)

months, to improve relations between Whitehall and Petrograd/Moscow and to avert a war of intervention. The reasons that made him change his mind are still the subject of speculation. He left the foreign service in 1922 and took up a career in banking and journalism, but was recalled to become Deputy Under-Secretary and Director General of the Political Warfare Executive of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office (under Leeper) in 1941. Vol. I of his Diaries, edited by Kenneth Young (1973) deals with the period 1915-18 but adds little to the material or the interest contained in his Memoirs.

#### ARTHUR LYNCH (1861-1934)

Born in Australia, Lynch was educated at Melbourne and Berlin Universities and went on to qualify as a doctor in Paris and London. In the Boer War he fought against the British, becoming Colonel of the 2nd Irish Brigade on the Boer side, for which he was convicted for High Treason and condemned to death in 1903. During this time he was elected M.P. in Galway City, but naturally did not take his seat. He was awarded a free pardon in 1907 and elected M.P. for West Clare in 1909-1918. He became a Colonel in the British Army in 1918 and did not stand for Parliament again. Lynch was the author of books on an extraordinary variety of subjects, including poetry, geometry and psychology.

#### JAMES RAMSAY MACDONALD (1866-1937)

MacDonald's political education began in Bristol, where he went in 1883 to work at a Young Men's Guild, and encountered and joined a branch of the SDF and (in 1886) the Fabian Society. In 1888 he also became Secretary to Thomas Lough, a Gladstonian Liberal parliamentary candidate, and through him came into contact with middle-class progressive Liberals. In 1894 he joined the newly-formed ILP. From 1900-1912 he was Secretary of the Labour Representation Committee, and from 1901-1904 represented Central Finsbury on the London County Council. In 1906 he was elected Labour M.P. for Leicester. He was Chairman of the ILP from 1906-1909 and Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Group from 1911, but resigned that position on 3 August 1914 out of protest against Britain's entry in the war. He was closely involved in the foundation of the UDC and also a spokesman for the NCCL. During this period he managed to gain and retain the respect of both wings of the Labour Party for the courage with which he maintained his unorthodox views on war, since he was not a pacifist. In the summer of 1917 the Seamen's Union refused to man a ship that would have taken him to Russia on a mission to the Provisional government. After Henderson's resignation of office in August 1917 there was a further closing of ranks within the Labour Party in opposition to the war. MacDonald lost his seat in 1918 but was re-elected in 1922; as Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party he now became the official leader of the Opposition and Prime Minister designate.



## AYLMER MAUDE (1858-1938)

Maude went to Russia as an English tutor in 1874 and remained there for 23 years, during which time he got to know Tolstoy. Although he did not subscribe to most of Tolstoy's ideas, he spent the rest of his life translating his works. In 1918 he went to Russia with the Intervention forces as a YMCA lecturer.

## ALFRED, VISCOUNT MILNER (1854-1925)

Milner made his reputation as an administrator in Egypt and returned to chair the Board of Inland Revenue from 1892-1897, after which he was sent to South Africa as High Commissioner. After the outbreak of the Boer War he was appointed Administrator of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal. He made known his disapproval of the worst aspects of British military rule in South Africa, and between 1902-1905 worked for the restoration of the South African economy. While on leave in London in May 1901 he began to recruit young men for his kindergarten. After leaving South Africa Milner became steadily more influential in public affairs. In 1916 he was included in the War Cabinet, where his responsibilities included the leadership of the British Mission to Russia in January 1917 (see Appendix V), and the negotiations which led to the creation of the Supreme War Council. In March 1918 he was made Secretary of State for War, and after the December 1918 election, Secretary of State for the Colonies, a post which he held until he retired from public life in 1921. Most of what has been written about him deals with his period in South Africa, but Lloyd George's dependence on him in the latter years of the war is made clear in the War Memoirs. The Milner papers at the Bodleian contain a number of telegrams between Whitehall and Petrograd/Moscow in 1917/1918 which are not preserved in the Foreign Office archives for the period, but do not otherwise throw any new light on Milner's view of Russia at that time. Milner's role in the Great War is described by Christopher Addison in Four and a Half Years (1914-1919) (1934).

## E.D. MOREL (1873-1924)

Morel's reputation as organiser of the Congo Reform Association, which had inaugurated the campaign to get the Congo removed from the misrule of the King of the Belgians, made him an obvious choice for the founders of the UDC when they were looking for someone to create an effective organisation and publicity campaign. He was highly successful in both respects, and there can be no question that the impact made by the UDC on liberal opinion during the Great War owed much to him. He was imprisoned for a purely technical offence under the Defence of the Realm Act (another tribute to his success as a publicist and his unpopularity with the authorities), and his health was undermined by this experience. In 1918 Morel joined the ILP and was elected M.P. for Dundee, holding the seat in 1922, 1923 and 1924. During this time he campaigned against the Versailles Treaty and in favour of the resumption of diplomatic relations with Russia. He wrote for Labour Leader, the Daily Herald, Forward and Foreign Affairs. See also F. Seymour Cocks: E.D. Morel, The Man and His Work (1920) and Chp. 8 of Catherine Cline's Strategies of Protest



(Morel, cont'd.)

(1980). Morel's personality as well as his work are also well described by Marvin Swartz in The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War (1971).

ROBERT LEONARD OUTHWAITE (1868-1930)

Another Australian-born member of the House of Commons during the First World War, Outhwaite was a journalist before becoming a politician. He sat as Liberal M.P. for Henley from July 1912-1918. His name appears as a member of the UDC in the Minute Book of the 2nd meeting of the UDC General Council in 1915. Little else is known about him except that he was interested in Land Reform movements, but it is obvious from Hansard that he was also one of those most concerned by censorship in Britain.

SIR BERNARD PARES

See Chapter 2, F/N 21.

ARTHUR AUGUST WILLIAM HARRY PONSONBY (1871-1946), First Baron Shulbrede.

The third son of Queen Victoria's Private Secretary Sir Henry Frederic Ponsonby, Arthur Ponsonby entered the Diplomatic Service in 1894 but resigned in 1902 in order to begin a life of political activity, initially as a Liberal. By 1907 he was in all but name a socialist, and in 1914 was one of the first to join the Union of Democratic Control. He spoke frequently on foreign policy in the House of Commons, and because he undeniably spoke from direct experience he was listened to with less disrespect than was the fate of many of his UDC colleagues. In 1918 he joined the ILP and the Labour Party. In the first Labour government he was made Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and in 1929 Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and then Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Transport. He was elevated to the peerage in 1930 to become Leader of the Labour Party in the House of Lords from 1931-1935. Though remaining a socialist he was first of all a pacifist, and he resigned from the Labour Party when it joined the Coalition government in 1940. Although there is no biography of Ponsonby his outspokenness in the First World War is well documented in most accounts of the radical movement in those years, notably by Marvin Swartz in his Union of Democratic Control. The Ponsonby Papers are at the Bodleian Library.

MAJOR GENERAL SIR FREDERICK CUTHBERT POOLE (1869-1936)

Poole first saw active service on the North West Frontier in 1897 and served as an artillery officer in the Boer War and in both East and West Africa before retiring in 1914 in protest against the slow promotion practices of the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was recalled in August of that year, promoted to Brigadier General in 1916 and

(Poole, cont'd.)

sent to Russia as a member of the Milner Mission in 1917. He remained in Russia in charge of British supplies, and in May 1918 was sent to command the British reinforcements which then arrived in Murmansk. In August 1918 he was put in charge of the Allied intervention forces at Archangel, but being no diplomat he caused widespread offence among the very people whose support the Allies were hoping to enlist, and he was superceded in October 1918 by General Ironside. He briefly reappeared in the Caucasus as British envoy to the anti-Bolsheviks in South West Russia, but returned to Britain in February in 1919 and was not employed again. He retired for the second time in 1920, and between then and his death in 1936 stood three times unsuccessfully for Parliament as a Unionist.

WILLIAM MATHER RUTHERFORD PRINGLE (1874-1928)

Very little is known about Pringle except what can be deduced from his speeches in Parliament. He attended Glasgow University, was called to the Bar, stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate for Camlachie in 1906 and was elected for North West Lanark in January 1910. He appears to have lost his seat in 1918 but was back in the House of Commons as M.P. for the Penistone Division of Yorkshire from 1922-1924. Although not, apparently a member of the UDC, his name was often to be found in the division lists as having voted with the UDC members on libertarian and foreign policy issues.

ARTHUR JAMES SHERWELL (1863-1942)

Even less is known about Sherwell, except that he was educated at Handsworth College, Birmingham, and was elected Liberal M.P. for Huddersfield in 1906, retaining the seat until 1918. A much-travelled man, he wrote widely on temperance, economic and social questions and sat on a number of government committees and commissions. However like Pringle he made an important contribution to the work of that small group of M.P.s who constantly questioned the government over its attitude to Russia and on censorship issues.

PROFESSOR J.Y. SIMPSON (1873-1934)

Author of numerous books and articles of a scientific and religious nature, Simpson also travelled extensively in both European and Asiatic Russia and the Baltic states. His publications Sidelights on Siberia (1898) and The Self Discovery of Russia (1916) were considered to qualify him as a Russian expert in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office from 1917-1919. Information about him is scarce, and there is no indication in his obituary notice in the Times (22 May 1934) as to where and in what subject he was a Professor.



## F.E. SMITH (1872-1930), First Earl Birkenhead

After obtaining a scholarship to Wadham College Oxford in 1891, Smith was elected Fellow of Merton in 1896 and taught law at Oxford from 1897-1900. At the same time he began to practice in Liverpool. In January 1906 he was elected Conservative M.P. for the Walton Division of Liverpool. A flamboyant character he was at the same time deeply conservative. Yet while opposing the 1909 Budget in the Commons he urged the Lords to let it through on tactical grounds. Under Bonar Law he was promoted to the Front Bench and in 1912 he "galloped for Carson" on Home Rule. His first official post was as Director of the Press Bureau in August 1914. In 1915 he became Solicitor General and then Attorney General. From then on he had a seat in the Cabinet. In the General Election of 1918 Smith was returned for the West Derby Division of Liverpool but was almost immediately offered the Woolsack, and created Baron Birkenhead in January 1919. He proceeded - perhaps surprisingly - to play a constructive part in the negotiations for the creation of the Republic of Southern Ireland. In the Baldwin government he was Secretary of State for India, and died not long after its defeat.

## JAN CHRISTIAN SMUTS (1870-1950)

Smuts' role in the South African War is well documented. He went on to participate in the British invasion of the German colonies in East Africa in 1915, was made a Lieutenant General in the British Army, and in 1917 came to London to represent South African interests in the Imperial War Cabinet. This led to his appointment as Minister without Portfolio in the War Cabinet and his involvement in policy-making on Russia. In the inter-war years he continued to be perceived as an international statesman as well as a South African politician, and exercised considerable influence over Churchill in favour of policies designed to contain Russia. See also J.C. Smuts: Jan Christian Smuts (1952); Frank Owen: Tempestuous Journey (1954); Sir Keith Hancock: The Smuts Papers (1955); John Ehrman: Grand Strategy (Volume 5) (1956).

## PHILIP SNOWDEN (1864-1937), First Viscount Snowden.

A weaver's son, Snowden studied socialism while recovering from a cycling accident which lamed him for life. He joined the ILP, becoming its Chairman in 1903,, and in 1906 was elected M.P. for Blackburn. His interest in the temperance movement took him on a world tour in 1914 and he was out of the country when war was declared. He strongly opposed the war and on his return worked tirelessly for conscientious objectors. He was certainly, by 1915, also a member of the UDC. Having made a study of finance he was an obvious choice as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the first Labour government and again in 1929. In 1931 he stayed with MacDonal and was made Lord Privy Seal in the National government. His Autobiography was published in 1934.



## Sir FRANK ATHELSTANE SWETTENHAM (1850-1946)

After playing a prominent part in the creation of the Malay States, Swettenham was appointed Resident General of the States in 1895 and in 1901 High Commissioner and Governor of the Straits Settlements. He retired in 1904, but in 1914 was brought out of retirement by F.E. Smith to become his Assistant Director at the Press Bureau. In 1915 he was made Joint Director, together with Sir Edward Cook.

## ARNOLD JOSEPH TOYNBEE (1889-1975)

Toynbee's early travels in Greece and Italy undermined his health and made him unfit for military service in the First World War. He was an obvious choice of assistant for Lord Bryce when he made his investigation into the Armenian atrocities of 1915 which resulted in the Papers Presented by Lord Bryce to Lord Grey of Falloden on that subject. This work led to Toynbee becoming involved in the production of propaganda issued by the News Department of the Foreign Office, including some work of which he later said he was ashamed, e.g. a pamphlet entitled The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks. He subsequently joined the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office and was the author of several important and remarkably impartial briefing papers on the Caucasus and Asiatic Russia. Toynbee is, of course, renowned for his twelve volume Study of History (1934-1961). From 1925-1955 he was Director of Studies at Chatham House and Professor of International History at the University of London. An account of his life by W.H. McNeill is to be found in the Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume 63 (1977) pp. 442-469.

## OLIVER WARDROP (1864-1948)

A commissioned officer in the 19th Middlesex Royal Volunteer Corps, Wardrop became an Army Interpreter in the Russian language but subsequently joined the Consular Service, with postings in Kertch, Sevastopol and St. Petersburg. He retired in 1910 but was recalled in 1914, becoming Consul General first in Bergen and then (1917) in Moscow. His reports to the Foreign Office after both revolutions were extensive, wordy, but well-informed, and he showed considerable grasp of the realities of the situation. He became Chief British Commissioner, Transcaucasus, from 1919-1920 and British Delegate on the Inter-Allied and International Commission for the Relief of Russia in 1921.

## JOSIAH CLEMENT WEDGEWOOD (1872-1943), First Baron Wedgewood

An early recruit to the Milner kindergarten, Wedgewood was Resident Magistrate in the Transvaal from 1902-1904, but chose a political life and entered Parliament as a Liberal in 1906, remaining in the same seat (Newcastle under Lyme) until 1942, when he was elevated to the peerage. Before the First World War he was associated with a number of libertarian causes, notably anything concerning the freedom of the press. In 1914 he volunteered and fought in Belgium, at Gallipoli and in East Africa. In 1916 he was appointed to the



(Wedgewood, cont'd.)

Royal Commission on the Mesopotamian campaign. In 1918 he was sent to Russia by the War Office to make contact with any remnants he could find in Siberia of the Provisional government. On his advising the War Office to try to retrieve their stores there rather than supply them to counter-revolutionaries, he was recalled. Although not a member of the UDC his speeches criticising the government's foreign policy (on the rare occasions that he was in London) were listened to with the respect normally accorded to a serving officer, despite their tenor. In 1919 he joined the ILP and the Labour Party, but always retained considerable independence of mind. His chief interests in public life were the taxation of land values, India, and the creation of a Jewish Homeland. See his own Memoirs of a Fighting Life (1940) and the biography of him by his cousin C.V. Wedgewood: The Last of the Radicals (1951).

W. LLEWELYN WILLIAMS (1867-1922)

W.L. Williams was elected Liberal M.P. for the Carmarthen District from 1906-1918. From 1912-1915 he was Recorder of Swansea and in 1915 was made Recorder of Cardiff. He was the author of many books and essays on Wales and editor of Froude's History of England in the Everyman Series.

## Chapter 8. Price Versus the Censor

In May and June 1918 Price sent 23 cables to the Manchester Guardian and kept copies of the originals of all but three of these. With the exception of those three, it is possible to identify precisely the passages which were censored. It is not difficult to deduce which cuts were likely to have been purely editorial. Broadly speaking, the Press Bureau cut or suppressed everything with a bearing on the possibility of Allied intervention or which accused the Allies of complicity in the civil war in Russia, although references to the fact that there was a civil war were passed. Any suggestion that the Allies had missed opportunities for positive as opposed to negative action in Russia was also invariably cut. Straight reporting on political developments within Russia or on Russian foreign policy were still, during these months on the whole allowed.

Before showing in detail how Price's cables were affected it will be necessary to describe how the policy evolved of which censorship was at first a reflection and then an integral part.

In the aftermath of Brest Litovsk the Foreign Office, the Quai d'Orsay and the Supreme War Council at Versailles spent a great deal of time and energy in seeking to devise what amounted to the best way of punishing the Bolsheviks under the pretext of keeping open a second front against the Germans. Inevitably the choice of options was dominated by geography. There were three areas in which pressure might be applied: in the Far East, in the South East and in the



North West. In the South East covert support for the counter-revolutionary forces of Kaledin and Alexeiv, combined with recognition of the Ukrainian Rada, had already laid down the lines and limitations of Allied intervention in the spring and early summer of 1918. In the Far East the Japanese seemed willing enough to do what the French and British wanted them to do (though for their own reasons), but the Americans continued unwilling for several more months to be seen to use the Japanese as catspaws. In the North West events played into the hands of the Allies, as will be shown.

At Versailles the Military Representatives of the Allies at the Supreme War Council continued to generate ideas for intervention. At their meeting on 15/16 March the Supreme War Council had asked them to address themselves to the possibility of landing forces at Archangel. A draft note of their deliberations on 29 March suggests that they failed to do so, having other ideas.

"Any resistance to the German conquest or absorption of Russia or of any part of the Russian Empire must...be preceded by the suppression of the purely destructive activities of the Bolsheviks, a task which the more patriotic and stable elements of the Russian population can only take on with assistance from outside."

Since this did not actually answer the question they had been asked to deal with, the draft was obviously reconsidered but the final Note - Joint Note 20 - still only called in general terms for "an immediate Allied intervention" and the American representative refused to sign it<sup>1</sup>. This Note was considered at a meeting of the Supreme War Council on 1-2 May at Abbeville together with Joint Note 25, dated 27 April, which dealt primarily with the future disposition of Czech troops in Russia. It was at this meeting of the Council

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<sup>1</sup> CAB 25.121.

that a resolution was agreed emphasising the necessity for an early transfer of Czech troops in Russia to the Western Front, the British undertaking to do their best to get as many of them as possible to Vladivostock and to approach Trotsky about getting permission for those not already en route to Vladivostock to be allowed to concentrate at Archangel and Murmansk<sup>2</sup>.

While the Supreme War Council was coming straight to the point, the British Foreign Office was still uncertain what to do for the best.

An instruction went to Lockhart on 4 April which said:

"We favour the policy of Japanese intervention as being the best if not the only means of saving Russia from enemy domination and of preserving the rights and liberty of the Russian people, but there is still uncertainty as to the moment at which this policy will mature. In the meantime you should use every effort to obtain an undertaking from Lenin and Trotsky to accept and co-operate with Allied assistance...The Bolsheviks should carry on every sort of operation, regular and irregular, against the Germans until the latter are forced to declare war upon them."<sup>3</sup>

(Balfour used the word "shall" instead of "should" in an earlier draft of this cable.) Lockhart continued to demur and to canvas energetically against the Japanese option, but by the middle of May he had begun to change his mind, at least about the necessity for obtaining prior consent for it from the Bolsheviks. In a cable to London sent on 13 May he said:

"I frankly admit that situation so changed that Bolshevik consent is no longer as important as before."

on which Cecil minuted:

"Mr. Lockhart has now reached the conclusion at which some of us arrived three or four months ago."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> CAB 25.121. SWC 151/1.

<sup>3</sup> FO 371.3290.

<sup>4</sup> FO 371.3285.



Lockhart's change of mind, which was never adequately explained either from a reading of the telegrams or from his Memoirs, may have been partly caused by the comparative ease with which the British had been able, on 9 May, to land reinforcements of troops to the small garrison already stationed at Murmansk to protect the stores there. This had been made possible without much more than a formal protest by the Bolsheviks because of a panic which had seized them at the height of the last phase of the negotiations at Brest Litovsk, when German interference with communications between the Russian delegation and Petrograd had made it appear that the negotiations had broken down<sup>5</sup>. At that time the Murmansk Soviet was instructed by

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<sup>5</sup> The port of Archangel, closed down by ice for more than half the year, was until late in 1916 the only port available to Russia. In September 1915 work began under British direction and with British assistance, on the construction of an ice-free port at Murmansk on the Kola Inlet and of a single-track railway connecting it with Petrograd. The protection of Russia's northern sea lanes had from the start been assumed by the British Navy. There were considerable stores (ordered by the Tsarist government) at Archangel, as well as British naval personnel. After the November revolution the Admiral in Charge, Kemp, ordered all British naval and commercial personnel hitherto stationed at Archangel to move to Murmansk. The already considerable importance of Murmansk to the British was thus enhanced, and the more so when the German advance into Russia continued throughout and after the last stages of the negotiations at Brest Litovsk. Although the Admiralty had defined British interests at Murmansk to consist in the preservation of the (unpaid-for) stores at Archangel, the safety of Russian warships in harbour at Murmansk, and the repatriation of Allied refugees, Kemp decided on his own initiative to land, on 6 March 1918, a company of marines from the battleship "Glory" (the only British battleship then in those waters). This action took place not because of but coincidentally with a request from the Murman Soviet to Petrograd for instructions as to what to do in the event of a German attack at a time when Petrograd itself was feared to be in great and imminent danger. This in turn was due to the fact that two telegrams sent by the Bolshevik delegation at Brest Litovsk were forwarded by the Germans in the reverse order, which resulted in giving the Soviet government the impression that the talks had broken down. Trotsky had thereupon telegraphed the Murman Soviet (on 1 March) to "accept any and all assistance from the Allied missions". It is not clear and will probably never be exactly known whether the Murmansk Soviet actually did appeal to Kemp to land troops, but the landing of the marines five days later unquestionably took place with its consent. See Ullman Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol. I pp. 109-119; Debo, Revolution

petrograd to accept any help that was offered, as a German invasion of the area was considered imminent. An agreement to co-operate was reached between the Murmansk Soviet and the Commander of the local British forces. British troops were even involved in skirmishes with Finnish White Guards, who fought with the Germans when they invaded Finland in April. Early in May the British War Cabinet ordered the despatch to North Russia of additional troops for the defence of Murmansk against further attacks from the Germans and the Finnish White Guards. Two weeks after their arrival General Poole arrived with the title of British Military Representative in Russia, and the cable which informed Lockhart of this fact also told him that Lindley, previously Commissioner (and temporarily on leave in London) was to return to Russia to take charge of all British interests in Russia. Lockhart cabled his "considerable astonishment" at this development, and with Cecil's approval Hardinge concocted a telegram designed to "soothe him down" and "promote a calmer atmosphere"<sup>6</sup>. It appeared, nonetheless, that the decision had been taken in favour of intervention in the North West of Russia.

There now entered into the situation an unexpected factor which had not apparently been under active political consideration, although the Supreme War Council had been fully aware of its military potential. This was the existence on Russia soil of the Czech Legion: the equivalent of a full army corps on the Western front, made up of prisoners of war and deserters from the Austro-Hungarian army. At that time they had only one objective: to secure a national homeland out of the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

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and Survival pp. 153-155.

<sup>6</sup> FO 371.3313.



when the war was over. On 26 March the Bolsheviks had agreed that the Czechs should be allowed to leave Russia with the object of getting to the Western front, where the French were only too eager to deploy them. Those stationed west of Omsk were to proceed via Archangel and the remainder via Vladivostock. Some of the latter immediately began to move eastwards, and the first contingent of Czech troops arrived in Vladivostock on 6 April. During May the government in Moscow began to receive uneasy signals from some of the Siberian Soviets about the presence in their territories of so many Czech troops. Orders were sent from Moscow to halt and re-route to Archangel all Czechs still on the Trans-Siberian Railway. The Czechs immediately sent representatives to Moscow to discuss the order; they also arranged a meeting among themselves at Cheliabinsk. Here, on 14 May, an incident took place which may or may not have been provoked. What is certain is that a Hungarian prisoner-of-war in a west-bound train also halted at Cheliabinsk threw a brick into one of the Czech trains, killing one of the Czechs, and that the resulting fracas completely changed the timing and strategy of Allied intervention.

It is only against this background that the significance of what Price was trying to send to his paper can be judged. In what follows everything printed with underlining is taken from passages deleted by the censor from despatches which were otherwise passed for publication.

The first of the cables of which Price kept a copy, that shows clear evidence of censorship, was one he sent from Petrograd on 20 February 1918 which was printed on 23 February. There are a number of minor changes and cuts as between the cabled and printed versions which

suggest the hand of the sub-editor rather than the censor, but the omission of the last sentence of the cable was obviously a censorship cut. Coming after a sentence about the treachery of the Rada in signing a separate peace with Germany - which was passed - Price intended to go on:

"It is interesting remember that ever since October revolution Allies have been supporting Ukrainian Rada which has now behaved so treacherously stop Letter recently intercepted by Soviet between General Alexeiv and French General at Kiev published last week shows General Alexeiv relying support allied military representatives with Rada stop Now latter betrayed both Allies and revolution and once again Allies have backed wrong horse."/>

The next example occurred in his cable of 22 February, printed three days later, sent when the Germans were continuing to advance into Russia despite the Bolshevik government's stated willingness to sign a peace treaty on Germany's terms. The censored passage dealt entirely with the possibility of intervention, again indirect and again in the South East. Price had already noted that a threat was perceived from Rumania, caught

"between two fires, namely fear Russian revolution from east and fear Roumanian Germanophil bourgeoisie who wish depose Ferdinand set up establish new dynasty stop Diplomatic documents which I telegraphed recently show that ever since outbreak European war Roumanian Government played double game between Central Powers and Allies stop Present moment seems Germanophil party forcing its policy on Government which is more frightened spread revolutionary ideas from Russia than it is from Austro-German imperialists stop thus Russian revolution attacked all along west front by German armies Rada Roumanian Government."

The third cable to show evidence of selective cuts was sent on 25 February (printed 27 February) and is merely a summary of Lenin's twelve theses on the necessity for signing the treaty of Brest

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<sup>7</sup> Manchester Guardian 23.2.18. Datelined Petrograd Wednesday (20 February) 'Failure of Bolshevik Hopes'. Signed M. Philips Price.



Litovsk. In the printed version of this despatch part of the tenth and virtually the whole of the twelfth thesis were omitted. The omissions might however have been purely editorial, as for example the missing sentence (from the tenth thesis):

"While England Germany are two examples capitalist worlds bleeding each other to death exhibiting themselves as lasting shame to Civilisation"

And again, in the case of the twelfth thesis, its omission might have been because it undermined the basis of Scott's strongest argument in defence of the Bolsheviki's handling of the peace negotiations: the fact that they were standing for the rights of small nationalities no less effectively than were the Western Allies. The missing part of Price's cable read:

"If Russian revolution abandons its comrades in Poland Lithuania Esthonia Finland it only does so in obedience maxim safety of revolution is highest law and preservation Russian revolution even more important than guarantee self-determination small nationalities."

The case against the censor in the matter of this cable is not proven.

The next example, a very short one, again relates to intervention, and is more likely than the last to have been a censor's cut. It occurs in the first cable that Price sent from Vologda (12 March) and is mainly about the extent to which the revolution was taking hold in the provinces, and the increase in popular consciousness that the revolution would have to be defended with arms.

"For the moment Japan assumed to be chief enemy"  
Price wrote, and in view of what is known of Lockhart's battle with the Foreign Office at this time and on this point, the omission is not surprising.

The last three articles which Price sent from Vologda were all written after Scott's dramatic leader of 4 March in which he for the first time and with no preparation referred to a proposed invasion of Russia by the Allies. Only the third of these, sent on 14 April, appeared to have caught the attention of the censor. It was not cut, but it was delayed for three months, finally appearing in print on 19 July. In it, Price drew attention to trouble brewing between the Siberian Soviets and "Russian monarchist bands in Manchuria" under Horvath and Senenov who were being supplied with arms by the Japanese. His description of Allied policy in the Far East as "the exact counterpart of the policy of the Central Empires in Western Russia" closely echoed Scott's leader, although this could not possibly have been deliberate. It was, however, not surprising that publication of this despatch was held up, for what would have seemed an alarmist report on 14 April, possibly even causing inconvenient questions in the House, could safely be disregarded by 19 July, when the piece was eventually allowed to be printed, by which time Allied preparation for intervention in the north as well as the east of Russia were irreversible.

The first despatch that Price sent after his return to Moscow was written on 26 April and based on an interview with Tchicherin. Rather more than a third of his account of the interview was stopped altogether, and the remainder was tacked on to another piece, sent on 16 May, which had itself been significantly cut. The rump of the two despatches was printed as one article on 1 June<sup>8</sup>. What was cut from the 26 April piece was the statement by Tchicherin that:

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<sup>8</sup> Manchester Guardian 1.6.18. Dated Moscow May 16 'Germans in Russia'. Signed M. Philips Price.



"Soviet Government now possesses facts proving that the so-called Siberian Government consisting group reactionary officers monarchists bankers who have taken refuge Far East has been negotiating Japanese British and French diplomatic agents Vladivostock for military aid against Siberian Soviets stop Japan put forward as condition supporting arms disarmament Vladivostock and apparently negotiations continuing among allies who cannot agree about share plunder."

Tchicherin also told Price that the French government agent had told the Horvath/Kolchak government that

"although open recognition by allies present moment impossible still in event slightest success military offensive against Soviets he could imagine no other authority but theirs worthy recognition."

In another of the documents from which Tchicherin derived the facts which he related to Price, and to which all reference was deleted, it appeared that the French Government was also in the process of making arrangements between Horvath and Russian bankers in the Far East that would

"remove all fear allies interfering internal affairs Russia."

Tchicherin then pointed out to Price that the French Ambassador in a statement recently made to the Russian press had said:

"if the Allies took action in Siberia this would not entail interference in the internal affairs of Russia stop I leave you said Tchicherin to reconcile this statement with facts disclosed in documents."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A great deal had happened between 26 April, when Price wrote the first of these articles, and 1 June, when parts of them were allowed to appear. What the British censors were preventing Price from describing were early intimations of the existence of one of the most far-reaching, if also the worst co-ordinated conspiracies of modern history. Already in February 1918 the British had succeeded in buying the Siberian Bank, considered particularly important to the Allies because it controlled the grain, platinum and gold trades of Siberia. The so-called Bankers' Conspiracy is described by Michael Kettle in The Allies and the Russian Collapse (1981), pp. 205-208, 242-244 and 246 being those which deal with the Siberian Bank. (In Kettle's view it is probable but not yet certain that it was through their control of this bank that the British were able to finance Kornilov and Alexeiv.) Throughout the early months of 1918 a member of the French Military Mission, Col. Pichon, was travelling about Siberia actively looking for the best candidate for Allied support against the Siberian Soviets. Price wrote the censored passage about Siberia just one day after the meeting in Peking at which Horvath agreed to become titular head of what finally emerged, six months



The other component of the article written on 16 May and printed on 1 June was also almost certainly based on an interview with Tchicherin, as Price's diary shows that he had another interview with the Foreign Minister on 9 May. The most significant cut was Price's statement that he had been told that

"semi-official statements reaching here from Paris that America has agreed with rest Allies to allow Japan free hand Siberia are interpreted in Soviet government circles as meaning that the Allied governments see in Russia class enemy more dangerous to them than their national enemy German Imperialism stop As proof of this is cited recent article in German official Norddeutscher Allgemeine Zeitung which openly hints possibility agreement between Germany Japan over spheres of influences in Far East stop Among other friendly acts which Allies are committing towards Soviet Republic is seizure four Russian ships Far Eastern waters and purchase all tea in China normally sold for Russian market thus depriving starving people of Russia of their last comfort."

It is instructive to compare what was stopped in these two cables with what was passed for publication. For whatever reason, the passages which were allowed were printed in reverse order but all datelined 16 May. The first part of the article which appeared on 1 June thus dealt with German difficulties in carrying out their plans for the Ukraine. Their forces were over extended because of the hostility of the peasants and only a fraction of the hoped-for corn had been obtained. "Instead of finding a beehive of honey" in the Ukraine, wrote Price, the Germans had stirred a hornets nest instead. He was also allowed to report that the recently appointed German

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later, as the Omsk Directorate under Kolchak. J.A. White (see below) notes (p.104) that it was in April that documents disclosing the efforts of the precursors of the Omsk Directorate to obtain foreign aid were discovered in Vladivostock, giving as his source Z. Karpenko: Grazhdanskaia Voina v Dalnevostochnom Krae, 1918-1922 (Khabarovsk 1934). The most comprehensive account of the origins and development of Allied intervention in the Far East and its relationship with the Civil War is still that of J.A. White: The Siberian Intervention (Princeton 1950), especially Chps 3 and 6. The evolution of American policy in the Far East and its repercussions on the other Allies is described by Ullman: Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol.



Ambassador, Count Mirbach, had visited Lenin at the Kremlin on 15 May but "an authoritative Soviet source" (again probably Tchicherin) had told him that the interview was "characterised by coolness". By a skilful piece of editing and with no indication that the rest of the article had been written some three weeks earlier, what followed appeared to be continuous. Tchicherin (now identified) had told Price that although Germany had formally recognised the Bolshevik government

"in practice she shows no more inclination to establish sincere relations with us than the Allies"

who he (Tchicherin) would have expected by now to have recognised the Bolshevik government. That government, he stated, was clearly the only authority capable of establishing the degree of order in Russia which the Allies claimed to desire. Tchicherin had gone on to state that the Bolshevik government had recognised the Rada only because compelled to do so by "force majeure" and that the Rada was becoming increasingly unpopular with the Ukrainians. Asked by Price if the Bolshevik government recognised the independent government of the Caucasus Tchicherin had replied that it had not yet received a reply to its enquiry as to whether that government considered itself independent. But, Tchicherin had gone on,

"we cannot think the Caucasus people wish to separate themselves from Russia, for that would leave them at the mercy of Turkey."

Tchicherin had been at pains to make it clear that the Caucasus government was free to <sup>do</sup> what it chose except in the matter of laying claim to Baku, which had established its own Soviet "with which we work in close contact". He thought that in any case the growing agrarian movement in the Caucasus promised "to alter the political

outlook of this part of the east".<sup>10</sup>

Because of delays both in transmission and on arrival, as well no doubt, because of editorial judgement, much of the material that Price was sending at this time did not appear in the order in which he wrote it, and it is impossible to give a coherent account of his despatches in a literal date order. Thus before sending the cable just summarised (16 May) he had, on 3 May, sent off an account which was printed virtually intact only four days later<sup>11</sup>. Again, it is instructive to observe what was passed by the censor with so little

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<sup>10</sup> At the end of November 1917 national councils in Tiflis, Batum, Kutais, Erivan, Elizavetopol and Baku met and formed a TransCaucasian Commissariat composed of Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians and local Russians, which proclaimed itself the de facto authority in the area until the Constituent Assembly should have met. After the dissolution of the Assembly the delegates of the various nationalities comprising the Commissariat formed a representative government, the Seim. This government repudiated the treaty of Brest Litovsk insofar as the cession of provinces to Turkey was concerned, tried unsuccessfully to negotiate directly with the Turks and then declared war on Turkey, but was quickly defeated. In order to put in place a body capable of negotiating peace with Turkey, an Independent Democratic Federative Republic of TransCaucasia was formed on 22 April 1918. It was short-lived. Disagreements as to the nature of the respective national interests of Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis which became apparent in the course of the negotiations resulted in the dissolution of the Federation within a month. Georgia made a separate peace with both Germany and Turkey, by the terms of which Germany acquired the use of Georgian railways and the Black Sea port of Poti, and Turkey gained recognition of her gains under the Treaty of Brest Litovsk. Armenia declared itself independent but continued to lie at the mercy of Turkey. Azerbaijan also declared itself independent, but the existence of this republic was complicated by the formation in April 1918 of a Soviet in Baku which alone in the TransCaucasus area recognised the Bolshevik government in Petrograd. For further reading see Richard G. Hovanissian: Armenia on the Road to Independence (Cambridge 1967), especially Chps. 10 and 11; Firuz Kazemzadeh: The Struggle for Trans-Caucasia 1917-1921 (Oxford 1951); Ronald G. Suny (Ed.) TransCaucasia: Nationalism and Social Change : Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (East European Series. Michigan, 1983); and Ronald G. Suny: The Baku Commune 1917-1918: Class and Nationality in the Russian Revolution (Princeton 1972).

<sup>11</sup> Manchester Guardian 7.5.18. Datelined Moscow Friday (3 May) 'Soviet and the Allies: Attitude to England and America'. Signed M. Philips Price.



difficulty. Price described the May Day celebrations in Moscow in this despatch, where he saw banners bearing the inscription "Remember Brest Litovsk". From this he deduced that

"all the conscious proletarian elements in Russia believe that there is only one problem before the young Soviet Republic - to prepare for future war against the forces of world capital which they think is attacking it on every side."

Germany and France, he went on, were the countries most feared; France was suspected of abetting Japanese designs on Siberia. England and America were regarded with least dislike, and the basis existed for a "possible rapprochement" with them. This he had from a "well-informed source". But he warned that any attempt by either country to

"bolster up the counter-revolution bands defeated in square fights by the Soviet troops would meet with the strongest resistance."

Assistance would have to take a "disinterested" form, in the shape, for instance, of "railway organisers, engineers, instructors of a new army, arms and munitions". He went on to claim that the Red Army was not to be compared with the old, undisciplined Tsarist army. A new revolutionary discipline had been established because "the Russian masses feel themselves responsible for their own destiny". But if the Allies persisted in mistrusting the "proletariat Government of Russia" the whole of the food stores of Eastern Europe and Central Asia were in danger of falling into German hands, and "all the raw materials which Germany can draw from the East will be used against

England and America in the West".

The next cable Price sent did not get off so lightly, although it was printed only three days after he sent it on 8 May<sup>12</sup>. What the censor allowed was his account of German plans for the Ukraine, which amounted to re-establishment of a Tsarist regime.

"Under the circumstances it would seem the best policy for the Allies to aim at saving those parts of Russia north and east of the Volga"

Price wrote; and went on to report that he had just been told by a member of the Finnish Soviet that 3,000 Finnish Red Guards were at Kandalaksha on the White Sea, ready to co-operate with Soviet troops for the protection of Murman. What Price also intended to say was that these Red Guards were ready to co-operate with Soviet and British (my emphasis) troops at Murman, but these two crucial words were cut, as well as the whole of the last two sentences of his message:

"Ground now well prepared co-operation English American democracies with revolutionary forces Russia Finland in task holding territories north and east of Volga and prevent German penetration central and northern Asia till such time as process internal disruption ripens in Central Empires stop Uneasiness Prussian war party at possibilities Anglo-Russo -Finnish co-operation shown by fact that German representative here today demanded disarming British troops Murman."

Although none of this was allowed, Scott seized upon Price's earlier accounts of German objectives and activities in the Ukraine as his theme for a leading article on 11 May on the danger to Britain of having in the Ukraine a "pro-German reactionary government" astride the overland route to India. "The Germans" said Scott "look like teaching even the blindest among us that by virtue of India we are an

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<sup>12</sup> Manchester Guardian 11.5.18. Dated Moscow Wednesday (8 May). 'German Aim in Russia: a Monarchy based on Kiev'. Signed M. Philips



Eastern as well as a Western power...That in any comprehensive scheme replying to the German Turkish threat we must seek the friendship if not the active co-operation of Great Russia is self-evident. Unfortunately our Government and the French Government seem determined to close their eyes to this fact."

Price's next two cables, one sent on 10 May and one on 11 May, were printed as one article on 22 May, the first being passed uncut but about half of the second being cut out<sup>13</sup>. As often happened, the remains of the two despatches were put together in reverse order. That part of the censored cable which was passed dealt with the establishment under German protection of a joint military dictatorship in the Ukraine under Generals Skoropadsky and

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Price.

<sup>13</sup> Manchester Guardian 22.5.18. Dated Moscow May 11. 'Ukraine Government'. Signed M. Philips Price.

Eichhorn<sup>14</sup>. The missing part described the strength of Kadet influence in that government and pointed out that the

"patriotic Russian bourgeoisie which stood last summer for war to bitter end against Germany and denounced Bolsheviks as German agents are now prepared to enter government established artificially by Prussian military oligarchy with object restoring land to landlords."

The uncensored cable which formed the other part of this article consisted mainly of a statement "from an authoritative source" (and as has already been noted, Price had an interview with Tchicherin on 9 May) calling for recognition of the Soviet Government by the Allies if they seriously wanted to assist Russia. This would not only give Russia the

"moral support necessary for the establishment of discipline and order"

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<sup>14</sup> As the Ukrainian Rada (see Chp. 6 F/N 7) was signing a separate peace with Germany at Brest Litovsk on 9 February 1918, Red Guards were on the outskirts of Kiev. A Ukrainian Soviet which was subsequently set up lasted for an even shorter time than the Rada, the rump of which positively welcomed the German advance into the Ukraine, which continued for some time after the signature of the treaty of Brest Litovsk. At the end of April 1918 what remained of the Rada was replaced by the Germans with a puppet government nominally under the hetman Skoropadsky but in fact a military dictatorship under the German General Eichorn. These two presided over a regime which E.H. Carr described as offering "little to the Ukrainian nationalists and nothing to the advocates of social reform" (The Bolshevik Revolution Vol. I p.299). The Skoropadsky regime survived the assassination of Eichorn (probably by Left S.R.s) in late July and lasted until the German collapse in November 1918. The situation in the Ukraine throughout this period was enormously complex and accounts of it match the situation. Carr made frequent references to the usefulness of Price's Reminiscences as a contemporary source, noting particularly pp. 162, 198-203, 233-255, 273 and 297-98 in his own section on the Ukraine during this period (Vol. I, pp. 292-300). Price does indeed appear to have taken a particular interest in the Ukraine and to have had a good understanding of the social, cultural and economic factors at work, but communications between Moscow and what can only be called the Ukrainian front in the spring of 1918 left a great deal to be desired, and when he wrote his Reminiscences Price still only had his own records on which to base his account. A clear overview of the tortuous diplomatic and military relationships between Moscow, Kiev and Berlin at this period is provided by Richard K. Debo, Revolution and Survival pp. 199-200.



but would also lay the foundation for a proper contractual relationship between the two countries in respect of supplies and trade. The policy of the Soviet government, according to the "source", was to keep Russia neutral,

"but if either of the great world groups shows more hostility than the other it may be compelled to act with the less hostile one".

The next two cables which Price sent were, in effect, an elaboration upon this theme. Both were sent on 15 May; one was published without cuts on 31 May<sup>15</sup>; the other was published on 23 May but as this is one of the few of which he did not keep a copy it is impossible to know if anything was deleted<sup>16</sup>. But both contained accounts of a debate on foreign policy in TsIK on 14 May and since they neither overlapped nor contradicted each other they will be summarised as one. On the day of the debate Price was given an interview by an unnamed but "prominent Bolshevik", who pointed out that there were "two tendencies" in the Government. One, led by Lenin and Trotsky, wanted to continue a policy of strict neutrality so long as both the Central Powers and the Western Allies, with Japan, continued to show "an equally hostile attitude". The other, led by Sokolnikov<sup>17</sup> held that

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<sup>15</sup> Manchester Guardian 31.5.18. Dated Moscow May 15. 'Russian Foreign Policy'. Signed 'From a Correspondent'.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid 23.5.18. Dated Moscow May 15 'Soviet Government. Lenin's Policy'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>17</sup> GRIGORII YAKOVLEVICH SOKOLNIKOV 1888-1939. A Bolshevik from 1905, Sokolnikov spent many years in exile, and though firmly associated with Lenin he devoted much time to attempting to reconcile the Marxist factions of the RSDLP. With Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Stalin and Bubnov he became a member of the first Politbureau and was also on the editorial board of Pravda and a member of the praesidium of Vesenkha (the Supreme Council of Public Economy). He supported Lenin over Brest Litovsk and headed the delegation which signed the final treaty. Active in the Civil War, he became Commissar of Finance in 1922 and one of the architects of NEP. From 1925 his fortunes began to decline and in 1937 he was one of the chief defendants in the show trials. He either died or was shot in 1939. There is no study of him in English, but extensive coverage of his activities appears throughout the volumes of E.H. Carr's History of

the respite gained by Brest Litovsk was over, that the military party in Germany had definitely won and that the time had come for closer contact with the Allies. Lenin, while determined, according to Price's informant,

"to keep clear of the two struggling groups of world capital till the crash should come"

had, however, conceded that if the Germans were determined to tear up the Treaty of Brest Litovsk they would find they had the Red Army to deal with. The Left S.R. leader Kamkov<sup>18</sup> had pointed out that the Germans had not scrupled to occupy the Don and the Crimea and that if the Soviet government were equally prepared to ignore the treaty by, in their case, giving aid to the Ukrainian revolutionaries they would succeed much faster in bringing about their objectives.

Sverdlov<sup>19</sup>, speaking for the Bolsheviks, claimed that the struggle

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#### The Bolshevik Revolution.

<sup>18</sup> BORIS DAVIDOVICH KAMKOV (1885-1938) was active in Left S.R. circles from an early age and forced to live in exile in France and Sweden until the March revolution. He then returned to Russia and was immediately elected to the Petrograd Committee of the party. At the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets he was elected to TsIK, and to the Central Committee of the (Left S.R.) Party at its first Congress in December 1917. He opposed the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and argued against the continuation of the alliance between the Left S.R.s and the Bolsheviks. He was involved in the Left S.R. revolt in July 1918 and continued to oppose the Soviet government, serving three years' imprisonment for anti-Soviet activity. He survived to work, in his later years, as a statistician in Voronezh.

<sup>19</sup> YAKOV MIKHAILOVICH SVERDLOV (1885-1919) joined the RSDLP in 1902 and in 1903 sided with the Bolsheviks. From then on he was ceaselessly active as an agitator and underground organiser. He remained in Russia but for much of the time until 1917 he was in internal exile, despite which he was co-opted a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party in 1912. In April 1917 he took over the Party Secretariat at Lenin's request and was largely responsible for holding the party together until the Bolshevik revolution. Appointed to the Military Revolutionary Committee he became the main link between it and the Central Committee. He was then made Chairman of TsIK in succession to Kamenev. He presided over the Constituent Assembly and supervised its dissolution. He supported Lenin over Brest Litovsk. He set up a system of provincial Secretariats to reinforce the apparatus of centralised party control. He died in March 1919. There is no biography of Sverdlov in English but a sketch of his life appears in Georges Haupt and Jean-Jacques Marie's



between the military and bourgeois parties for predominance in Germany was not yet over; the Russian revolution still had its breathing space, and should use it to create a new army and revitalise the country by discipline and hard work. As if to exemplify Sverdlov's (and the majority Bolshevik) view, a telegram had been received from Joffe in Berlin<sup>20</sup> and was read to the meeting. The telegram stated that the German government had agreed to stop the advance of their troops in the Ukraine and had admitted that the Don and the Crimea lay outside the jurisdiction of the Ukraine. After reading the telegram, the President of the TsIK had said that this did, indeed, suggest that the military party in Berlin had not yet secured the upper hand. Perhaps the most interesting piece of information buried in the texts of these two despatches sent by Price on 15 May is the fact that these differences of opinion had

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Makers of the Russian Revolution (Ithaca N.Y. 1974). The leading authority on Sverdlov is Charles Duval, author of the following articles: 'The Bolshevik Secretariat and Yakov Sverdlov: February to October 1917' Slavonic and East European Review 51 (1973) pp. 47-57; 'Iakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov: Founder of the Bolshevik Party Machine' in Ralph Carter Elwood (Ed.): Reconsiderations on the Russian Revolution (Cambridge Mass. 1976); 'Yakov M. Sverdlov and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets (VTsIK). A Study in Bolshevik Consolidation of Power, October 1917 - July 1918' Soviet Studies 3 (1979) 1 pp. 3-23.

<sup>20</sup> ADOLF ABRAMOVICH JOFFE 1883-1927. Joffe joined the RSDLP in 1902 and spent most of the next 15 years in exile in Europe or Siberia. On returning to Petrograd after the March revolution he was elected to the Soviet and became an active member of the Military Revolutionary Committee. He was Chairman of the armistice negotiations and of the first stage of the peace negotiations at Brest Litovsk. He supported Trotsky's "no war no peace" formula but did not vote against the treaty. In April 1918 he became the first Soviet Ambassador to Germany but was expelled in November for his too-visible Bolshevik propagandist activities. For the rest of his life he was given mainly diplomatic assignments. He became a close friend and supporter of Trotsky and shot himself in 1927 in protest against Trotsky's expulsion from the Communist party. There has so far been no biography of Joffe but further information about him is to be found in Louis Fischer: Men and Politics (New York 1966) and in Isaac Deutscher's The Prophet Armed (New York 1954) and The Prophet Unarmed (New York 1959).

not, apparently, emerged in the debate although their existence was clearly well-known to Price's informant. But, Price wrote, the majority Bolshevik view

"on grounds of party discipline was the only one expressed yesterday in the debate on foreign policy...The second view is held by an influential minority."

On 19, 20 and 24 May Price wrote three articles which might have been designed to illustrate Scott's leader of 11 May (see above p.256) which had emphasised Britain's Eastern interests. The first two were published in reverse order on 28 May<sup>21</sup> and 3 June<sup>22</sup>; the third did not appear at all. This was a pity, because although all three were self-contained they formed, when taken together, a remarkably comprehensive picture of what was happening on the borders of Soviet influence. The first article to be written was given the title "German Road to India", and in it Price laid out what he called the stepping-stone strategy in the Pan-German scheme of conquest. The puppet regime in the Ukraine had been the first to be established of a proposed chain of buffer states under the suzerainty of the Central Powers. The next were to be in the Caucasus: Georgia and Armenia. In all three areas German policy was to support the forces of reaction, whether landlords, mullahs or khans. In the Caucasus both the Armenian and the Georgian Volunteers had refused to accept the terms of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk which returned to Turkey important areas in the south west in which the Moslems were in a majority. The Turks had, nonetheless, occupied Batum, Kars and Ardahan. The Georgians had responded by setting up an independent

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<sup>21</sup> Manchester Guardian 28.5.18. Dated Moscow May 20 'South Eastern Russia. Conflicting Forces'. Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid 3.6.18. Dated Moscow May 19. 'German Road to India'. Signed M. Philips Price.



state of Transcaucasia, similar to the first Ukrainian Rada in that it tried to steer a middle course between invaders from abroad and agricultural reformers at home. At first it appeared to be more rather than less pro-Petrograd in orientation, but the success of the Bolsheviks in creating an independent Soviet at Baku had frightened the Georgian bourgeoisie, and the government of Transcaucasia was now dominated by Mensheviks. But Price concluded by warning the Allies not to place their hopes in the government of Transcaucasia. It was being bribed by the Central Powers, who had offered to return Batum to Georgia in return for permission to send a German expeditionary force across its territories into Persia. "The same drama is now being enacted in Tiflis as has recently finished in Kiev."

The second article set out to show how the Germans were hoping to put down another stepping stone by creating an independent state out of the mountain and steppe territories in the North Caucasus. Taking advantage of the age-old rivalry between the Cossacks, many of whom had formed themselves into Soviets after the death of Kaledin, and the mountain tribes of Daghestan, the Central Powers were stirring up trouble wherever they could. Under the influence of Pan-Islamic leaders the richer tribesmen were mobilising to resist the spread of revolutionary ideas while the poorer were more attracted by Bolshevism: class warfare complicated by religion. In the Caspian oilfields the proletariat of Armenian, Russian and Tartar descent had (he reported, inaccurately) buried their differences and formed workers' Soviets at Baku and Grosni, but the Tartar Khans surrounding them were co-operating with the Central Powers and had cut the railway from Baku to Tiflis in order to prevent Russian military

supplies from reaching the Georgian and Armenian Volunteers still holding out against the Turks in the Caucasus<sup>23</sup>. "Once again" Price concluded the article "the Bolshevik Soviets in the oilfields and the Armenian peasantry are the sole bulwarks against Turco-German Imperialism."

The third article was stopped, perhaps because it was marginally more critical of Allied policy in this area than the other two. Price pointed out in it that whereas the Soviet government had withdrawn Russian troops stationed in Persia under the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, the British had informed the Persian government, in March

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<sup>23</sup> In March 1918 a massacre of the Azerbaijani Muslim population of Baku by the city's Armenians ensured that ethnic and religious differences would continue to dominate events in that area. The Baku Soviet proclaimed itself in April 1918, while the rest of Azerbaijan joined the short-lived Independent Democratic Federative Republic of Transcaucasia. After its collapse, the Baku Soviet was seen as inimical by the residual independent state of Azerbaijan. While Turkish troops advanced towards Baku, the behaviour of (mainly Armenian) Baku Soviet troops in the course of their campaign to capture Elizavetopol further alienated support for the Soviet, and the Azerbaijani population tended to co-operate with the Turks. Although the Baku Soviet itself did not regard the Turks as a particular threat, the Armenian and non-Bolshevik Russians in the city began to look to the British for help. The Baku Soviet was disbanded in July 1918 and its members exiled. On 17 August a British force landed at Baku. This was Dunsterforce, a unit consisting of 41 cars and 1400 men under the command of General L.C. Dunsterville which had been sent to Mesopotamia in January 1918 with the object of preventing the passage of Turkish or German forces through the Transcaucasus to India, and to prevent the oilfields of Baku from falling into Turkish hands. By the time Dunsterforce reached Baku it was immediately obvious that the British forces were too small to prevent the besieging Turks from seizing the town, and within a few days it had retreated. On 15 September the Turks let Azerbaijani troops in to Baku and stood aside for two days while they took their revenge on the Armenians for the March massacres before stepping in to re-establish an independent government of Azerbaijan. One of the many damaging legacies of this episode was the fact that the British failed to prevent, even though they probably did not instigate, the shooting of the members of the Baku Soviet, after their dispossession, by the British-protected, anti-Bolshevik government of Transcaspian which was set up after the deposition of the Tashkent Soviet earlier in the year. For further reading see above Chp. 8 F/N 10.



1918, that they intended to remain. Public opinion in Persia had turned against the Western Allies once again and was divided, more or less on class lines, between supporting the Soviet Government and supporting the Central Powers. On the whole Russophil tendencies were in the ascendent.

"If England to secure confidence Persians prevent Turco-German influence spreading into east she must adopt same policy to Persia as Soviet Government namely recognise in fact as well as name Persian integrity."

Price went on to describe the danger to the Allies in Turkestan, the last of the "stepping stones", where the reactionary Emir of Bokhara was looking to the Central Powers to save him from the revolutionary Young Sart party<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bukhara was one of five independent principalities in Turkestan after the Russian conquests of the 1860s, with a population primarily of Uzbeks and Tadzhiks. The word Sart, used by Price, had no ethnic meaning and was one usually used out of ignorance by Europeans, being a word originally employed to describe merchants as opposed to nomads in the area. The feudal rule of the Emir of Bukhara, strongly supported by a fanatically reactionary Muslim clergy, began to be questioned as the result of the introduction of compulsory education throughout the Tsarist Empire early in the twentieth century, combined with the new right of the inhabitants of Bukhara to representation in the Duma. A liberal nationalist movement (Djadism) began to emerge throughout Turkestan. In Bukhara its leaders came mainly from the sons of wealthy merchant families who had sent their children to be educated in Turkey, and from Uzbek intellectuals. The Young Bukhariot movement began as an underground bourgeois-revolutionary movement between 1905-1909. As the result of the March revolution, a Soviet was set up at Tashkent which claimed to represent the whole of Turkestan. Early in 1918 the Young Bukharians attempted to get constitutional reforms from the Emir. Confronted by the extreme hostility of Islam they sent for help from the Tashkent Soviet. A brigade of troops was dispatched to reinforce their negotiations but to no avail. The Emir actually succeeded in improving his territorial position viz-a-viz the Provisional government. Many Young Bukharians then went to Tashkent and Samarkand, where they began to take part in Russian political movements, but a few remained and joined Communist cells in Bukhara. The Emir tried but failed to get recognition of the independence of Bukhara from Britain; he undoubtedly was in contact with British Intelligence at Meshed (which may have been why the reference to him in Price's article was cut). He was eventually driven out of Bukhara in 1920 by a successful combination of Young Bukharians and Communists. Bukhara was proclaimed an Independent People's Republic in 1921 but reincorporated into the Soviet Union in 1924/25. The



"In conclusion may be said if Soviet Government given adequate support it could effectively resist imperialist designs Central Powers in Asia stop No other native Russian element capable of this for bourgeois parties since events Ukraine have shown treacherous complicity with imperialist PanGermanism."

Until late in May 1918 most of the speculation about Allied intervention in Russia had been predicated upon the idea that Japan would do the intervening on behalf of the Western Allies. On 25 May Price sent a cable, most of which got into print on 28 May<sup>25</sup> about the Sino-Japanese Military Agreement which had been signed on 16 May<sup>26</sup>, under the terms of which the Japanese were later to claim they were acting when they landed in Siberia, Manchuria and the Chinese Eastern Railway zone in August 1918. This despatch is also interesting for the light it throws on the continued relative independence, at that time, of two "bourgeois" papers, Zarya Rosseya

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most detailed account of events of 1918 in Bukhara is to be found in Seymour Becker: Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva 1865-1924 (Harvard 1968), pp. 242-253, 265-268, 280-288, 292-294, 303-305.

<sup>25</sup> Manchester Guardian 28.5.18. Datelined Moscow Saturday (25 May) 'Chino-Japanese Treaty. Russian Suspicions.' Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>26</sup> The Sino-Japanese agreement of May 1918 was made at a time when the Peking government was dominated by a pro-Japanese so-called Anfu clique. It was supposed to ensure that Japan and China would take concerted military and naval action "against the common enemy". It was so unspecific that a supplementary agreement was needed in September 1918, to spell out what Japan, at least, expected from it. This was that Chinese troops under Japanese command should take part in joint operations in Transbaikalia and Amur. From the Chinese point of view the agreement was only intended to provide for co-operation if circumstances arose that required co-operation: for instance in the management or defence of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Thus it seems that the Soviet-controlled press was quite accurate in perceiving that Japan was intending to use the agreement as a fig leaf for the planned invasion of Russian territory. In fact 1600 Chinese troops entered the Maritime Province in August 1918 under the terms of the agreement and remained, as China's token participation in the Intervention, in the Kikol'sk Ussuriisk and Kharbarovsk area until the spring of 1920. See Tien-fong Cheng: A History of Sino-Russian Relations (Westport, Conn. 1957); Sow-Theng Leong: Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations 1917-1926 (Canberra 1976); John A. MacMurray: Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China Vol. 2, pp. 1411-1414 (Washington 1921).



and Svoboda Rossii<sup>27</sup>. The former, which Price said had remained consistently pro-Ally, was "bewildered" by the new situation created by the Agreement, and pointed out that Russia's vital interests were affected by it. Svoboda Rossii which Price described as having for some time been "oscillating" between a pro-German and a pro-Ally orientation, had also sounded a warning note. Price quoted from the paper:

"The desire of certain groups for foreign interference though intelligible, is unjustifiable. We can only be saved by ourselves."

Price himself thought that the Russian bourgeois press, though not welcoming the prospect of a Japanese invasion, had "taken refuge in foggy platitudes" whereas the government press saw the agreement clearly as the first step to an invasion of Eastern Siberia which would, as he put it in his summary of their view, enable

"Chinese forces to outflank the Soviet troops in the Trans-Baikal while the Japanese hold them at the mouth of the Amur."

Price went on to say that he had been informed by an authoritative source that the Government looked upon the agreement as

"a provocative attempt to force the issue in the Far East before the Soviet Government can explain the situation to the Allies."

This was a reference, as he went on to point out, to the fact that Robins had recently left for America and had, in agreement with both

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<sup>27</sup> Zarya Rosseye (Price's transliteration): Russian Dawn. The Bibliography of Periodicals of Russia 1901-1916 lists 22 newspapers the title of which began with Zarya followed by a different regional place name, none of them purporting to be all-Russian. They may well have been local versions of the same paper (as with Izvestia now). In May 1918 conditions were so chaotic that one of them may have taken the name used by Price; it is unlikely that records for that period are complete in any case. Svoboda Rossii (Price's transliteration): Free Russia. The Bibliography of Periodicals lists one paper by that name, founded in 1907. There are also a number of regional papers with the title beginning Svoboda followed by a regional place name, all founded between 1905-1908.

the Soviet Government and his own Ambassador, Francis

"undertaken to put directly before his government a picture of what has taken place here during the last six months, so that the democracies of the Allied countries may be in possession of the facts."<sup>28</sup>

So far, rather surprisingly, the cable had lost only one sentence, which referred to the cynicism of the Allies in pretending to be fighting for liberty and freedom, and that could have been an editorial cut. The whole of the last sentence, however, was not printed

"Soviet Government interprets new situation Far East as meaning that there exists in London and Washington a circle that wishes to force the pace before arrival Colonel Robins in America."

The Soviet government was right, and there is good reason for believing that this sentence was cut by the censor. Relations between and within official circles in both Whitehall and Washington appear, throughout the spring of 1918, to have been conducted at several different levels, some of them in direct conflict with others: a not unusual phenomenon. The Milner papers at the Bodleian<sup>29</sup> contain copies of a number of telegrams which passed between London and Moscow which have not been preserved in the Foreign Office archives at the P.R.O. Unfortunately most of them are

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<sup>28</sup> DAVID R. FRANCIS was appointed American Ambassador to Russia in March 1916 and remained in post until November 1918, when he was forced to leave Russia by reason of illness; he remained titular Ambassador until March 1921. Francis was a St. Louis banker who had been successively Mayor, State Governor and a member of the U.S. Cabinet but had absolutely no experience of international affairs and had, indeed, never been out of America before he took up his post at the age of nearly 80. Lockhart admitted that he was a charming old man but "he doesn't know a Left Social Revolutionary from a potato" (Memoirs p. 282). His relations with Raymond Robins are hard to decipher. By Robins' account he appears to have been accessible and reasonably co-operative. But in his own memoir Francis makes almost no mention of Robins except to record that he saw him on his way back to America in May 1918. David R. Francis Russia from the American Embassy April 1916 to November 1918 (New York 1921, reprinted 1970).

<sup>29</sup> Milner papers. The Great War. Box D4.



undated, few numbered, and none signed: almost as if a deliberate attempt were being made at the time to ensure that none of these exchanges should be taken as official policy. From these it would appear that in late April or early May Lockhart had been given the basis for an understanding with Trotsky. In what appears to be a reply to a query from Lockhart, cable No. 113 from London, dated 30 April (one of the few to be so identifiable) told him: "Policy outlined in my previous telegram still holds good and you should continue to do all that is possible to secure its immediate acceptance by Trotsky. As you know, I am endeavouring to gain full concurrence of the US government on the subject and have requested that instructions shall be sent to Col. Robins to support your efforts." The cable was unsigned and who the "I" was is likely to remain a mystery, although the voice is hardly the voice of Cecil. A cable from Lockhart to London dated 8 May referred to an agreement with Trotsky concerning the disposition of Allied stores, the export of flax to Britain and the use of Russian trawlers at Murmansk and Archangel. "These are not" observed Lockhart "actions of a German agent". But the very next day British reinforcements were landed at Murmansk. Meanwhile Robins, who left Russia on 14 May, had also been furnished with a set of proposals on the heads of a trade agreement. Both sets - or copies, if they were, as seems possible, the same - would have been in breach of the terms of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, which offers at least one possible explanation of the need for extra secrecy. The episode also suggests that Robins had indeed been given the support requested by the anonymous benefactor in

Whitehall. But by the time he reached Washington that support, for what it was worth, had apparently been withdrawn.<sup>30</sup>

After the end of May events dictated that both Price's cables and Scott's leading articles would concern themselves with other aspects of British policy in Russia, but in the last days of May both of them continued to be primarily concerned with developments, or threatened

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<sup>30</sup> The Foreign Office had known what Robins thought about the situation in Russia as early as December 1917, when his predecessor as head of the American Red Cross mission, Col. Thompson, called in and presented Sir George Clerk with a memorandum from Robins (FO 371.3018). Robins' attempts in February and March 1918 to get American recognition for the Bolsheviks (as well as help) in the hope of preventing the ratification of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk were made in some degree of co-operation with Lockhart and with the knowledge of his Ambassador. George Kennan describes these efforts at length, if sceptically, Russia Leaves the War (1956), Chapter 24. The extent of Robins' working relationship with Lockhart emerges from the Robins papers at Wisconsin (P 45935 and P 45936) and from the Lockhart Memoirs. Robins left Russia on 14 May 1918 and called on his Ambassador before he left. In his only published account of any of his meetings with Robins, Francis recorded that he had afterwards "heard" that Robins had subsequently told the Associated Press representative at Vologda and a member of the Embassy staff that if he could get one hour with President Wilson he would be able to persuade him to recognise the Bolshevik government: "I have the goods on my person". Francis added that he also "heard" afterwards the the "goods" in question were proposals offering the U.S. Government the same concessions as those which had been forced from the Soviets by the Germans at Brest Litovsk. Francis must have known this and not just "heard" it, and it certainly a fact that when Robins reach Tokyo on his way home he wrote, on 6 June, a memorandum to the American Ambassador to Tokyo which was copied to Washington and London. It was read without comment by Leeper, Gregory, Clerk and Hardinge in the last week of July 1918 (FO 371.3287). In it Robins reported that before he left Lenin had personally handed him a statement on the possibility of economic co-operation based on an inventory of resources prepared for the Germans under the terms of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk (and therefore in direct contravention of it). Robins added that it was his belief that co-operation on the lines proposed would not only enable the Bolsheviks to take a less "hard line" politically but could result in a redeclaration of war on Germany. William Hard, (Raymond Robins p. 215) recorded that on his return to the U.S.A. Robins received a message from the State Department desiring him not to talk for publication. He went straight to Washington nonetheless but the President did not send for him. Robins wrote to Wilson on 7 July and again on 8 July but received no reply (Wisconsin, P 45936). Francis' hearsay account of the message that Robins was carrying is given in his book Russia from



developments in the Far East. Scott wrote four leaders on Russian affairs between 22 and 31 May. On 22 May he noted that the terms of the Sino-Japanese agreement had not been published, and that its existence had been made

"by certain English newspapers the excuse for a renewed campaign to..let Japan go in and save Russia from Germany".

But not even the Japanese, said Scott, were going to believe that Japanese intervention in Russia would be a disinterested act. He returned to the point on 27 May:

"No one has attempted to show how Japanese troops at Vladivostock could save Moscow, or how even by advancing as far as Lake Baikal they could prevent the Ukrainian peasants from being robbed of their wheat."<sup>31</sup>

On 28 May, the same day as Price's article on the Sino-Japanese agreement was published, Scott stated that he himself disagreed with the official Russian reading of it as given by Price. He personally thought that the effect of the treaty would be to "tie Japanese policy to China rather than deflect it to Siberia", and with uncharacteristic naivete he professed to believe a "recent report" that the European Allies and America had agreed that there was to be no intervention in Siberia. He concluded by referring to "our correspondent's" mention of Robins. Price had, after all, been allowed to report that Robins was returning to America and hoped to be able to give there his own interpretation of events in Russia. All that had been cut was that there were those who hoped that he

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the American Embassy, April 1916 to November 1918 p. 302.

<sup>31</sup> Milner papers: The Great War, Box C1. On 21 May 1918 Sir Carelton Green, the British Ambassador at Tokyo, sent a report of his most recent discussion with the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had told him that if the Allies invaded Siberia the Japanese would advance to the Urals, but he conceded that "it was a military problem".

would be - as he was - overtaken by events. Scott, perhaps not knowing of the cut, wanted to believe that

"this marks the beginning of a new and better period in Allied diplomacy where Russia is concerned".

In his leaders on both 22 and 27 May Scott had made his usual plea for the de facto recognition of Russia, but in the last of the series he made recognition the main theme of his argument. In effect he accused the Foreign Office of splitting hairs over terminology.

"Surely it ought not to be beyond diplomatic metaphysic to invent a formula which, if it is not 'recognition' gives the two countries the benefits which would flow from it."

He went on:

"While we are on the subject we would beg the Government to make what arrangements are practicable for enlightening public darkness with regard to the profoundly important happenings in Eastern Europe and the borderland of Asia. A good news service is one essential."

Price did not hear of the incident at Cheliabinsk until 28 May, according to his diary, two weeks after it had occurred. On 30 May Martial Law was declared in Moscow in the face of what was seen by the Soviet Government and reported by Price on 30 May as "counter-revolutionary attempts from two quarters". It will be recalled that under pressure from the Siberian Soviets orders had been given in Moscow to re-route the Czechs still held up at on the Trans-Siberian railway. After 14 May the Czechs still held up at Cheliabinsk had decided to disregard the change of plan proposed for them and to proceed to Vladivostock anyway. The government in Moscow now ordered their immediate disarmament: an order that was, in practice, unenforceable. The Czechs then seized key points along the length of the railway and by the end of May controlled it from Samara to Irkutsk. In his cable of 30 May it is obvious that Price at that time



considered that the Czechs represented no more of a threat to the Soviet government (if also no less of one) than the formation in Kiev, under German protection of a South Eastern Alliance of Don and Kuban Cossacks and Tartars under Krasnov which he reported in the same telegram<sup>32</sup>. It is interesting to note, however, that while the very full account of the South Eastern Alliance that he sent in was passed uncensored, his reference to the Czechs was cut to the bone. He was only allowed to mention that their seizure of points on the

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<sup>32</sup> As soon as it became apparent that the Bolshevik revolution was not going to be easily reversed, Cossack military leaders still in Petrograd went down to Novocherkassk to work out with the Ataman of the Don Cossacks, Kaledin, ideas which he had already discussed with them for the formation of a South Eastern Alliance of Don, Kuban and Terek Cossacks. Their objective, as expressed by Price in his Reminiscences (p.163) was to "unite for political and military purposes the agricultural population of the black earth territories of the south east against northern Bolshevism. The Cossacks were the dominating element in it, for...they formed a privileged agrarian caste under the control of an officer corps". Price went on to point out that even on the Don they were opposed by a mainly immigrant proletariat (miners from North Russia) and by the landless peasants; moreover the Don Cossacks themselves were more concerned with the issue of their own independence than with thoughts of creating an alternative government for the former Russian Empire. This ramshackle alliance nonetheless proved to be a first focal point not only for armed resistance to the Bolsheviks over a wider ideological front, but also for allied assistance to that resistance. On 3 December 1917 the War Cabinet in London offered Kaledin virtually unlimited support, (see Chp. 7 p.197). But the Alliance quickly ran into every kind of trouble. Rumania, which should have formed its left flank, signed peace with Germany. Former Tsarist generals, notably Alexeiv and Kornilov, began to arrive at Novocherkassk with entirely different ideas from those with which Kaledin started out. It required all the diplomatic skills of Miliukov to bring about a temporary leadership triumvirate between Kornilov, Alexeiv and Kaledin. In January 1918 Red Guards and Red Sailors took the offensive in the Don and captured Novocherkassk and Rostov. Alexeiv retreated, with such forces as he had been able to muster, to the Kuban. Some of the Don Cossack regiments formed themselves into a Soviet. Kaledin shot himself (and was succeeded as Ataman by Krasnov). Kornilov was killed in action at Ekaterinodar. The South Eastern Alliance collapsed, which is not, of course, to say that the civil war on this front was anything other<sup>than</sup> just beginning. The recent literature on the civil war in Russia is considerable, but not unnaturally the South Eastern Alliance is generally seen as only one element in it, and not a very important one at that.

railway had been prompted by the order to disarm them. The censor cut:

"Soviet Government circles say they have discovered contact between certain Czechoslovak regiments and French and Japanese counter-revolutionary propaganda agitating for overthrow of Soviet Government thus making it clear that as far as Siberia is concerned Russia is threatened not by Germany but by certain of the allies stop Government is sending large forces to disarm these regiments."

On the day that those parts of this cable which were passed, were printed, (12 June)<sup>33</sup> Scott referred to it in a leader from which it is clear that he, too, was more worried about the South Eastern Alliance than about the Czechs. He pointed out that the Germans clearly had more than one motive in "setting up this new puppet" (Krasnov) since by this act Russia was deprived of access to the Black Sea. He also took up a point made by Price elsewhere in his cable: that the official German explanation for their part in setting up the alliance had been that the Soviet government was about to conclude a new agreement with the Allies, and that the Central Powers were entitled to protect their interests under the treaty of Brest Litovsk. This, commented Scott, "may not represent the facts but it represents German fears...But what are the Allies doing to strengthen the only anti-German forces in Russia, the Soviets?...Surely the least the Allies can do is to enter into direct communication with the Soviet government and find out what measures can be devised between them."

Scott's reiterated plea for common sense did not appear in print until two more cables from Price had arrived on the censor's desk.

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<sup>33</sup> Manchester Guardian 12.6.18. Dated Moscow May 30. 'To Starve Russia. Monarchist South East'. Signed M. Philips Price.



Both were stopped. The first, sent on 5 June, began with a frightening catalogue of the disparities between the needs and available resources of the Soviet government in terms of coal, wood, iron, cotton and food. Of food there were still stores in Siberia.

"But Siberian railways now torn up by Czechoslovaks who together with counter-revolution army bands financed by French and Japanese agents in Eastern Siberia are trying sever Muscovite Russia from last corn reserve...Present allies policy drift refusal recognise government of the day only makes task restoring order and mobilising what stores food remain impossible."

Price went on to summarise a report which had appeared the previous day in Izvestiya about the discovery of documents showing that

"foreign finance has been planning overthrow Soviet Government"

and that the only reason action had been delayed was because some of the officers involved were pro-German and wanted German help - as in the Ukraine - while others

"favoured rebellion in one of Volga provinces where in Czechoslovak uprising planned by French agents they should unite with Japanese forces advancing across Siberia".

On 7 June Price devoted an entire cable to the history of events leading up to the current activities of the Czechoslovaks. In his diary for 6 June he noted "Radek gives me account of C-Ss and policy of Soviet government to them". The cable, not one word of which was allowed to be printed, consists of information which has since been entirely corroborated, although it is necessarily incomplete. In order to follow the development of Price's thought it is worth quoting the last two sentences:

"I am in position assert categorically that action Soviet Government against Czechoslovaks signifies no hostile policy towards allies but was dictated solely absolute necessity secure safety Russian proletarian republic stop Soviet government is ready consult allied representatives about future of Czechoslovaks".

On 10 June, only 3 days after sending this last cable, which it was not considered in the public interest for the British to read, Price sent another piece which, in remarkable contrast, was printed in full on 26 June<sup>34</sup>. It began:

"In connection with the rumours of the impending Allied intervention in Russia on the pretext that the Soviet Government has ceded part of Murman to the pro-German Finnish Government, it would be well if the following facts were made known."

He went on to explain that although Pecheneg, on the western coast of Murman, had been ceded to the then revolutionary government of Finland in February, that government having been overthrown the Soviet government now considered the cession of Pecheneg invalid. Moreover the government had, in a Note to the German Ambassador, "energetically protested" against a recent German submarine blockade of that coast, pointing out that this was in breach of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk.

"Though not definitely saying so the Note... clearly hinted that the Soviet Government might be forced to invite the Allies to assist it in protecting the neutrality of these regions."

"Rumours of the impending Allied intervention" were, of course, well-enough founded, although it is hard to see how anyone, at that time and those conditions, could have foreseen from which direction it would first come, since the principal authors of it did not themselves appear to have made up their minds. It will be recalled that the first reinforcement of the British garrison at Murmansk had taken place on 9 May, five days before the Cheliabinsk incident. On 11 May, in what became known as the Abbeville Resolution, the Supreme War Council in Paris decided that Trotsky was to be asked to agree

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<sup>34</sup> Manchester Guardian 26.6.18. Dated Moscow June 6. 'Russia and the Allies. Protection of Murman Neutrality'. Signed M. Philips Price.



that any Czechs not already on their way to Vladivostock should be allowed to concentrate at Murmansk. On the same day the War Cabinet in London set up a Committee to consider what could be done to organise military resistance to the Germans while the endless correspondence with America and Japan dragged on. Smuts' notes of this Committee showed that earlier the same day, at the meeting of the War Cabinet which had set it up, Lloyd George had acknowledged that it would be "difficult and indeed impossible...for M. Trotsky to invite Allied intervention in Russia however much he might desire it, before an Allied force was on the spot to protect him against the enemy". Some hours later the Committee also came to the conclusion that it would be unrealistic to wait for a formal invitation to intervene<sup>35</sup>. It came to the further conclusion that it would be "inadvisable" to ask the Japanese for ships to take the Czechs to Europe "at the very time when we were pressing Japan to undertake intervention in Russia, which would absorb all her tonnage". The Committee felt that the Czechs who had already arrived in Vladivostock might be better employed "to stiffen the Japanese as part of an Allied intervention force"<sup>36</sup>. It was into this tidy solution that a brick had been thrown at Cheliabinsk.

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<sup>35</sup> Churchill believed that an invitation to intervene had been "all important in overcoming the reluctance of the United States" to do so, and that the advance of the Czechs into Siberia had provided a convenient alternative pretext. See W.S. Churchill The World Crisis. Vol. 6 The Aftermath (1929) pp. 91-95.

<sup>36</sup> FO 371.3286.

As late as 5 June the Russian Minister in London, Litvinov<sup>37</sup> told Rex Leeper of P.I.D. that if the Allies would really carry out an intervention against Germany "promptly and on a large scale sufficient to defeat the Germans...the Bolsheviks would be prepared to run the risk of what might follow the arrival of the Allies."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> MAXIM MAXIMOVICH LITVINOV 1876-1951. After a brief career as a soldier, Litvinov joined the RSDLP in 1908, and was soon forced into exile. He became extremely adept at smuggling agents and literature in and out of Russia. From 1914-18 he lived in England, where he was appointed charge d'affaires for the Soviet government in December 1917. He was arrested in September 1918 in retaliation for the arrest of Lockhart in Moscow but a mutual exchange was quickly arranged. From 1921 he became an increasingly valued member of Narkomindel, despite numerous disagreements with Tchicherin. His advocacy of disarmament at the League of Nations made him a world-renowned figure until he died, and despite his known disapproval of Cold War policies he was not persecuted. There is as yet no serious biography of Litvinov although much has been written about him. The best account of his career in English is by Henry L. Roberts in The Diplomats 1919-1939 (Ed.s Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert, Princeton, 1953). His early period as a diplomat is also dealt with by Richard K. Debo in Slavic Review Vol. 34 (1975), pp. 463-482: 'Litvinov and Kamenev - Ambassadors Extraordinary: the Problem of Soviet Representation Abroad'.

<sup>38</sup> Leeper might have used Litvinov's statement as the (unacknowledged) basis upon which he built up an argument in favour of intervention for presentation to the Advisory Committee on International Questions of the Labour Party. In June 1918 the Committee had invited Toynbee and Leeper (both in P.I.D.) to prepare memoranda on Russia and the Eastern front "with special regard to a) the Brest Peace b) the Border States c) Intervention". Leeper submitted a memorandum in July 1918 which argued that the Bolsheviks had admitted their inability to offer adequate resistance to the Germans without a trained army, to build up which they needed time. But, he went on, Germany was "already the real master of Petrograd and Moscow and has extended her control throughout the Ukraine and the Don as far as the Caucasus". Therefore it was useless for the Allies to support the Bolsheviks, and intervention was not only justified but demanded by "those Russians who desire to save their country from German control". But it would have to come via Siberia, where the local inhabitants would be unlikely to fight for the Bolsheviks. "It is true that Germany would overthrow the Bolshevik Government and occupy Petrograd and Moscow" Leeper concluded. "But the position of Russia would not be worse than at present as a result of Allied intervention, whereas the position of Siberia would be materially improved." It seems reasonable to assume that this was one of many rationalisations being discussed in Whitehall in the weeks prior to the Allied landings in August 1918. Another, unsigned, memorandum, with an excellent hand-drawn map to illustrate the argument against intervention in the Far East, is to be found in the same section of the Labour Party Archives. There is no evidence



It is even arguable that but for the brick thrown at Cheliabinsk the Western Allies could, if only more by accident than design, have drifted into a form of intervention which would have been more or less acceptable to the Soviet government. As it was, complained Cecil on 11 June, the decision to invade North Russia, now formulated

"for the first time...since it was turned down by the Admiralty in February, appears to be rather the accidental result of a rapid evolution of plans consequent on the Czechoslovak movement than a conscious stage in the process of general intervention".

This was in a typed memorandum to Balfour. A postscript written in his own hand suggests that the British weekend had also played a role in the timing and placing of intervention:

"The important decisions" Cecil wrote "appear to have been taken over the heads of the Russia Committee and perhaps the F.O. also. I certainly was never informed of them - perhaps because I was at Sandwich."<sup>39</sup>

On 23 June further reinforcements were landed at Murmansk, this time including French as well as British troops. Within a week the Allied representatives there had concluded an agreement with the Murmansk Soviet which virtually established an Allied protectorate.<sup>40</sup>

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in the Minutes of the Advisory Committee that it was ever discussed. It went much further in opposing intervention than yet another memorandum (by Brailsford) which offered routine arguments against intervention and which was discussed by the Committee. The unsigned memorandum could have been by Toynbee, who tended to specialise in the Near and Far East of Russia at P.I.D.. The Committee ended up hopelessly divided on the whole subject. Labour Party Archives, LP/1 AC/1 and Memoranda 1-80.

<sup>39</sup> FO 371.3305.

<sup>40</sup> Ullman's account of the British presence in Murmansk throughout the spring of 1918 is based on telegrams found in the Milner papers, many of which did not find their way into the Foreign Office files at the P.R.O.. Between March and June Admiral Kemp's appeal to London for reinforcements at Murmansk were apparently not being heeded, although General Poole was sent out as British Military Representative in Russia (arriving on 24 May 1918) to command any troops which might eventually arrive. Both Kemp and Poole formed a good working relationship with the Murmansk Soviet, as a result of which both went so far as to advocate de facto recognition of the Bolshevik government to London. But the apparent improvement in on-

On 11 June Price sent a cable which was printed, with significant omissions, on 2 July<sup>41</sup>, a few days after the first encounter between British and Russian troops. Many years later Price wrote:

"In this despatch I was abandoning objectivity because it was now almost impossible to be objective. I was on a knife edge and had to come down on one side or another."<sup>42</sup>

Why so much of it passed the censor is a mystery; possibly some censors interpreted their instructions more liberally than others. Price began by describing the difficulties under which the Soviet government was trying to maintain order. Bad news for the Soviet government was on the whole good news for the Press Bureau, and it is not surprising that this passage was passed. But Price was then allowed to go on to appeal specifically to British and American Labour "to prevent the canker of anarchy from rotting the structure of the Russian Revolution" and to point out that the overthrow of the

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the-spot relations was suddenly reversed by the activities of the Czechs in Siberia and by German pressure on Moscow to get the British out of Murmansk (their presence being unquestionably in breach of the terms of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk). On 15 June Lockhart received a categorical demand from Tchicherin for the withdrawal of British forces from Murmansk. On 23 June Major General M.C. Maynard landed there with 600 men and immediately set forth down the railway. Despite having received clear orders from Moscow to protest against the landings and indications that armed resistance was being prepared, the Murmansk Soviet, on 30 June, passed a resolution to defy Moscow and continue its existing co-operation with the Allies (from which, it must be said, they at that time benefited considerably in terms of food supplies). On 6 July a formal agreement on the lines of mutual co-operation was signed between the Praesidium of the Regional Soviet on the one hand, and by Poole and the captains of the French and American cruisers then in port at Murmansk, on the other. See Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol. I pp. 174-185; and Debo, Revolution and Survival pp. 267-270 and 280-288.

<sup>41</sup> Manchester Guardian 2.7.18. Datelined Moscow May 11. 'The Allies and Russia: Intervention Dangers' Signed M. Philips Price. (The Manchester Guardian dateline is obviously a misprint. Price's own copy and cable are clearly dated June 11.)

<sup>42</sup> My Three Revolutions p.127.



soviet Government would in the long run benefit only Germany. he then tackled the subject of recognition.

"We are informed here that the Allies could not recognise a government representing only one class if that class was the working class."

Yet a government

"consisting mainly of landlords, bankers, industrial capitalists and intellectuals who call themselves democrats"

and who, too, represented only one class, would somehow qualify for recognition by the Allies. If there was discontent in Russia now, Price maintained, it was not due to dislike of socialist legislation but "an elementary outburst due to famine". If the Allies succeeded in setting up the sort of government in Russia that they appeared to want

"the very workers and peasants who are now discontented with the Soviet Government on account of famine will be doubly more opposed to the Allies for class reasons...the ground will be prepared for a much more dangerous explosion".

The violent reaction of the peasants in the Ukraine, Price went on, was a case in point. This was not a national but a class rising and the same thing would happen in any district in Russia in which the Allies set up a government of Kadets and landlords who should proceed to take the land away from the peasants and crush the Labour movement.

"The days of national coalition governments in Russia are gone and the capitalist lion can no longer lie down with the proletariat lamb except under one condition - that the lamb is inside."

He concluded by warning the Allies again against attempting to set up a puppet government in Russia, for

"those who touch the social reforms of the Russian Revolution are only adding fuel to the Bolshevik flame which, though driven under ground will burst out with

even more destructive violence later."

What was left out of this cable was mainly concerned either with the Czechs or with the direct appeal that Price considered he was making to British and American Labour. After a first sentence in which he acknowledged that the Soviet Government was facing an anarchic situation, he wrote a long passage, which was suppressed, about the activities of the Czechs along the Siberian railway. The Czechs, Price tried to say, were not the innocents they were made out to be.

"It is significant that every town of Siberian railway which Czechoslovaks enter they arrest local Soviet set up local government consisting of kadets local bourgeoisie cossack officers and other opponents Soviet authority stop When at same time French military mission and diplomatic representatives allies take Czechoslovaks under their protection as they are doing it is clear that allies are deliberately supporting rebellion against Soviet Government and financing anarchy in country.

The censor then, after allowing a passage about famine and its relation to peasant discontent, stopped a passage which read:

"If allied governments have set themselves task overthrowing Soviet Government by economic isolation Muscovite Russia and utilising anarchy resulting from famine for their own ends then they are to be congratulated on being about to accomplish their object stop Nevertheless they cannot now sanctimoniously pretend that they are not interfering in internal affairs Russia and are not helping one of the two class forces against the other stop Bolsheviks have always foreshadowed this possibility and Lenin himself always said that unless British and American labour came to aid Russian revolution latter would perish.

A third passage was cut from the very end of this despatch, but this may have been done for editorial rather than political reasons, since it contained a number of hackneyed phrases about the struggle between rival groups of finance capitalists and the hopes of brighter days for troubled humanity which rather took the edge off an otherwise remarkable defence of the Russian revolution which, perhaps even more remarkably, escaped the censor's pencil.



Price later thought that this despatch may have prompted Scott to send him, on 18 June, a cable - of which no copy survives - asking him to find out whether the Soviet government was prepared to enter into economic relations with Great Britain. The chances are that at the time Scott sent off the cable Price's despatch was still stuck in the Press Bureau. But Scott would have been acting consistently with the line he had in any case been taking editorially for months: that the Allies would do well to find out what the Russian government needed if it was ever again to play a significant part in the closing stages of the war. Since outgoing cables were equally subject to censorship the Press Bureau must either have approved it or at least not dared to stop it. As soon as he received Scott's cable Price got an interview with Tchicherin and sent off a reply on 20 June which was printed almost word for word, but not until 8 July<sup>43</sup>. Price later recorded that at about this time he ran into Lockhart in the street and discussed with him the whole question of Allied aid to Russia. Lockhart confirmed that Tchicherin had said much the same to him as he had just said to Price but, wrote Price, "he doubted if anything would come of it because the pressure working for intervention was now very strong".<sup>44</sup> Lockhart was, of course, now working for it himself.

In his account of his interview with Price Tchicherin spelled out in some detail the kinds of economic aid which the Soviet government needed to re-establish industrial and agricultural productivity, and

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<sup>43</sup> Manchester Guardian 8.7.18. Dated Moscow June 20. 'How to Help Russia. Official Soviet View' Signed M. Philips Price.

<sup>44</sup> My Three Revolutions p.127.

went on to say that the Soviet government would be ready in return to export certain raw materials and to make

"certain public concessions under specified conditions. We have already made an offer to Germany to treat with us and to America, through Colonel Robins who is now on his way home. We have not yet made the offer to England simply because we do not feel assured that the words of Mr. Lockhart to us represent the views of the British Government or only his own view" [sic].

But, Tchicherin went on,

"we shall in no circumstances allow the workers and peasants of Russia to be made cannon fodder for the Allies, and the first practical step the Allies must take if they wish to help us is recognition of the Soviet Government".

Price then put his own gloss on the interview. "If the Allies intend to act" he wrote "they have, as often before in this war, decided too late". He listed the opportunities they had missed for helping rather than interfering: in the Ukraine and in the Cossack regions during the past two months. He advanced the idea that "no greater service" could be done to Russia than that the Allies should offer to mediate between the Soviet government and the Czechoslovaks

"with a view to the speedy removal of the latter to France, where they can be much more useful...The first practical help the Allies can afford is to inform all military forces which have raised rebellion against the Soviet Government that they cannot count on their support, either material or moral."

The Soviet government was, Price believed, still strong enough to organise Russia, at least that part of Russia east of the Volga, if assisted on the lines suggested by Tchicherin. But if the Allies, like the Germans, sought to bring about change by relying on the Russian bourgeoisie, they would find that

"the workers and peasants will not calmly stand by and see the restoration of the social system of Tsarism".



And even the Russian bourgeoisie, he suggested, were beginning to have second thoughts;

"the lesson of the Ukraine Kadets is being learned by their Moscow colleagues".

Price always thought that the subsequent arrival in Russia of the British Economic Mission was in some way connected with Scott's enquiry and his interview with Tchicherin. But in writing about it in later years he got the dates hopelessly confused. In any case he could not have known that the sending of the Mission had been planned in Whitehall, many weeks earlier. An account of the origins and adventures of the Mission is given in Appendix VI.

Among the last messages sent by Price of which parts, at least, got through were two sent on 14 and 21 June about Turkish annexations in the Caucasus. Only the second was printed (on 3 July) and unfortunately this was one of those of which he did not keep a copy. The two were, however, probably designed to go together. In the first, (14 June), Price gave the background to the second by describing the situation in the Caucasus as reported to him by refugees recently arrived in Moscow from that area. They had told him that the Transcaucasus Government had collapsed three weeks earlier because the Armenians had withdrawn their support when the government acquiesced in the cession of the Kars plateau and the Araxes Valley to Turkey. The Turks had thereupon advanced into Georgia and arrived within 50 Miles of Tiflis.

"This threat believed to be sign of strong imperialist party Constantinople probably led by Enver Pasha who wishes draw nationalities Caucasus southeast Russian steppes into sphere Turkish influence".

Germany had blocked the Turkish move by insisting on the creation of an independent Georgian state under her own protection. The Turks then stopped their advance into Georgia but

"there is said to be secret clause in treaty between Germany and Georgia by which latter agrees allow former transport troops through its territory".

The consolation prize for Turkey was to be creation of an Azerbaijan Tartar Khanate under Turkish suzerainty. The Turks, thwarted in Georgia, were countering by occupying the Persian province of Azerbaijan and were intending to create an autonomous province of Turkey consisting of Azerbaijan and the former Transcaucasus provinces of Baku and Elizavetopol.

"All this territory inhabited by Persian Shiites speaking Turanian dialect and its severance from Persia and formation into autonomous province of Turkey is part pan-Turanian party's policy which Germany seems for moment to be supporting against panIslamic imperialist group in Constantinople.

These events had resulted in strong anti-Turkish feeling in Persia and brought a pro-British government into power.

"Whole of Transcaucasus except one spot Baku where red flag still flying must be regarded as lost to influence allies stop Latter could have barred the way of pan-Germans into Central Asia if they had acted in time.

It is perhaps not surprising that the Press Bureau found it easier to allow the publication of the piece that Price subsequently wrote, which appeared on 3 July under the title "Dismemberment of the Caucasus", than to pass on his suggestions as to how this might have been prevented<sup>45</sup>.

On the same day (14 June) as Price sent the first of his despatches about developments in the Caucasus, he sent another account, which

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<sup>45</sup> Manchester Guardian 3.7.18. Dated Moscow June 21.  
'Dismemberment of the Caucasus'. Signed M. Philips Price.



was suppressed entirely, of the activities of the Czechs in Siberia. He noted that they were getting support from both the Siberian and the Orenburg Cossacks, and from the Cossacks of the south-eastern steppes. He recalled that he had

"more than once pointed out what basis of Cossack movements is

and that the Cossacks feared

"tide immigration peasants from Muscovite Russia as result calamitous economic state latter region...Plan of Czechoslovak rising has apparently been skillfully laid and leaders have calculated on seizing points where they could count on support wealthier Cossack population".

Price went on to report the joint declaration made on 4 June by Allied diplomats in Moscow to the effect that the Allies looked upon the disarming of the Czechs as a hostile act. He also reported Tchicherin's Note of 14 June in reply, in which he had point<sup>ed</sup> out that

"Russia neutral country and cannot allow armed forces not subjected to authority Soviet Government to exist in Russia."

Tchicherin's Note had referred to

"information in possession of Government that Czechoslovak commanders have been in close communication with agents who are trying to overthrow Soviet authority".

Price attempted to amplify Tchicherin's reference in another despatch, similarly stopped, on 28 June, in which he summarised a report which had appeared on the previous day in the Czech internationalist journal Prukopik Svobodi. This had stated that documents discovered in Moscow proved that members of the Czechoslovak National Council had received 11 million roubles and a further £80,000 for the use of regiments under the control of Council. Prukopik Svobodi had gone on to point out that if it had been true, as Czech commanders on the Siberian and Chinese Eastern

Railways had reportedly told their men, that they were being prevented from going overseas, then

"one would expect they would take steps to force their way eastwards".

The journal had also observed that while it was true that 15,000 Czech troops had now arrived in Vladivostock,

"no attempt being made send them to France Allied consuls stating there is no tonnage".

Meanwhile the Czechs remaining on the railways were

"engaged...overthrowing Soviet administration establishing their opponents in power."

On 25 June Price sent two messages to the Manchester Guardian on the same day, as he had often done before. Half of one of them was printed but the other one was stopped. The one that was stopped harked back to his earlier disclosures about the Secret Treaties, consisting of an account of Russo-Japanese relations as far back as the winter of 1914. At that time it had been agreed that the best way for Japan to help the Western Allies would be

"keeping China free German influence".

This decision had been embodied in a Russo-Japanese treaty in June 1916, said Price, of which the Bolsheviks had now found the text. A secret clause of the treaty provided for the cession to Japan of Russia's interest in the southern part of the Chinese Eastern Railway and of navigation rights on the Sangari River, despite the fact that the railway was the joint property of Russia and China and the consent of the Chinese had not been obtained. Not content with this, the Japanese had demanded, in January 1917, further compensation from the Tsarist government

"for concluding military convention with Allies especially as all other Allies had already agreed upon compensation each was to receive at close war".



The Tsarist government had apparently replied that if the Japanese wanted further compensation they would have to look for it in China.

Price added:

"Soviet Government circles here profess believe Japanese policy not changed since then."

The agreement of June 1916, with its cavalier treatment of China, was still valid but

"Soviet Government apparently desires regulate these points by agreement both with Japan and China confirming former in her concession interests under treaty without at same time infringing sovereign rights China".

The second despatch which Price sent off on 25 June was the last, which he had written on Russian soil, to be printed in the Manchester Guardian and at that it had been considerably shortened by the censor before it appeared on 11 July<sup>46</sup>. His references in it to a supposedly French-provoked rising of German prisoners of war at Irkutsk were deleted, and what remained was a precis of messages of bland assurance which the Irkutsk Soviet had sent to Moscow. The situation in Eastern Siberia was satisfactory. Semenov was retreating into Manchuria, the Trans-Baikal Cossacks were quiet, the younger generation of Siberians were supporting the Soviets and their elders were neutral. It might, with equal justice and as much irony have been headed: "All Quiet on the Eastern Front".

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<sup>46</sup> Manchester Guardian 11.7.18. Dated Moscow June 25. 'The Soviet and Siberia'. Signed M. Philips Price. (Price's diary for 24 June contains the entry "Tchicherin phones me to see him about conditions in Siberia".) Price papers.

## Chapter 9. The Censor Wins

In October 1918 an exchange of notes in the Foreign Office was headed "dangerous Activities of Mr. Price and Mr. Ransome". Stephen Gaselee contributed to this, a propos Price, "We have sometimes had to look very sharply at his telegrams to the Manchester Guardian"<sup>1</sup>. As has just been shown, Price's telegrams were being sharply looked at from at least February 1918. Evidence of the censorship of his messages throughout June was abundant. In July the five he tried to send were stopped. In August Price appears not to have tried to send anything, although one piece which appeared in the Manchester Guardian on 16 August about the new Russian Constitution might have been by him, if for no other reason that he had just translated it into English. In addition, the account would appear to have been written by somebody who took a partisan (i.e. favourable) view of it. Between 13 September and 19 October he sent ten messages by wireless. After that he appears to have given up trying.

Although there is some evidence that Price made use of the copies he kept between February and October 1918 - he occasionally quoted from them in his books - he did not appear to value them for what they are: an alternative account of the Russian revolution during most of 1918 which could have been available to his contemporaries. It is the fact that Price told them, at the time, so much of what has since

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<sup>1</sup> FO 371.3342.



been laboriously put together with industry and hindsight, that makes these despatches so interesting. In what follows all the information summarised is taken direct and uncorroborated from his messages. Everything in italics is a direct quotation. None of it appeared in print.

The message that Price sent in response to the landing of Allied troops at Murmansk on 23 June was dated 29 June. It began by recording that Tchicherin had delivered a formal protest, and that the Allies had replied by denying that they had any aggressive intentions, and protesting that the landings were necessary to keep open communications between Russia and the West which had been threatened by Finnish and German activities on Pecheneg. Price also noted that the agreement of the Soviet of the Northern Provinces to the landing was, in part, prompted by hunger and the hope of food from the Allies. On the other hand the Petrograd Soviet in which recent elections had given an overwhelming victory to the Bolsheviks, was determined to defend the territories of the Soviet Republic at all costs and had ordered troops up to Murmansk.

Allied governments appear singularly unfortunate in methods they adopt to Russia and by their recent action they seem about to create for themselves another Salonika on the Murman stop If they had recognised Soviet government in spring and treated it with ordinary civility they would have been in position now with sanction of latter to secure Murman from German aggression and would probably have obtained dominant economic position in north and centre of Russia stop But now by recognising only Soviet of Northern Provinces they accelerate process partition Russia into spheres influence and throw Muscovite Russia into sphere of Germany stop Moreover unless Allied governments understand that recognition Northern Soviets excludes all attempts interfere affairs country and to find so-called real Russia by overthrowing workers Soviets and establishing rule of landlords and local bourgeoisie as Germans and Czechoslovaks have done they will arouse fierce resentment stop It appears

certain people in England are anxious to arouse so-called healthy national feeling in Russia stop Anyone who has lived in Russia during these times knows that healthy national feeling has been here all along stop But it is a nationalism that insists that Russian land shall be given to Russian peasants who work it that Russian workmen shall be emancipated from exploitation by uncontrolled foreign capitalism and that the territories of the Russian Federal Soviet Republic shall be freed from the imperialist forces of western and central Europe that are wandering over its borders.

The next despatch that Price sent began with a dismissive reference to Kerensky's speech to the British Labour Party Annual Conference on 26 June 1918<sup>2</sup>. He pointed out that although Kerensky had been the popular hero of the revolution during the previous summer he had lost influence after the failure of the Stockholm Conference and the centre of gravity in Russia had subsequently shifted decisively to the Left.

To put up Kerensky now as representative of revolutionary Russia would be like trotting out corpse of Robespierre to lead French Revolution after he had been guillotined.

Price went on to analyse what he called

the inexorable force that drives humanity in periods of cataclysmic change.

In February he had reported that the urban proletariat were against peace while the peasantry wanted peace at almost any price.

If all allies had not hindered Soviet Government by financing rebellion against it and if they had honestly supported its endeavours to reconstruct country Russia would now be in a position to avenge Brest Litovsk.

The peace had given peasant soldiers a chance to go back to their homes,

to find land is indeed theirs and therefore now have something to fight for.

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<sup>2</sup> Kerensky made a surprise appearance at the Labour Party Conference on 26 June 1918, when he condemned the Bolshevik regime and appealed for British intervention in Russia. Michael Farbman in The Herald on 6 July summed up the occasion more in sorrow than in anger.



signs were not wanting that those who favoured peace in February were now

thoroughly aroused against German tyranny.

The anti-peace section within the Bolshevik party would gain ground if only

the allies by intervention do not prevent this healthy normal development.

The Left S.R.s were also gaining ground, and Price recalled that although they had broken away from the right wing of the party in the autumn of 1917 and made common cause with the Bolsheviks, particularly with regard to the confiscation of land for the peasants, they had parted with the Bolsheviks on the issue of Brest Litovsk. The Left S.R.s believed in

war with all imperialist governments and under no circumstances agree compromise on vital questions of principle of revolution.

Price added prophetically:

Upon them in fact has fallen mantle of the terrorists.

He then reported an interview which he had had the previous day with one of the Left S.R. leaders, Sablin<sup>3</sup>, who had told him that at the forthcoming 5th All-Russia Congress of Soviets the Left S.R.s were going to try to secure the renunciation of Brest Litovsk. Asked by

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<sup>3</sup> YURI VLADIMIROVICH SABLIN (1897-1937). Born into an aristocratic family with revolutionary traditions, Sablin joined the army in 1916 and after the March revolution was elected to the Moscow Soviet of Soldiers Deputies. In the November revolution he was a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and soon afterwards was elected to the Central Executive Committee of the 4th All-Russian Congress of Soviets. He is thought to have resigned in protest against Brest Litovsk, and he took part in the attempted Left S.R. coup in July 1918, for which he was arrested, tried, sentenced and amnestied. He joined the Communist Party in May 1919 and fought on three Civil War fronts. He went on to become a military academic and one of the founders of the Soviet Air Force. He was executed during the Stalinist purges but has been posthumously rehabilitated. Very little has been written about him in English. he is mentioned by John Erickson in The Soviet High Command (New York 1962) and by B.H.

Price about Left S.R. reaction to the Allied landings Sablin had replied that they were at one with the Bolsheviks in resisting imperialist aggression to the last man. Price said that in the Left S.R.s he now found the spirit of 1812, and that

rebellion will be raised against all who invade Russia

whether as

unblushing counter-revolutionaries

like the Germans in the Ukraine, or the

so-called supporters so-called real Russia

favoured by the Allies in the Murman and Siberia. The Allies would not find support anywhere: neither among the proletariat nor among the poor peasants nor among the better-off peasants. They could rely only on the Right S.R.s.

One is therefore tempted to ask what the allies intend to do where when they decide to intervene and whether they have any idea of how to deal with the internal social problem in Russia which they must tackle if once they set out on their dangerous adventure stop Allies are sowing dragons teeth in Eastern Europe which will some day grow into bayonets which may be directed in direction they least desire.

Price was present throughout the proceedings of the 5th Congress which opened on 4 July. In My Three Revolutions he devoted more than six pages to the attempted Left S.R. coup which took place during this Congress because he thought its importance had been insufficiently recognised by most writers up to the late 1960s. "Moreover I was one of the few people who saw the whole affair at close quarters, but I never succeeded in reporting anything about it to the Manchester Guardian"<sup>4</sup>. This was not for want of trying; he

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Liddell Hart (Ed.) in The Red Army (New York 1956).

<sup>4</sup> My Three Revolutions pp. 119-126. The planning, execution and political consequences (in terms of both internal and external politics) of the attempted Left S.R. coup is described in considerable detail by Debo in Revolution and Survival pp. 311-331,



sent off four despatches about the Congress, but all were stopped.

In the first, dated 4 July, he reported that Joe Fineberg<sup>5</sup>, whom he

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drawing largely on Russian sources. His account of the proceedings of the Fifth Congress up to the time of the murder of Mirbach tallies closely with that given by Price in the first of his four censored telegrams. However Debo goes on to concern himself entirely with the political consequences of the event; he does not return to the Congress. Price on the other hand continued to record its activities for the remainder of its sessions, including the passing of the new Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R., in three more articles which the British public did not get a chance to read. Price also described both the Congress and the coup graphically in his Reminiscences pp. 313-326. The account in My Three Revolutions is essentially a condensation of that, with a few more personal recollections of the occasion added.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph (or John) Fineberg, (born Zhokin) in Poland in 1886 was brought to England by his parents at the age of 18 months. He became an East End tailoring worker and a member of the B.S.P., in which he became increasingly associated with the opposition to Hyndman's attitude to the First World War. Fineberg was a member of the Executive of the B.S.P. from 1914-1917 and a regular contributor to its journal The Call from its first edition in 1916. He was one of the 3 B.S.P. members to be elected to the Provisional Committee set up to carry on the campaign for the formation of Soviets in Britain after the Leeds Convention of June 1917. In February 1918 he became Litvinov's secretary and in July arrived in Russia just in time for the 5th All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Two articles by him appeared in the (British) The Call on 18 July and 5 September giving accounts of life and political events in Moscow at that time which are unique in the English language. He quickly became involved in propaganda and journalism and in his own contribution to Reminiscences of V.I. Lenin (Moscow 1960 pp. 205-209) stated that in 1918-1919 he was "busy editing leaflets and a small newspaper The Call which were to be distributed amongst British and American intervention troops in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and other places". It is also clear that he had considerable freedom of access to Lenin and accompanied many if not most English-speaking visitors to Lenin, including Price. Among Lenin's letters is one written to Tchicherin early in May 1920 asking him "and Fineburg" to look through the draft of his Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder and let him know if there were "any mistakes or errors of tact". (Lenin: Collected Works, English Translation, Vol. 4 p. 371). Fineberg took an active part in the preliminary work of setting up the Third International and endorsed in the name of the B.S.P. the manifesto which paved the way for its first meeting although he had no mandate to do so and the B.S.P. did not, in fact, affiliate to the Comintern until the autumn of 1920. From 1925-1926 he was TASS Correspondent in Peking. Fineberg is known to have worked for the Comintern until 1935 and survived for another twenty years. See also The Internationalists (Moscow 1961) pp. 180, 227, 544-548, 555, 556. Reminiscences of V.I. Lenin appears to have been published originally under the title Lenin and the International Workers Movement: Reminiscences (Moscow 1934). There



had met for the first time two days earlier, opened the proceedings by reading a resolution from the British Socialist Party demanding that the Allies cease interfering in the internal affairs of the Russian revolution. He was followed by a delegate from the Ukrainian Peasants' Soviet, who described what the Germans were doing to the Ukrainians and what the Ukrainians were doing to drive them out. This had brought loud denunciations of Brest Litovsk from the Left S.R.s, who then attempted to get the delegates to the Ukrainian Soviet accepted as members of the conference. But this had to be turned down under the terms of the treaty, which declared that the Ukraine was not within the jurisdiction of the Soviet Government. Trotsky had then come forward to allege that both Pan-German and Allied agents were working in the Ukraine to induce Soviet troops to take action before they were ready. A furious debate then took place in which the Left S.R.s Kamkov and Spiridonova<sup>6</sup> called for action against the Germans while the Bolshevik president of the Petrograd Soviet, Zinoviev, called for restraint. Price reported him as having said:

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are also references to Fineberg in Walter Kendall: The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-1921 (1969).

<sup>6</sup> MARIA ALEKSANDROVNA SPIRIDONOVA (1884-1941). A socialist revolutionary since 1905, Maria Aleksandrovna Spiridonova mortally wounded a Tsarist official in 1906 and was condemned to death, a sentence subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life. She returned to European Russia to attend the 3rd Congress of S.R.s in May 1917 and became a member of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Central Executive Committee of the All Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, of which she later became President. She supported the Bolsheviks at the 2nd and 3rd Congress of Soviets, her support including the ratification of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, but in the summer of 1918 became more anti-Bolshevik, mainly because of policies towards the peasants. Implicated in the Left S.R. coup of July 1918, she was given a one-year sentence. From 1920-1928 periods of internal exile alternated with periods of imprisonment, house arrest and treatment for tuberculosis. She is thought to have been killed in prison in 1941 at Orel by Soviet authorities as the German armies approached the city. There is one biography in English:  
I. Steinberg: Spiridonova - revolutionary Terrorist (London 1935).



We see at our doors crimes of Germans in Baltic provinces but we have sufficient revolutionary discipline to know when and how to strike

Trotsky had supported Zinoviev:

We must not allow independent regiments at front to decide question of war and peace for that power belongs only to this conference stop Disorderly band (partisan) warfare is tactic of political impressionists and not of statesmen.

Trotsky had then proposed a resolution insisting on discipline. The resolution was adopted by the Congress but the Left S.R.s left the hall in protest. Price concluded this cable by suggesting that although the country was deeply divided

as to tactics to adopt over question struggle against Brest Litovsk...apparently Bolsheviks have learned from Governments of Germany and the Allies how to unite their people the masses against external danger by appeal to patriotism.

On 8 July Price sent his second message about the 5th Congress. He reported that on the second day the Left S.R.s had returned and taken part in a debate on the report of the Council of People's Commissars on government policy in the past three months.

Nevertheless even on second day it was clear breach Left S.R.s and Bolsheviks was widening every hour.

In the morning they opposed on ideological grounds the Bolshevik policy of using force to extract food from the richer peasantry on the grounds that it would result in civil war. Even Left S.R.s still wanted to be seen in their historical role as representatives of the peasantry,

which they recognise as separate class in community

wrote Price. But

in matters concerning foreign relations...part of Left S.R. leaders have fallen under influence certain terrorist groups...Tactics of Socialist Revolutionaries as matter fact have always been distinguished by spasmodic outbursts of terrorism stop Present condition Russia crushed between two armed alliances produces feeling hopelessness and despair which inevitably reacts upon certain unbalanced intellectual minds.

The intrigues of German agents and the behaviour of the Allies had all

helped to prepare ground for this terrorist group.

Price referred almost casually to the assassination of the German Ambassador during the lunch-hour<sup>7</sup> and quoted Lenin's statement after the liquidation of the attempted Left S.R. coup of which the assassination had been part as the epitome of revolutionary realism:

The revolution (said Lenin) with extraordinary consistency brings to a logical end every one of its stages mercilessly exposing the stupidity and criminality of those tactics which are unsuitable to the given moment.

Price concluded this despatch with a summary of the Bolshevik position:

They see that material forces are not at their disposal which enable them to fight against military power central empires with few guerilla bands armed with hand grenades while governments of England and France continue to finance counter-revolutionary organisations in their rear and occupy as much territory of the Republic as they are capable stop Lenin's great speech on Friday was entirely devoted to need of realising what is and what is not practical for Russian revolution surrounded by whole world in arms against it stop On other hand tragedy Left Socialist Revolutionary party who apparently have not sufficient balance of mind to resist sacrificing themselves on altar of terrorism is much regretted by Bolsheviks for the two parties have worked together in more or less close union for many months stop Now Bolsheviks are quite alone and upon them rests superhuman task of bearing the cross of the revolution against armed camps of Europe until democracies of other lands awake.

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<sup>7</sup> Price was lodging at this time "not more than 100 yards from the German Embassy" and "On leaving my lodging near the end of Arbat about two o'clock to return to the afternoon sitting of the Congress I heard two loud explosions followed by what seemed to me to be revolver shots". (Reminiscences p. 322). Debo in (Revolution and Survival p. 316-317) gives an account of the assassination of Mirbach which suggests that Price misremembered the order in which the sounds occurred and his sources are, of course, a great deal more reliable than Price's aural memory. In fact the assassin Bliumkin first fired a pistol shot which mortally wounded the Ambassador; he then threw a bomb into the room to cover his retreat as he was leaving.



(The fate of this message is unusually well-documented, and is dealt with in Appendix X because it illustrates the problems experienced by the British Censor in dealing with messages sent by wireless.)

On 10 July Price sent off a very short piece describing how quickly life had returned to normal after the attempted Left S.R. coup and how well the troops had behaved towards the civilian population. The Congress had resumed its work and had been discussing food production. The situation in central Russia was still critical but an excellent harvest was expected. On the last day of the Congress (11 July) Price sent a report of its final act, the passing of the Constitution of the Russian Federal Soviet Republic. He noted briefly who had the right to vote and who had not under the new constitution; only those with the right to vote had the right to bear arms but they would also be liable for military service. Private property in land had been abolished but it was recognised that the products of labour on the land were the property of those who had produced them. Railways, waterways, mines and banks had been declared state property. Price reported that about half the S.R. delegates had taken part in this last session of the Congress, having disassociated themselves from those who had been responsible for the attempted coup. Price gave his own characteristic explanation of the defection of the Left S.R.s:

These delegates represent richer corn producing districts central Volga where peasants fear requisition food stop Thus position analagous to that created by defection of Girondists from national convention in French Revolution stop Urban proletariat and poorer peasantry now becoming controlling factors in government here.

A copy of one of Price's messages to the Manchester Guardian sent at some time during the summer of 1918 is undated: the only one. It makes no mention of the Allied landings (which is not surprising since he must have guessed by then that nothing he said on that subject would ever be printed) but neither does it mention any of the events which he dealt with in the next series of messages that he sent, beginning 13 September. This suggests that the undated piece should be placed in the second half of August. It continued, predictably, to deal with one of the main preoccupations of that period in Russia: food. The piece began with a brief account of the rationing system operating in Moscow and of the food-gathering expeditions which Trades Unions and Shop Stewards Committees in the industrial cities were sending to the provinces<sup>8</sup>. Price was well placed to describe what was going on in the villages within walking distance or a short railway journey from Moscow, because by now he was food-gathering himself.

Each industrial union takes a province and sends some of its workmen to take...trainloads of manufactured goods to peasants and receive in return food for working population of towns stop Peasants readily part with their produce under these conditions and this process natural exchange has effect of doing away reducing issue of fresh currency stop These workmens food expeditions are also organising so-called committees of poor peasants in villages to requisition stocks from rural speculators stop Last week I was in rural district of neighbouring province and found that these committees...are almost entirely controlling the peasant soviets and are organising village schools where there had been none before lectures reading room public restaurants in provincial towns stop In some places I found interesting experiments in creation of agricultural communes among urban workmen recently returned to villages stop Land is worked in common and produce divided equally among members stop Soviet government gives loans to them for development scientific agriculture by modern machinery and manures but scarcity latter greatly hinders successful

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<sup>8</sup> See above Chp. 6 F/N 37.



development stop Most of these communes are founded on the domains of the now dispossessed landlords.

On 1 August 1918 Price began work as a translator at Narkomindel (see below p. 318). The Allied landing at Archangel took place the next day. His response to it is not to be found in any attempted message to the Manchester Guardian but in his pamphlet The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia which will be dealt with in Chapter 10. By the date of his next attempt to send anything to his paper, Uritsky, the Bolshevik Chief of Police, had been assassinated; an attempt made on Lenin's life; the British naval attache Captain Cromie had been killed defending the former British Embassy buildings in Petrograd; Lockhart was shut up in the Kremlin; the Red Terror was in full force; and Britain had threatened to get Russia declared outlaw by the entire international community<sup>9</sup>. On 13 September

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<sup>9</sup> On 5 August 1918, the day after the Allied landings at Archangel, the Cheka arrested and interned 200 French and British residents in Moscow and all the members of the British Consulate General staff except the Consul-General himself, Oliver Wardrop. Realising they could now no longer protect their nationals the Allied consulates took down their flags. British interests were given into the charge of the Netherlands Minister in Petrograd: Oudendyk. Although diplomatic relations had not been formally broken off, the internees were used by the Soviet government as bargaining counters with which to get Litvinov and his staff out of England, and for the return of Russian soldiers serving in France. On 30 August the head of the Petrograd Cheka, M.S. Uritsky, was shot dead by a military cadet and in the evening of the same day Lenin was shot and severely wounded by Dora Kaplan, a young Left S.R. Next day an armed mob broke into the British Embassy building in Petrograd. One of its few remaining occupants, the Naval Attache Captain F.N.A. Cromie, attempted to block their way and killed two of the mob with his pistol before he was himself killed. When news of this reached London Litvinov and his staff were put under preventive detention in Brixton Prison until all British representatives in Russia should have been allowed to leave. Balfour sent a telegram demanding immediate reparations and the punishment of those involved in the killing of Cromie. He threatened that in the event of any further violence against a British subject the British government would hold the members of the Soviet government individually responsible and would "make every endeavour to secure that they shall be treated as outlaws by the governments of all civilized nations and that no place of refuge shall be left to them." This was sent on 4 September, the same day that Lockhart, who had already been briefly arrested and imprisoned once early in August, was arrested again, this time on charges involving him in a major Allied conspiracy (see below F/N 11 on the Lockhart Plot). Outside the relative safety of the area of

Price attempted to send off three numbered articles, all of which naturally ended on the censor's desk, and which are in marked contrast to the frenzied style of what was actually being printed in the British press at that time about events in Russia<sup>10</sup>.

The first despatch began:

According to foreign press received here it seems imagined western Europe that Russia is passing through continuous nightmare horrors stop In actual fact life in Moscow going on much as usual.

He went on to admit that food was short

thanks to those who have occupied Ukraine Siberian granaries

and that many industries had closed down for lack of raw materials

for Czechoslovaks have cut off cotton supply and British in Baku cut off oil fuel.

Nevertheless substitutes were being found in some instances, and productivity was improving

result stricter labour discipline.

Price then continued his running commentary on the problems of the villages, now becoming crowded by the return of semi-skilled industrial workers for whom there was no work, and who were belatedly demanding their share of the land. These people also tended to be the most politically active in the villages, running the Committees of Poorer Peasants and ousting grain speculators. He reverted to the theme of agricultural communes.

In several districts one hears that they have started co-operative agricultural communes to work landlords domains in opposition to system of mediaeval

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diplomatic harassment, the more dreadful events of the Red Terror now began to take place. Price gave his account of these days on pp. 334-337 of his Reminiscences. For his attitude to the Red Terror, see Chapter 10 below.

<sup>10</sup> For an extended footnote on what a sample of the British press were writing about Russia in September 1918 see the end of this



rural commune which older general peasants still cling to with its primitive threefield system and antiquated methods distribution.

He referred briefly to the theoretical preference of the Bolsheviks for state farming, and to the problem of dealing with

a backward peasantry whose only idea is grab divide land regardless loss productivity.

Until that question was resolved, said Price, there could be no alleviation of the famine.

That is the most important internal problem Russia present moment

Having said that, Price surprisingly began the second instalment of the series with the statement:

While agrarian problem is in process of solution

and went immediately into a short account of Lockhart's implication in a counter-revolutionary plot. His account does not differ in essence from that given in Lockhart's own Memoirs of a British Agent<sup>11</sup>. Price merely commented:

The Bolshevik leaders have not had ten years of underground revolutionary training for nothing...Moscow public seems to have come to conclusion that British diplomats if they intend continue these tactics should become more adept at the art.

He went on to note the discovery of yet another counter-revolutionary plot which involved the blowing up of the main railway bridges

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chapter.

<sup>11</sup> Lockhart's own account of the "plot" is given in Chapter 9 of his Memoirs. New light was shed in 1971 by Debo, with access to newly available Russian archives as well as at the Public Records Office. In an article "Lockhart Plot or Dzerzhinski Plot?" (Journal of Modern History Vol. 3 (1971) pp. 413-419) Debo suggests that Lockhart began to listen in May 1918 to the agents of Boris Savinkov, the S.R. turned counter-revolutionary and through them, made contact with "The Centre". This was a Moscow organisation with links to both Savinkov and Alexeiv, which Lockhart now began to finance. Meanwhile Chekist agents directed by Dzerzhinski succeeded in convincing the British naval attache, Cromie, as well as Lockhart himself, and the British agent Sidney Reilly, that they could secure the surrender of the Latvian regiments which now provided the only organised force defending the North West. The murder of Uritsky and the attempt on Lenin's life by Left S.R.s compelled Dzerzhinski to spring his trap prematurely.

leading to Petrograd<sup>12</sup> and pointed out that

outcome these plots has been to increase measures repression against bourgeoisie and former officers.

He admitted that hostages were being taken by the Bolsheviks and that

a few wealthy British French subject have been arrested on suspicion financing counterrevolution.

(Price did not evade the moral issues posed by the Red Terror, but dealt with them, in the main, in the course of his propagandist writings (see Chp. 10).) He concluded this article as abruptly as he had begun it with the only reference he seems ever to have made to

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<sup>12</sup> On 4 September René Marchand, Petrograd Correspondent of Le Figaro, addressed a letter to the President of the French Republic, M. Poincaré. In it he claimed that he had always been a convinced anti-Bolshevik and had supported intervention "without the Bolsheviks and in spite of them" in order to help the Russian people to "shake off the German yoke". But he had observed "with anguish" that in recent months the Entente governments had become involved in Russian internal affairs in such a way as to increase the suffering and distress of the Russian people. He adduced in proof that he had been present at a meeting held on 23 or 24 August between the Consul-General of the U.S.A. and France together with a number of other Allied agents whom he did not know, from whose conversation among themselves he learned of plans to blow up the railway bridges leading into Petrograd and for derailing trains on various lines, to bring about "the complete starvation of Petrograd". He added that throughout these discussions "not a word was said about the war against Germany". He said that he knew that Allied agents were actively searching for documents which would prove that there was an alliance between the Soviet and German governments: an alliance which, Marchand pointed out, was inconceivable because it would not only be contrary to the Soviet government's own interests but would also compromise it in the eyes of international socialism. Marchand pointed out that anti-German sentiment in Russia was increasing to such an extent that Germany was having to reinforce her army in the occupied areas and even to extend the areas occupied. He pointed to German atrocities in the Ukraine and to Bolshevik support for anti-German partisans. Bolshevism had massive support, not only in Moscow and Petrograd but throughout Russia. Every attempt to overthrow the government not only intensified the sufferings of the Russian people but dissipated "ENERGIES WHICH COMBINED MIGHT ALREADY PERHAPS HAVE BEEN TURNED VICTORIOUSLY (Marchand's emphasis) against an enfeebled and increasingly powerless Germany". A copy of this letter came into the hands of the Soviet authorities during a house search and they published it in Izvestia. A precis of it among the Price papers, and made on the typewriter Price was using at that time, suggests that he may have considered trying to send a much fuller account of the Marchand letter to the Manchester Guardian than what he included in his cable.



the British practice of calling up Russian citizens in Britain for military service. This, he said, was

bitterly resented working class population here

and he concluded by suggesting that if the British government seriously desired to protect British subjects in Russia they should cease conscripting Russian subjects in Britain<sup>13</sup>.

The third of the articles which Price sent off on 13 September dealt entirely with the civil war and needs to be put into its context. In the spring of 1918 there were, for a time, only two serious contenders against the Soviet government: Krasnov and Denikin (Alexeiv having died). Although the British were assisting Semenov in the Far East he was, as has been noted, little more than a bandit, and the alternative governments of Horvath/Kolchak in that area had yet to develop. In the South East, however, Denikin's Volunteer Army and the Don Cossacks represented a real if momentarily latent threat. This was slow to emerge because the two leaders could not agree on a

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<sup>13</sup> As noted above in Chp. 5 F/N 13, a Russian Political Prisoners and Exiles Relief Committee had been set up in London in the summer of 1915 in which Tchicherin played an active part. After the introduction of conscription in Britain the Committee became wholly engaged in preventing the conscription into the British army of Russian emigres, who were given the alternative of being returned to Russia to do military service there despite the fact that they were, overwhelmingly at that time, political refugees from the Tsarist government. The Secretary of the Committee was Mrs. Mary Bridges Adams (see Dictionary of Labour Biography Vol. 6) and its chief spokesman in the House of Commons was Joseph King. On 24 June 1918 King pointed out in the House of Commons (Hansard, col.s 765-771) that there were about 25,000 Russians of military age in Britain, the great majority of which were doing useful war-related work in the clothing and woodworking trades. Some 5,000 had already been conscripted but although Russia had since gone out of the war, the government were continuing to call them up. King also drew attention to the unfairness of the government's exemption policy. Of the 13,000 Italians of military age in Britain (mainly working in the catering trade) no less than 3,000 had been exempted from military service, whereas only 1,500 Russians had been exempted, out of a total nearly twice as large.

common strategy. Denikin remained pro-Entente; while hoping and waiting for help from the British he regrouped his forces in the Kuban, on the east side of the Sea of Azov. Krasnov meanwhile positively acquiesced in the German occupation of the Ukraine and accepted material help from the occupiers.

What galvanised both these hitherto ineffective oppositional groups into something like co-ordinated action was progress of the Czechs. In May those of them who were not already proceeding eastwards along the Trans-Siberian railway turned westwards into the Volga provinces. In collaboration with the Orenburg Cossacks under Dutov they captured Samara in June and Kazan in August. In the same month Denikin improved his control of the area between the Black Sea and the Caspian by capturing Ekaterinodar as well as the Black Sea port of Novorossiisk. The British landed their small force at Baku. Krasnov took Novocherkassk and then turned north into the province of Voronezh. The British and American forces just landed at Archangel advanced down the railway towards Vologda and up the Dvina towards Kotlas. At the end of August only a narrow strip of land lay between the Allies coming from the north, the Czechs from the east, and the counter-revolutionary generals from the south. In the Far East the Americans and Japanese declared a protectorate over Vladivostock. The opening words of Price's third article written on 13 September reads like the triumph of wishful thinking:

Work of creating revolutionary army for war on Archangel Murman Volga Don North Caucasus fronts is steadily proceeding.



The bulk of the population was so preoccupied by famine, he said, that

they are almost apathetic to war

but compulsory military service had been decreed

for all urban rural proletarians who do not hire labour and sons of former propertied classes are being mobilised into labour battalions in rear...The whole object of training is to create and intensify class consciousness and make the army political weapon of working classes.

Price then referred to the presence in the Red Army of a number of German and Austrian prisoners and refuted any allegation that they were German agents<sup>14</sup>

They are all internationalists who have accepted Russian citizenship

he wrote, and pointed out that the German government had protested as far back as May that these "prisoners' regiments" were

carrying on revolutionary propoganda and preaching rebellion against German Government.

He went on to state that the Bolsheviks had succeeded in improving the performance of the Red Army in a remarkably short space of time, and noted that revolutionary agitation in the Volga district had begun to be effective.

Peasants responding to mobilisation orders as soon as they see that in territories occupied by Allies and Czechs land is given back to landlords.

Considerable successes had also been announced from the Don and Kazan fronts and in the previous week three Cossack regiments had deserted Kraznov.

All Don at present seems to be in a state of revolutionary ferment.

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<sup>14</sup> See Chp. 7 F/N 39.

On 4 October Price sent off three more despatches, one of which was entirely about developments in Bulgaria, which had come out of the war on 29 September. The remaining two of the 4 October series dealt with the internal situation in Russia and the civil war. There was good news to report from the Volga front, where the Red Army had begun to drive back the Czechs<sup>15</sup>. Russian Cossacks and peasants who had joined Czech regiments were now deserting them, and Price reported that Trotsky had

publicly thanked Czechoslovaks for service they had done revolution

by demonstrating so clearly what the consequences of a successful counter-revolution were likely to be:

a regime which reminded everyone of the worst years of Alexander Third's<sup>16</sup> reign stop As a result Red Army has found on its return population very much more revolutionary than when it left.

Price then turned to Archangel front and described the treatment of English prisoners who had recently been taken. Among the benefits these men were receiving from their captors he wrote was

plenty of suitable literature in keeping with present political conditions in Russia.

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<sup>15</sup> In September 1918 Trotsky's efforts to recreate an effective army began to bear fruit. On 17 September the Red Army recaptured Kazan and on 9 October Samara. A month later the European war ended. Price barely referred again, in any of his other articles, to the civil war in Russia which was to continue for more than the next two years.

<sup>16</sup> After the assassination of Alexander II his son set out to institute what would have been a considerable counter-reformation had it been successful. The main elements of his policy were: changes in the system of elections to zemstvos favouring the gentry; increased censorship; a retrogressive education policy; increased Russification and increased anti-Semitism. The effects of his reign are described by Peter A. Zaionchkovsky: The Russian Autocracy under Alexander III (Edited and translated by David R. Jones, the Russian Series Vol. 22, Florida 1970); Heide W. Whelan: Alexander III and the State Council: Bureaucracy and Counter-Reform in Late Imperial Russia (Rutgers 1982); Norman Naimark: Terrorists and Social Democrats: The Russian Revolutionary Movement under Alexander III (Harvard 1983).



This must have been written tongue in cheek, since by then Price himself was producing much of the literature in question (see Chp. 10). He concluded this piece with a brief reference to the reaction of Chinese and Korean labourers on the Urals front

who on hearing of Japanese invasion of Siberia have formed regiments for Red Army stop Feeling against Japanese ruling class very high among these workmen<sup>17</sup>

In his third message of 4 October Price noted a

marked abatement in measures repression against counter revolutionary elements

in the past week, which he attributed to a combination of increasing confidence on the part of the Soviet government and increasing

hopelessness which has apparently overcome Russian bourgeois class in chances of overthrowing its enemy stop While there have been cases particularly in provinces where local soviets have taken former landlords and officers as hostages and have shot them in reply to attempts on lives Bolshevik leaders still in main repressive measures of government have taken form of arrests suspected persons and shooting only those found guilty of counterrevolutionary plots.

Price went on to note that in taking hostages the Bolsheviks had done no more than the Czechs had done in Ufa, where they were holding the wives of a number of Bolshevik commissars whose release were being

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<sup>17</sup> As a consequence of the very late and very rapid process of industrialisation in the Urals, particularly in the years 1913/1914, an extreme shortage of manpower developed in the area. As a result factory managers were allowed to recruit labour not only from other parts of Russia but from as far afield as Harbin, which accounted for the presence in the Urals industries of a noticeable number of Chinese and Korean workers. Although as a percentage of the total workforce their number was not great - less than 5% - in certain industries, notably the mining and metallurgical industries, they formed a higher proportion of the workforce than in others, and higher than the proportion for which they accounted in the region as a whole. See O.I. Laskova, 'Chislennost' Sostov Ural'skii Rabochi 1910-1914' g.g. ('Numbers and Composition of the Urals Workforce'), Akad. Nauk, Istoricheski Zapiski. (Akad. Nauk, Historical Notes) Vol. 67, p.268. See also Central War Industries Committee: Report for 1917 on the Workforce, Moscow 1917; Lenin Library, microfilm. I am indebted for this information to Mrs. Sue Causey.

negotiated by a member of the Friends Relief Unit, E. St. John Catchpool<sup>18</sup>. But

Enemies Soviet government seem to have gone out of their way to give (Bolsheviks) pretext for repressive measures.

The piece concluded with another summary of Marchand's letter to President Poincare protesting against Allied counter-revolutionary plots, which he adduced to illustrate the last point.

The next (and penultimate) message that Price sent to the Manchester Guardian from Russia is dated 11 October and begins

Events in Germany and Balkans being watched here with intense interest and unbounded enthusiasm<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> E. St. John Catchpool was a Quaker and a Conscientious Objector who originally went to Russia in the spring of 1916 to do relief work among refugees from the Polish front, but found himself diverted to Armenia instead. He met Price in Tiflis in 1917 and it was he who subsequently introduced Price to Count Sergei Tolstoy, in whose house Price and Catchpool shared a room in the summer of 1918. (Letter from Catchpool to Price, 8 July 1964, Price Papers.) The Turkish offensive in the spring of 1918 compelled the British and American relief missions based at Erivan to withdraw to Baku, and from there Catchpool went to Moscow, where he worked with homeless children. In the late summer of 1918, as the Red Terror was just beginning and with it the practice of hostage taking on both sides, Catchpool volunteered to go to Ufa on a mission to secure the release of the wives of a number of prominent Bolsheviks being held hostage there. He received every support and help from Tchicherin, and his attempt, which appeared at one point to be about to succeed, is chronicled in his book Candles in the Darkness (1966) pp. 47-64. A noteworthy feature of his account is the ferocity of the French officers who appeared totally to dominate the Czechs, who were doing most of the fighting in that area. See also A.E. Backhouse, W.A. Kennedy M.D. and E. St. John Catchpool: In TransCaucasia, a pamphlet published by the Armenian Refugees (Lord Mayor's) Fund, London 1918, (The Library of the Society of Friends, Box 380/10).

<sup>19</sup> The most significant of these events must have been the appointment, on 4 October, of Prince Max von Baden as Imperial Chancellor. After Bulgaria came out of the war on 29 September, with the Turks collapsing in Mesopotamia and Allied troops at last beginning to advance northward from Salonika, Ludendorff insisted that Germany would have to sue for an armistice if the German army was not to be completely destroyed. The appointment of Prince Max, long known for his liberal views, was the Kaiser's response to this demand. From his memoirs, it is quite apparent that even Prince Max, when he took office, had not appreciated how badly the old Prussian system had broken down. At the same time he appears to have been



He quoted from a letter which Lenin had written to a joint session of TsIK and the Moscow Trades Unions, in which he had said:

"Bolshevik tactics of waiting for slow development world revolution was being justified tenfold by events...German government will now have to settle accounts for Brest Litovsk peace with German proletariat and Russian proletariat looks to their German comrades and not to Allied imperialists for justice in this matter."

Price went on to say that the reaction of Soviet official circles to the Fourteen Points (on the basis of which negotiations between America and Germany were then being conducted) was that they were

little more than fourteen phrases to drug the awakening revolutionary masses of Europe into sleep again.

In the same circles the idea of a League of Nations was considered to be

league of allworld financial oligarchies to protect right of propertied classes to live like parasites under fast crumbling capitalist system.

At the same time, a capitalist peace presented no threat to Russia. Here Price was quoting an unnamed member of the Supreme Council of Public Economy (see pp. 368-369) because the economic effects of the war had gone so far that the proletariat of all countries would sooner or later be forced to accept Bolshevik principles of state socialism. Even a world-wide counter-revolutionary alliance, said the spokesman, would

only hasten process of uniting the revolutionary front in Russia, Germany and Austria to which labour in Anglo-Saxon countries will probably join later.

Official circles in Moscow, Price reported, while not minimising

gravity of struggle with forces of allworld counterrevolution nevertheless regard condition created by fall of Prussian war party as beginning of

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surprised by the extent of the divisions in the German Left and by how strong (though not powerful) the extreme Left was. An English translation of the Memoirs of Prince Max was published in New York in 1928. The original German version was published in Berlin in 1927. This note is based on a new German edition edited by Golo Mann and Andreas Burchkhardt: Errinerungen und Dokumente (Stuttgart 1968).

victorious march of Bolshevism across hills and plains of Europe.

Price then dealt with news from the Ukraine, where Skoropadsky was trying to pre-empt a Bolshevik victory by forming a government supposedly on the lines of the old Rada. He reported that the Red Army had now defeated the Czech forces on the Volga front and was advancing on the Urals and Orenburg to join up with revolutionary forces in Central Asia. He repeated what he had said in an earlier message about the effects of the Czech occupation upon the political thinking of even the wealthy peasants of the Volga provinces, and he concluded with the words:

I remarked in a telegram on the eve of Allied intervention the Allies are sowing dragons teeth in Europe and these teeth will someday grow into bayonets which will be turned in directions which they least expect unquote It seems that these words are likely to be realised earlier than seemed likely.

On 19 October 1918 Price sent off his last message from Moscow. It began

After reading English papers which arrive here I am at loss to decide whether the persons giving information about events in Russia are deliberately fabricating news for political ends or whether they are merely victims of chronic nervous breakdowns.

Price went on to state that he felt it was his duty

to communicate a few facts about conditions prevailing here

and went on to deal systematically with most of the areas of public activity in Russia about which he felt qualified to report.

It is safe to say that never since commencement of war has there been more order and tranquility in Moscow and Petrograd than at present stop Everyone is busy working in some public department either in new Red Army or in one of numerous economic councils which are everywhere growing up and transforming former anarchical system of speculation and private profiteering into one in which production and distribution is organised on public basis in interest of working class population stop One no longer hears shooting in streets at night there are no more wastrels walking about streets with rifles and beggars have almost disappeared stop Not only is there no unemployment but there is shortage of labour especially skilled workmen stop



Last month only eight to ten wagons of food used to arrive in Moscow each day now we get never less than 100 and sometimes 300 wagons of flour alone each day stop Food distribution is carefully worked out whole population is classified and receives rations according to amount and intensity of work performed stop Everyone is guaranteed with a minimum and former propertied classes can receive the same food ration and pay as working classes if they agree to work or enter public service stop

Whole economic life of country is controlled by powerful body called Supreme Council of Public Economy stop An American businessman who arrived here recently from tour in provinces has described it as a more publicly useful and efficient body than any of the great capitalist trusts in America stop It is divided into departments headed by Commission appointed by Central Soviet Executive stop Each department controls a public service like rail transport water transport nationalised iron coal cotton leather oil industries also food distribution and state finance stop

In sphere public education new constructive programme being introduced stop Primary schools opened for winter season last week stop Pupils are taught to introduce discipline into schools themselves Meanwhile number and strength of Red Army is increasing every day and discipline is becoming very severe stop Trotsky makes periodical journies to different fronts accompanied by his supreme military council stop I may here state that strict orders have been issued to commanders on northern fronts that all common soldiers from ranks of Allied armies who are taken prisoners are to be well treated stop Recently a number were brought to Vologda where they are now comfortably housed.

The situation in Germany is watched here with intense interest and enthusiasm stop Lenin in his recent letter to All-Russia Central Soviet Executive stated that Russian proletariat must be prepared to help German proletariat in its struggle against its own and foreign Imperialists stop He foreshadowed large increases in Red Army and creation in Central Russia large grain reserves to help the German revolutionaries as soon as they take over the power in Germany stop The content of this letter has been suppressed by the censor in Germany and recently we hear that frontier at Oshal has been closed stop Article in Kreuzzeitung stating that fight with Bolshevism is bridge across which Allies and Germany can unite to protect their culture is looked upon here as attempt to create twentieth century form of Holy Alliance.

This message was transmitted through Stockholm on 31 October and stopped at the Press Bureau, apparently on the orders of the Home



Secretary himself when it reach London on 5 November. A copy of it was forwarded by M17(a) to Cecil but his comments, if any, have not survived. In accordance with the War Cabinet's decision of December 1917 Scott's lobby correspondent Harold Dore was shown this despatch at the Press Bureau. He made a remarkably accurate summary of it which he sent to Scott on 19 November<sup>20</sup>, ending with the words:

"Sir Frank Swettenham told me exception is taken to whole message which undesirable to circulate in this country. He considered sting was in tail - presumably Kreuz Zeitung reference."<sup>21</sup>

Scott passed a copy of this message on to Price's aunt in Manchester and it thus became the only example he was eventually able to see for himself of the way in which his despatches were regarded and treated by the Press Bureau. In My Three Revolutions he wrote, fifty years later:

"I am ready to state now that, while what I wrote somewhat exaggerated the situation in Moscow, it was a healthy antidote to the kind of rubbish that was being circulated throughout the world about conditions in Russia at that time. But we had reached the position by that time in Britain that a military censor was deciding what political ideas the British public should be allowed to hear. My despatch did not touch in any way on military matters. It was strictly a statement of political and social facts as I saw them. Yet it

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<sup>20</sup> John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Scott papers 335/57. Also FO 371.3342.

<sup>21</sup> The paper known as the Kreuz Zeitung was still at that time properly called Neue Preussische Zeitung and was held to reflect the view of the Junkers. It was published under that title from 1846-1929, went on from 1929 as Neue Preussische Kreuz Zeitung, until in 1932 it finally appeared simply as Kreuz Zeitung. It ceased publication in January 1939. It is not difficult to see why Swettenham should have taken such particular exception to the quotation from this paper. It must already have appeared in print in Britain, since King quoted the same passage in a debate in the House of Commons on 13 November (Hansard, Cols. 2791-2792), describing it as "the novel and extraordinary doctrine" which would create a bridge of common interests across which "the capitalists and militarists" of the former belligerents were to be led into Russia for its "exploitation and domination". As noted in Chp. 7 above, the Press Bureau were sometimes frustrated by the continued freedom of expression which obtained, more or less unabated, in Parliament.



was not allowed. I can imagine what Scott said to Sir Frank Swettenham about this"<sup>22</sup>

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1918 Scott had continued relentlessly to question in his leading articles every aspect of Allied policy in Russia (see Chapter 10, pp. 394-397). But it is unlikely that he said anything to Sir Frank Swettenham as the result of seeing Dore's summary of his last despatch from Price. He reserved his fire for a leading article which appeared in the Manchester Guardian on 6 December, and which represents a kind of judge's summing up of the case against the Government. After tracing the pretexts upon which the various acts of intervention had been based, he declared that the thin disguise of military necessity could now no longer be maintained. Questions would be asked but, said Scott, it was doubtful if they would be answered because the real reason for the intervention was

"not a very nice reasons, nor one that is likely to commend itself to reasonable people in this country or to our working class. That reason, of course, is that the war against Russia has from the first really been a war against that particular form of Socialistic theory known as Bolshevism. We are no admirers of that theory. Applied to any Western European country, we believe it would be disastrously subversive. Even in Russia we may doubt its permanence. But there it is. It has established itself; it has existed for more than a year. It is not weakening in power; all trustworthy information goes to show that it is gaining in power, that it has established order, that it meets with general support from some eighty millions of people whom it controls, that it is grappling successfully with the food problem, that it is promoting the popular arts, music and the drama, and is preparing a great scheme of popular education - that, in fact, it is performing most of the normal functions of a Government and performing them with increasing success. These are the facts but they do not suit the policy, the policy at least hitherto pursued by our freedom-loving Government. The telegrams of the few British correspondents, including our own, who are still in a position to give authentic information are ruthlessly censored or suppressed, and the Government goes on in its blind and foolish way, a way that can, if persisted in, lead only to discredit and disaster."

Although Scott did not change his mind about the folly of the Allied intervention; although he quite clearly believed that his correspondent had been telling him the truth even to the point of echoing some of the phrases which Price had employed in his censored despatches, Scott was now coming under pressure to disown him. The wider effects of Price's despatches on Whitehall will be dealt with in Chapter 11; but in the matter of his relationship with the Manchester Guardian he had left himself open to criticism by allowing his connection with the paper to be advertised on the front page of his pamphlet The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. This left Scott, too, vulnerable, and he felt obliged to terminate the relationship. An epitaph is given in Appendix XI.



## Footnote 9 (11)

An impressionistic survey has been made of the headlines on Russia and of the essence of the columns beneath them, of five British newspapers, for the month of September 1918. They are the Times, Express, Morning Post, Daily News and Manchester Guardian. (John Bull was also looked at for the month, but Russia was only mentioned twice, the paper being wholly given over to a hate campaign against Germany.)

The Express: The front page headline on 2 September was "Murder of Lenin: Russia's Evil Genius killed by a Girl"; the leader described Dora Kaplan as "Russia's Charlotte Corday". Between 2 and 11 September the headlines and comments dealt more soberly with the attack on the British Embassy and the danger to British residents in Russia. On 11 September there was a headline "Blood Madness in Russia" on the front page. The leader on 12 September was headed "The Depths of Disgrace" and dealt with the murder of the Romanov women (the Tsar was not mentioned) for which the Express managed to blame the Kaiser. On 18 September: "Out for Murder: Bolsheviks Intoxicated with Blood Lust"; on 21 September "Massacre in Petrograd: Wholesale Slaughter of Allies. German Instigation". Most of the remaining headlines in September containing the word Bolshevik dealt with what the paper called British Bolsheviks: the strikers on the Clyde and on the railways. The imputation of guilt by association with Russia was always made clear.

The Morning Post: On 3 September Lenin's death was reported under the headline: "Bolshevik Regime of Blood; the Moscow Shambles". The column went on to suggest that the death of Lenin was "perhaps...of greater importance than the disappearance of the Tsar". On 7 September, under "Bolsheviks the Tool of Germany" was a report by a "prominent Englishman" just returned from Russia, which included the words "Their leaders are not really Russians but mainly renegade Jews". On 10 September under "Russian Nightmare" it was reported that peasants were marching on the capital and the Bolsheviks were in flight. On 12 September the following headlines were all on the main news page: "Petrograd on Fire"; "Sequel to Bolshevik Misrule"; "Gaunt Famine" and "Strange Scenes in Streets" (which turned out to be about people exchanging food coupons). On 13 September the headline was "Russia in Revolt: Peasants Arm against Bolsheviks", but there was not a single word in the short column beneath the headline which supported the statement. On 18 September, "The Russian Tangle: Bolshevik Defeats: Officers Deserting to the British" (at Archangel). In the last week of the month the Morning Post, while not letting up on reports of the "awful anarchy to which Russia has been reduced", also concentrated its fire on British Bolsheviks on the Clyde and in South Wales.

The Times: The death of Captain Cromie was reported with very little comment, but a leading article on the same day (5 September) contained possibly the most convoluted reasoning found in any of the press on the British intervention, which had then been going on for just over a month. Taking as its text the Supplementary Treaty of Brest Litovsk, the leader concluded: "We are told that Russia will fight against the Entente in North Russia. If the statement is correct, the Bolsheviks would seem to regard themselves as in a state of war with us. But only savages began war by assassination." By 11



September the Times was in full voice: "Bayonet Rule: Worse than French Terror"; on 12 September "Blood for Blood"; on 16 September "Bolshevist Frenzy for Blood" and on the same page a column on the Sisson documents headed "Lenin and Trotsky Disclosures. Paid Agents of Germany." On 25 September "The Russian Terror; Direct Despatch from Petrograd; Terrible Plight of the People; British Colony's Danger." This had been written on 14 August (my emphasis), came from "Our Petrograd Correspondent" and had reached London "By an indirect Agency". The substance of the column was indeed about the precarious situation of British residents in Russia, but this was as the result of the intervention and the cholera epidemic in Petrograd. The headline was clearly intended to make it appear that the piece was about the Red Terror, which had not begun at the time it was written. On 26 September "The Russian Nightmare. How the Masses Are Deluded". Most of the statements supporting the column were made by an escaped American journalist in Stockholm. On 28 September the Times reached the peak of its frenzy with the headline "A Red Wave of Blood" which stood over an account (by the correspondent of the Berlin Lokal Anzeiger), and which contained the statement that "some sailors who participated in the executions almost every night...contracted the execution habit, executions having become necessary to them just as morphia is to morphia maniacs". Indeed the Times made considerable use of German correspondents' reports in September 1918, including those of Alfons Paquet in the Frankfurter Zeitung, but generally managed to put a lurid headline over even the most factual of his despatches.

The Daily News: During early September Ransome was sending despatches almost daily from Stockholm. His sources of information were necessarily indirect, although his contacts were undoubtedly less anti-Bolshevik than those of other newspapers. But only on one occasion did his report appear under a sensational headline. This was 10 September: "Starvation and Terror. Wholesale Murders and Executions in Russia. 'The Verge of Delirium'". But this was a completely untypical presentation by the Daily News, and the delirium Ransome was writing about was - as he made quite clear - the delirium of starvation.

The Manchester Guardian: In striking contrast, Guardian headlines were strictly related to content, which was almost entirely devoted to bulletins about the fighting on the Northern Front or at Baku, taken some times from War Office bulletins or from German correspondents via neutral countries. The most sensational headline of the whole month (on Russia) was on 11 September: "Shot by Bolsheviks. Protopopoff and other Ex-Ministers. Oppressors Under the Tsar". The column underneath was given up to an account of their careers and misdeeds. The paper also made space, on 14 September under the headline "A Great Russian Revolutionary Woman", for a long obituary of Breshkovskaya, the "grandmother" of the Russian revolution.

In conclusion it should be born in mind that two other subjects were contending with Russia for attention in September 1918 although one of them: the strike wave on the Clyde and in South Wales, was often used as a pretext for homilies on the dangers of Bolshevism at home. The other was, of course, the first signs of the German collapse in the West.



## Chapter 10. From Journalism to Propaganda

### (i) Moscow 1918: The Group of English-Speaking Communists

When Price returned to Moscow from Vologda in April 1918 he at first found a room with "some very nice people called Fidler ... friends of the Kropotkins", as he described them in a letter to his aunt on 7 May. The house was on Glazofskaya, not far from the German Embassy; he sometimes saw Mirbach coming and going in his motor and was close enough to hear the shots which killed him in July. In the same letter to his aunt he wrote that he was so far able to keep his head "above water. But one never knows what tomorrow may bring. The whole of civilisation is collapsing above one's ears and I often wonder if I shall ever live to see it through." But, he added, "I shall stick to the Soviet Government wherever it goes". On 3 June he wrote again to his aunt, "Ransome and I keep on hammering away and loading the telegraph wires with our cables demanding the recognition by the Allied governments of the Soviet Government here." His last surviving letter written from Russia (again to his aunt) is dated 18 July. (All three of these letters were prefaced by a sentence or two saying that he had just heard of a chance to get a letter out of the country, but he never afterwards explained how. It must have been the same means which brought him his last letter from England, from Charles Trevelyan (see below p.323)). In July he moved to lodgings in the house of Count Sergei Tolstoy, the eldest son of the writer, a move brought about by the good offices of one of his former associates in Armenian Relief work, St. John Catchpool. "They are very nice people" Price wrote of the Tolstoys "but rather reactionary. Curiously enough on account of my good relations with the Bolsheviks

they expect me to protect them from the latter."<sup>1</sup> He described the worsening food situation, which he attributed to the civil war in the south and east. "The Allies apparently want to complete the iron circle which is enclosing this unhappy land and reducing it to a state of misery indescribable in the history of man. When I am at my last gasp and can do no more work for the Manchester Guardian I shall enter the Red Army as a volunteer and be killed fighting for the revolution". (Price's attempt to enlist in September 1918 is described below, see p.331). He ended this letter by praising Lenin: "...the most courageous statesman in Europe at present, and history will I believe put him down as one of the great brains of this period." (A long quotation from the letter appeared in Common Sense on 7 September 1918.)

These three letters to his aunt contain the last subjective accounts of how Price was thinking and living at this time, and he added very little of a personal nature in either of his books about the Russian Revolution. By now money had again become a problem. The Manchester Guardian had been able to send him some of his back pay in May, but since then he had been unable to receive anything more, whether as salary or from his private income. At this point Tchicherin once more came to his rescue and offered him a job as a translator at the Soviet Foreign Office (People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs or Narkomindel). Price accepted the offer, obviously at least in part because he needed to earn some money, but perhaps also because he hoped to make himself useful to a cause he had now come unreservedly to espouse; although he could hardly have foreseen, when he took up his post on 1 August, where this step would lead

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<sup>1</sup> In a footnote on p.135 of My Three Revolutions Price wrote, with reference to his account of the Tolstoys: "The merit of Pasternak's great book Dr. Zhivago to my mind is that it gives an excellent picture of just these social types in Russia who suffered intensely during the Revolution."



him. His appointment coincided almost exactly with the Allied intervention in North Russia<sup>2</sup> and early in August 1918 Price added to his continuing - if by now completely unavailing - attempts to report the situation in Russia for his paper and to his new work as a translator,<sup>3</sup> the role of propagandist.

At about this time Price met the first German journalist to come to Russia after Brest Litovsk, Dr. Alfons Paquet, who represented the Frankfurter Zeitung.<sup>4</sup> In My Three Revolutions Price recorded that he first met Paquet

<sup>2</sup> The Allied occupation of Archangel took place on 2 August 1918. For an account of the operation see Ullman: Anglo-Soviet Relations, Vol.I, Chapter 8.

<sup>3</sup> Price left no record of what his work as an official translator at Narkomindel entailed over and above the translation of propaganda. However he undoubtedly translated the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. into English at some point, and he also mentioned, in his Reminiscences (p.344) that he sat up all night in the autumn of 1918, translating a Note to President Wilson "prepared in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs" which "surpassed in pungent wit and biting sarcasm anything which had yet been produced by that office." This was almost certainly Tchicherin's Note of 24 October, subsequently reproduced in pamphlet form. According to William H. Chamberlin: The Russian Revolution 1917-1921 (1935) Vol.2 p.154, Radek was involved in the drafting of that note.

<sup>4</sup> ALFONS HERMAN PAQUET (1881-1944) was a contributor to the Frankfurter Zeitung from 1904 until it was forced to cease publication in 1943. Paquet was not only or even primarily a journalist, however. His works include poetry, drama, short stories and novels, although many of them reflect an imaginative approach to political and social issues. From 1916-1918 he represented the Frankfurter Zeitung in Stockholm, and from July-November 1918 in Moscow, where he was also Press Attache to the German Consulate General. After his return to Germany he wrote a lively account of this period in his book Im Kommunistischen Russland. Briefe aus Moskau (Jena 1919). He also published three lectures given shortly after his return under the title Der Geist der russischen Revolution (Leipzig 1919). Baumgart's edited edition of his Moscow diaries and letters are copiously cited; they provide an extraordinarily vivid picture of the life of a foreign intellectual in Moscow during the summer and autumn of 1918. A yet unpublished work is Paquet's novel Von November bis November, which deals with the first year of the Russian revolution. Price wrote a revealing passage about Paquet's delighted reaction to the news of the mutiny of the German fleet at Kiel in his Reminiscences (p.394). For a good short account of Paquet's life and work see H.M. Waidson, 'Paquet and the Russian Revolution', Germano Slavica Volume 3 (1981) pp.319-330.

in November 1918 but his only reference to Paquet in his Reminiscences suggests that by then he already thought of him as a friend and indeed his own diary shows that he met him on 10 August.<sup>5</sup> There are a number of references in Paquet's published diaries and letters<sup>6</sup> which show that they quickly established a relationship, and which shed a unique light on what Price was already doing by mid-August as a propagandist, as well as giving the only description so far discovered of how Price looked, thought, felt, talked and behaved at this time. Paquet's diary for 15 August noted that Price visited him in the evening.

"We sat together on the balcony with a bottle of red wine, Kommissariat bread and sausage, from 9 - 12.15. [Talked] Much and freely... I promised out of a feeling of friendship to send Price, who is very ragged, my old grey suit tomorrow."<sup>7</sup>

On 21 August Paquet recorded that it had rained heavily all day and that he met Price in the Kommissariat

"wearing an old fur, underneath it my suit. His socks were wrinkled and dirty and his shoes stuffed with paper... Today he seems like a fool."<sup>8</sup>

A week later Paquet recorded another long evening visit from Price, this time

"very nice and reasonable... Looks thin, emaciated, poor. In my grey suit, the sleeves of which are too short. Eats bread voraciously. We drink tea and smoke cigars."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Reminiscences p.348; My Three Revolutions p.144.

<sup>6</sup> Von Brest Litovsk' zur Deutschen Novemberrevolution. Aus den Tagebüchern, Briefen und Aufzeichnungen von Alfons Paquet, Wilhelm Groener und Albert Hopman, Marz bis November 1918. Herausgegeben von Winfried Baumgart mit einem Vorwort von Hans Herzfeld. Vanden Hoeck & Ruprech in Gottingen, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> Baumgart, Von Brest Litovsk etc. p.108.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.118.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.132.



Price, unlike most other government employees, did not live in an official commune and thus did not get the official rations. He was forced to become a meshochnik - a bagman - and he spent most of his weekends hunting for food for the Tolstoy household in the villages around Moscow. Paquet several times referred to Price's food-gathering expeditions in his diaries as if he found it surprising that they should have been necessary. Most other foreigners in Moscow seemed to manage better.

On 16 August Paquet wrote to his editor enclosing some material

"... in English, specially written to be dropped from aeroplanes to the soldiers in Murmansk and Archangel. The author/translator is the correspondent here of the Manchester Guardian, Mr. M. Philips Price, an interesting young chap who has travelled widely in Central Asia and has been on the Russian front practically throughout the war. He is a Cambridge scholar and comes from a good family but has for months been as good as cut off from England; also strongly proletarianised and lives for very little money at Count Tolstoy's and is the comrade in thought and fate of his colleague Arthur Ransome who has now gone to Stockholm... Both Ransome, who is older and wiser, and Price, who is a kind of madcap, give the impression of sincerity."<sup>10</sup>

Paquet concluded his letter by asking to be sent cuttings of their previous articles and despatches in the Daily News and Manchester Guardian. The interesting point here is that Price had apparently, by 16 August, already both written and translated propaganda material. He must, therefore, have been responsible for at least translating some of the very first leaflets to be dropped. One of these, headed "Do you realise what you are doing?" is actually dated - the only one to be so - and the date is 10 August. This is very likely to be one of those which Paquet sent to his editor only six days later. Another leaflet, which he may have included and which Price may also have translated, is headed "Al-lies" and deals with the proclamation issued by the Allies on 8 August, setting

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. pp.109-110.

out their ostensible reasons for having invaded Russia. Both these leaflets went out over the names of Lenin and Tchicherin.

To have been one of the handful of Entente nationals who supported the Soviet Government, in Moscow, in August 1918, was obviously a traumatic experience. Writing about it only two years later in his Reminiscences Price appears already to have telescoped some of the events of this period and got others out of order, as for example the date he first met Paquet. Thus the relevant passage in that book suggests that he wrote his first propaganda pamphlet, The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia, in response to the revelation of the so-called Lockhart plot (accounts of which did not appear in the Russian papers until 3 September 1919.

But on the same page Price wrote:

"I sat down during the second week of August and wrote off, as fast as my pen would permit me, a pamphlet entitled The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia and signed my name to it so that every Englishman should know that there was at least one of his countrymen who would not be silent."<sup>11</sup>

Paquet's diary for 24 August noted:

"Radek has now taken the Propaganda Centre into his department. The first production [emphasis added] is Price's pamphlet under his full title as 'Correspondent in Russia of the Manchester Guardian'... An equally strong piece is coming out from Ransome."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Price: Reminiscences p.332.

<sup>12</sup> This was almost certainly Ransome's pamphlet The Truth About Russia, written in May 1918 under great pressure so that Robins could take the text back with him to America. It was printed there by The New Republic but also appeared in pamphlet form. From Paquet's account it was issued by Sovprop. Another edition of it was later made by the Writer's Socialist Federation, 400 Old Ford Road, London E.3. but it is not dated. A copy of this edition is to be found in the library of the London School of Economics, D208(47). See also Hugh Brogan The Life of Arthur Ransome (1984) pp.196-198, 214. There is no mention of it in the Autobiography of Arthur Ransome edited by Rupert Hart Davies.



Price again spent an evening with Paquet on 28 August, when the two men talked, wrote Paquet, "about his pamphlet which is just coming out". They also, he noted, discussed the contents of a letter written on 4 August which Price had, by some means, recently received from Charles Trevelyan about the poor prospects of a revolution in England.<sup>13 14</sup>

If Paquet was right, the pamphlet which they discussed must have been The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia, and it was the first production of Sovprop, the new organisation under Radek to which he had alluded four days earlier. But Price was also working for Narkomindel, and it seems almost certain that he was also at this time translating, if not himself writing, propaganda put out by the Commissariat for Foreign

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<sup>13</sup> Baumgart Von Brest Litovsk etc. p.132. Paquet made the following note of the content of Trevelyan's letter to Price of 4 August, as related to him by Price: "Trevelyan writes that he doesn't believe that there will be a strong revolutionary movement in England but that there will be far-reaching changes when the armies come home. The property owners are shaking with fear for their properties. (Lloyd George will probably be thrown out in the November elections.) The possessors are determined to defend their position with the bayonet. England will be obliged to have a Standing Army after the war (on social grounds), the army will want to go home as soon as peace is made, just as the Russians formerly did. Trevelyan thinks that the English and German governments will take the path of negotiation." The words underlined were in English in the original. Paquet was presumably referring to the British conscript army in his penultimate sentence.

<sup>14</sup> It seems probable that in the summer and even in the early autumn of 1918 a number of ways had been found, not only of communicating with Price but even of getting money and clothes out to him. In a letter to Charles Trevelyan written as late as 25 August Robin Price wrote that Price's bank in Gloucester had got some money for him as far as Stockholm "which I hope he may get... The Bank refused to give the money to Litvinov without the Treasury's sanction, which of course they refused to give." On 2 September Robin Price wrote, again to Trevelyan, that he wanted to get a letter and some clothes to his brother. "If you think there would be any chance of L. being able to take them or send them by somebody, would you tell me where I could have them sent to?" A letter written on 20 September, when Britain had broken off diplomatic relations with Russia, shows that yet another line of communication with Price had been opened up, this time via the Editor of the Daily News in London and Ransome in Stockholm. Newcastle University Library. Trevelyan papers. CPT 82.

Affairs. A confusing kind of confirmation of this was provided by the Soviet historian, K.L. Seleznev in his appreciation of Price published in 1974:

"Price became involved in the work of the Department for International Propaganda of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and helped to produce leaflets and newspapers for the German soldiers at the front."<sup>15</sup>

Actually there is no evidence whatever that Price had been involved in the production of Bolshevik propaganda in German, and it is probable that Seleznev was thinking of some of the other English-speaking writers who undoubtedly were so involved. But there is plenty of evidence that Price became involved in the propaganda activities of Narkomindel while working there as a translator, and that he then also began working for Sovprop. The authors of The Internationalists,<sup>16</sup> an account by a group of Russian historians of the work of non-Russian communist sympathisers, stated that Price was "especially prominent" among those doing this work, and their references suggest that they had good evidence for making the statement. The sheer volume of material which has now, with a greater or lesser degree of certainty, been traced to Price also suggests that he was working for more than one propaganda organisation in August 1918 and within a month he was working for three. Propaganda was, at that time, by far the most powerful weapon in the Soviet armoury, and it is not surprising that more than one organisation was concerned in its production.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> K.L. Seleznev. Istoria SSSR Vol.3. (Akad. Nauk SSSR Moscow 1974.) pp.217-219.

<sup>16</sup> Internationalisti (The Internationalists). (Akad. Nauk SSSR, Moscow 1967) The book is a symposium. Chapter 14 (pp.516-572), by L.M. Zak, L.P. Karlov and R.Ya. Tsvilina deals with French, Anglo-American and Italian communist (or communist sympathiser) groups.

<sup>17</sup> Within weeks of the November revolution Trotsky had instituted at the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs a Press Bureau under Radek and a Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda under Boris Reinstein,



In a passage in his Reminiscences referring to the so-called Lockhart plot exposures in August 1918 Price wrote:

"The indignation which these criminal plots aroused in the minds of all honest men caused a number of Allied citizens in Moscow, including myself, to stand by the Russian Soviets come what might... Quickly a little group of Allied citizens was formed in Moscow who mutually pledged themselves to continue work of this kind until the Allied intervention was stopped."<sup>18</sup>

The "work of this kind" was propaganda to be directed towards the Allied troops of the intervention, and the "little group" had its beginnings at a meeting held at the Internationalist Club in Moscow at the end of August, an account of which was given in Izvestia on 1 September. A copy of that account found its way to Whitehall with a translated summary supplied by the British Consul in Moscow, Wardrop. The summary was head-lined "Meeting of Anglo-French Communists at Moscow" and contained the words "Comrade Price of the Manchester Guardian presided. Club formed

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one of the many English-speaking Russian refugees who had returned from America after the March revolution. Reinstein's section concentrated on the production of material in English and among those who wrote for him were John Reed and Rhys Williams. Radek's section, staffed mainly by prisoners of war from the armies of the Central Powers, produced Die Fackel (The Torch) in German, and equivalent publications in Magyar, Roumanian, Serbian, Czech and Turkish. Under the terms of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk the dissemination of propaganda in German proceeding from a Russian department of state was prohibited. Reinstein's Bureau was disbanded, but a Bureau of Foreign Literature was immediately established under Radek's direction, which employed the same personnel, but produced propaganda which was now party - rather than government-inspired. The foreign sections were later organised into a Federation of Foreign Groups of the Russian Communist Party. After the Allied invasion of North Russia a new bureau, Sovprop, was set up under Radek's direction, and both Sovprop and Narkomindel (not bound by any treaty with the Allies to refrain from doing so) began to issue propaganda in English. A few weeks later the Group of English-Speaking Communists also came into being. This group probably originated more propaganda material than Sovprop and Narkomindel put together, and much of it was subsequently republished by the Comintern. For further reading on the development of Bolshevik propaganda organisations, see Carr, Vol.III pp.18-22, 73, 129; J.W. Wheeler Bennet: Brest Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace (1939 pp.90, 261, 271; Debo: Revolution and Survival pp.89-90; Rhys Williams: Journey into Revolution Chapter 2.

<sup>18</sup> Price: Reminiscences p.332.

for propaganda purposes and the teaching of English and French. Apostles will go forth from the Club to preach Bolshevik principles."<sup>19</sup> The authors of The Internationalists stated that "the real founder and organiser" of the group was the French communist Jeanne LaBourbe<sup>20</sup> but that Price was present at the first meeting and outlined a programme of meetings, lectures and courses to be harnessed to the requirements of propaganda.<sup>21</sup> A second meeting took place on 4 September, when Price reportedly spoke of the need

"to establish links with the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and with the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and of associating themselves with the Federation of Communist Groups attached to ZK [the Party Executive]."<sup>22</sup>

Price's reported statement appears to indicate that both party and government organs were again involved in propaganda and strengthens the

<sup>19</sup> FO.371.3336.

<sup>20</sup> Jeanne Marie LaBourbe 1877-1919. Born into a peasant family near Vichy, LaBourbe's father was a Paris Communard. She obtained a post as a governess in a Polish family in 1896 and returned with them to Poland, where she got to know Polish and Russian revolutionaries. She used her French passport to get a number of Russian women revolutionaries out of Russia. In 1905 she joined the Bolsheviks and took an active part in the 1905 Revolution. By 1917 she was married to V. Markovic, one of the organisers of the Yugoslav group of the party, and was working in Moscow as a teacher. In August she managed to see Lenin, who gave her a letter of introduction to Tchicherin to discuss, presumably, the need for propaganda in foreign languages. She was a founder member of the Anglo-French Group and when it split on linguistic lines became secretary of the French Group. She edited a newspaper, Le Communiste, for distribution to the French intervention troops and sailors. When the French landed in Odessa - according to one account - she literally threw herself between the French and Russian troops and was arrested on the spot (The Tribunal, 18.9.19). The entry for her in the English translation of the collected works of Lenin (Vol.44) states merely that she was arrested by French intelligence services and shot. The Tribunal also stated that no soldier was willing to carry out the sentence, and that she was shot by French officers. See also The Internationalists pp.518-520.

<sup>21</sup> The Internationalists pp. 516,519.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.546.



presumption that he himself was already involved with both. It was at this second meeting of the group that the need was recognised to divide the work on linguistic lines: French and English. An advertisement for the first meeting of what came to be known as the Anglo-American Group and then as the Group of English-Speaking Communists stated that membership was to be confined to "English-speaking communists who had lived in England or America" although this qualification was later modified to allow "sympathisers" to take part.<sup>23</sup> The question of Price's membership of the Communist party will be dealt with below (see p.333), but there can be no doubt that he was involved with the Group from the start.

The Group of English-Speaking Communists gave itself a formal constitution in November 1918. It was accepted as a member of the Central Federation of Foreign Groups - as Price had recommended - in January 1919 and it remained in existence at least until the beginning of 1920. It was responsible for producing probably most of the English-language propaganda to emerge from Soviet Russia between September 1918 and May 1919 (when the Comintern began to produce its own material, although some even of that took the form of reprints of the Group's earlier work).<sup>24</sup> Much of its

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.548.

<sup>24</sup> For the first ten weeks of its existence the members of what was finally known as the Group of English-Speaking Communists were apparently too busy to give themselves a formal constitution, but on 28 November a meeting chaired by Fineberg formulated a structure and chose an Executive Committee (Nauka 544). The first consisted of Joe Fineberg, Peter Petrov, S.J. Rutgers, Raisa Likhacheva and Solomon Mikhelson. I.M. Iokhel and Moisev (M. Finkel) were elected on 9 December and Kovalevsky and Kolontai on 5 January 1919. On 8 January Reinstein became a member of the Executive and on 24 January Fineberg became its Secretary, with Dobin as his Assistant. On 26 December 1918 the Group decided to publicise their existence and sent formal announcements to Pravda and Isvestia as well as letters to Lenin and Sverdlov in which they stated their objectives. These were defined as being "to engage in spoken and printed propaganda among British and American workers in Russia and abroad; to educate and organise British and

output was in the form of leaflets and pamphlets: some in the name of the Group and some unattributed. After November 1918 the Group decided that from then on some of its leaflets were also to be attributed to Lenin and Tchicherin, as certain earlier Sovprop and Narkomindel productions had been. It is, of course, perfectly possible that Lenin and Tchicherin actually wrote some of the texts that appeared over their names, but it seems more likely that they were ghosted by members of the Group. Members of the Group also helped the Petrograd section of the Central Federation of Foreign Groups to produce a weekly journal in the English language, Kommuna (see below, p.359). But its main work throughout the period of its existence was the production of a small (four-page) weekly newspaper, The Call.

Price never referred in later life to any of his work as a propagandist except for his authorship of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. But he always put a circle round the words The Call whenever it was referred to in any of the books about the Russian Revolution he was so often asked to review. It was supposed by the few surviving members of the English or English-speaking community in Moscow in September 1918 that he was its editor, and this impression was firmly conveyed to and

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American prisoners of war; and to inform the Communist party about the labour movement in Britain and America". It would seem that by early 1919 the Group was no longer directing its activities exclusively towards the troops of the Allied intervention, but so long as they remained on Russian soil the Group appears to have taken on the role of distributing as well as producing propaganda. In February 1919 local party organisations in the Northern Front area sent both to the Group and to Sovprop for literature, and the Group arranged a weekly despatch of material to both Northern and Southern fronts. In April and May 1919 170,300 copies of various leaflets and pamphlets were printed for the Northern Front alone. In June 1919 the Group was asked for literature for distribution in the Astrakhan area and Persia. They were specifically asked to send copies of The Shame of Being a Scab, Do You Realise What You Are Doing, and the Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. The Internationalists pp.536; 544-546; 555-556; 563.



held by the Foreign Office in London.<sup>25</sup> But Fineberg later stated unequivocally that he was the editor of The Call whereas Price was extremely ambivalent about his precise role. There can be no doubt however that he was very much involved in the production of The Call, in whatever capacity, during the early months of its existence. In the same period, moreover, a number of articles appeared in its columns which it is difficult to imagine anyone but Price having written, in Moscow, and at that time. (These will be dealt with below, see pp.348-359.)

During his last four months in Russia Price worked hard. He was still officially the Manchester Guardian correspondent in Russia, he was a salaried translator, a pamphleteer and, for most of that time, if not editor then closely concerned in the production of a weekly newspaper. It is no wonder that the fastidious Paquet sometimes found his behaviour odd, his appearance unkempt and his manners leaving a good deal to be desired. The Northcliffe press, wrote Paquet in his diary, was "as dirty about him as he looks".<sup>26</sup> Price's diary reveals of his personal life only that he went to the theatre and to concerts as much as he could, and that he spent most weekends hunting for food, although he sometimes noted that he did not feel well enough to enjoy the walking this entailed as much as usual. There are indications in his books and in the unpublished manuscript upon which the second one was based, that the worst things he felt at this time were the sense of isolation from the rest of the world and the sense of shame for what his country was doing. "I used to look at the maps of the Civil War with fear every day because I felt that if I realised fully what was happening I would lose hope.

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<sup>25</sup> FO.371.3342.

<sup>26</sup> Baumgart Von Brest Litovsk etc. p.160.

It was better under the circumstances to ignore facts and simply set one's teeth"<sup>27</sup> But during the same period, although he was ready to defend the Red Terror with his pen he was personally appalled by it and made what protest he could with his voice to his employers at the Soviet Foreign Office.<sup>28</sup> On 9 September 1918 Price and Paquet were together for part of the day and probably heard together the shootings which Paquet noted in his diary with "severe twinges of conscience".<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the autumn Price continued to go through all the motions of a foreign correspondent: he read the papers, attended meetings, interviewed political leaders and wrote articles which he must have sent off in much the same frame of mind as if he had been throwing bottles containing messages into the sea. After the declaration of martial law in Moscow, factory meetings were held every Saturday at which the government attempted to keep workers informed of what was going on. Price must have been one of the very few outside observers who attended them regularly, although Paquet described once going with Radek to what might have been one of them. He found Price already there, he wrote, and went to sit behind him, pulling up his coat collar "so as not to show my white shirt".<sup>30</sup> Price and Paquet also frequently encountered one another at meetings of the TsIK, and later of the Sixth Congress. Paquet described how he had walked home with Price through the Alexander Garden of the Kremlin on 30 September, and that Price had talked on the way of his work for ROSTA (the Russian Overseas Telegraph Agency).<sup>31</sup> This is the only reference

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<sup>27</sup> Price Papers. Ms. "Back Bench Traveller". pp.690-694.

<sup>28</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions p.137.

<sup>29</sup> Baumgart: Von Brest Litovsk etc. p.157.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p.145.

<sup>31</sup> ROSTA: the acronym for Rosiiskoye Telegrafnoye Agentsvo. In the summer or autumn of 1918 ROSTA took the place of PTA (Petrograd Telegraph



anywhere to the fact, if it was a fact, that on top of all his other activities Price worked at this time for an official Russian news agency (which is what the Foreign Office in London had assumed he was doing all along (see Appendix X). Meanwhile his food-gathering expeditions kept him to some extent at least in touch with village life. His diary records that during the summer and autumn of 1918 he visited Pushkin, Sokolniki, Fili, Vlacheraskoye, Mojaisk, Vorontsova, Dimitrov and Mamnotov; on one occasion he found himself on the battlefield of Borodino but (unlike Pierre) too tired to walk around it. But he was able to report from first-hand observation the increasing success with which the supply of food from village to town was now being organised, and the remarkable efforts of self-education which were being undertaken in the villages even at such a time.

On three occasions during this period the sword seems to have appeared to Price to be a more relevant weapon than his pen, although he only once attempted to wield it himself. In August the American journalist Robert Minor applied to Lenin personally for permission to go with Price to the Volga front, presumably as war correspondents.<sup>32</sup> Lenin took up the request

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Agency), the former main Russian press agency at the time of the revolution. ROSTA was one of several agencies which were eventually amalgamated into TASS.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Minor (1882-1952) joined the American Socialist party in 1907 and by 1911 had established himself as the chief editorial cartoonist of the St. Louis Post Despatch. In 1912 he went to Paris to study art and became converted to anarcho-syndicalism. His anti-war cartoons were published in the New York Evening World, but after America came out on the side of the Allies, Minor took his talents to The Call and The Masses, for whom he went as a war correspondent first to France and then to Russia (1918). According to Paquet Price and Minor began to associate in August 1918, possibly just before making their joint request to go to the Volga front. Minor remained friends with Price when Price was Daily Herald correspondent in Germany and was one of the few American or Russo-American journalists and writers from this period to whom Price continued to refer in later life. He joined the American Communist movement in 1920 and became a cartoonist for the

with Tchicherin but nothing came of it which, in view of Price's usefulness to Tchicherin at the Soviet Foreign Office at that moment is not surprising.<sup>33</sup> After the attempt on Lenin's life, when Price "thought the last hour of the Soviet Republic had actually struck"<sup>34</sup> he tried to join the International Legion of the Red Army.<sup>35</sup> He went to a camp on the Moscow River which was supposedly its headquarters, with the intention of enlisting. However when he got<sup>there</sup> he found

"practically no organisation in existence and no equipment. Everything was, of course, being sent to the Red Army now on the Volga front. Also I saw a number of suspicious characters whom no-one seemed to know much about and who were obviously White spies. So I wished them good luck in getting something together and decided for the moment to do nothing more."<sup>36</sup>

And again, much later, on the very eve of the Armistice on the Western Front, Paquet recorded that he had talked with Price and Sadoul, the Socialist French Military Attaché who was as much at odds with the French government as Lockhart had at first been with his.<sup>37</sup> "Both" wrote Paquet

Daily Worker, but was repelled by Stalinism and retired from active politics in the late 1940s. Theodore Draper in The Roots of American Communism (New York, 1963) gives the only available account so far discovered of his political activities. Some of his cartoons were reproduced in Paul Avrich's The Russian Anarchist (Princeton 1967).

<sup>33</sup> M. Trush. Vneshnepoliticheskaya Deyatlenost V.I. Lenina 1917-1920. Den za dnem. (V.I. Lenin's activity in the sphere of foreign policy 1917-1920). (Moscow 1963).

<sup>34</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions p.135.

<sup>35</sup> Albert Rhys Williams, by his own account, took the initiative in forming an International Legion of the Red Army in February 1918. This is described in chapter 9 of Journey into Revolution. He did not mention the fact that he was asked by Lenin to write an appeal for volunteers which was published, by Lenin's order, in both English and Russian, in all the main Russian newspapers on 23 February 1918. This is related on p.540 of The Internationalists.

<sup>36</sup> Price Papers Ms.: "Back Bench Traveller" pp.704-5.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques Sadoul was a socialist lawyer on the staff of the socialist Minister of Munitions in the French coalition government, Albert Thomas. In August 1917 he was sent to Russia notionally as a member of the French Military Mission, but actually to report direct to Thomas on the state of affairs in Russia which Thomas, quite correctly, believed were being misrepresented in the despatches of the French Ambassador,



"want to get to the Western Front via Germany to agitate among the Entente soldiers".<sup>38</sup> But nothing came of that idea either, and in the circumstances of the time it may well have been the euphoria of an Englishman, a Frenchman and a German whose countries were about to stop destroying each other.

Of the top Soviet leaders Price knew Tchicherin the best. Throughout 1918 he appears to have been able to get interviews with him whenever he wanted to, and Tchicherin twice intervened to make his life easier. But Tchicherin was a remote figure who worked mainly at night, and foreigners did not seem to get close to him, as Sadoul, Ransome and Robins got close to Trotsky and John Reed and Albert Rhys Williams appear to have got close to Lenin. With Radek it was a different matter, and for about a year, from the spring of 1918 to the summer of 1919 Price appears

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Noulens. Sadoul's letters to Thomas were eventually published in book form as Notes Sur la Revolution Bolchevique (Paris 1919) and Quarante Lettres de Jacques Sadoul (Paris 1922). Sadoul was the same kind of realist about the prospects for survival of the Bolsheviks and of the possibility of doing business with them as Robins and Lockhart. But on 1 June 1918 he wrote to Thomas "Robins a compris l'inutilité de ses efforts et a regagné les Etats Unis. Le pauvre Lockhart est rentré dans sa tente. Mois je suis désespéré." (Notes pp.384-387) It is not known when Price and Sadoul met, but that they knew each other is certain. Paquet referred to their conversations at his flat in his diaries, and Price, in his Open Letter to the Workers of Gloucester (Leicester 1920) referred to "my friend Jacques Sadoul" and described how they had worked together to try to get information out of Russia about Allied support for counter-revolutionary activities in Russia in the summer of 1918. Sadoul was ill throughout the autumn of that year and was probably therefore not able to take an active part in the activities of what began as the Anglo-French Group. He remained in Russia after the end of the war and became a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. In France he was condemned to death in his absence but eventually returned to defend himself and to live out the rest of his life as "a lawyer acting for Soviet interests and as an agent in Parliamentary circles" (Victor Serge: Memoirs of a Revolutionary p.145 in 1984 edition). The best account of Sadoul's life is to be found in an unpublished doctoral thesis by Carol Knuth Sakoian, "Jacques Sadoul and the Bolshevik Revolution", (Boston University, 1977). See also Antonio Coen: La Verité sur l'affaire Sadoul (Paris 1919) and Paul Vaillant-Couturier: Et Sadoul? (Paris 1922).

<sup>38</sup> Baumgart: Von Brest Litovsk etc. p.228.

to have enjoyed an extremely friendly relationship with him. Moreover Radek was the only Soviet politician of that period who was openly appreciative of the work Price was doing. In a speech to a combined sitting of the Moscow Soviet of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies, Factory Committees and Trade Unions on 3 September, Radek referred to Price as a "manly and honest Englishman" who had said

"clearly and often that the English had come to Russia to break the revolution and to rebuild an Eastern front"

and he quoted parts of the last three paragraphs of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia to illustrate his point.<sup>39</sup> On 20 September Radek wrote to Ransome, then in Stockholm, asking if he had yet succeeded in getting Price's pamphlet published "in the Scandinavian languages". He went on to report in affectionate terms that "little Price" (he was six feet tall) had "joined the party... is editing an English newspaper for our front" and "generally creating a marvellous impression" by his "liveliness and devotion to the cause." He continued:

"God knows how a Bolshevik like that came out of a good English family. Your mother would doubtless say that some beautiful Bolshevik girl or other was the cause but you know that is not how things are with Philips."<sup>40</sup>

The letter is interesting for several reasons. It contains the first reference to the translation of Price's first pamphlet into Scandinavian languages. It appears to confirm that Price did indeed edit The Call at that time. And - most interesting of all - it states that Price had

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<sup>39</sup> Karl Radek: 'Die internationale Lage und die äussere Politik der Räteregierung'. Speech reprinted by Rote Fahne, Berlin, and published as a pamphlet by Sovprop. Date indecipherable. L.S.E. Library. D (47) B.21.

<sup>40</sup> Ransome papers, Brotherton Collection, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.



"joined the party". Whatever that may have meant in terms of card-holding, it must at least mean that Price considered himself a Communist long before he joined the CPGB (which was not until 1922) and therefore that he was in the movement three times as long as he was generally considered to have been: six years and not two.

Without a doubt the high point of Price's life during his last months in Russia was his interview with Lenin, which may have been arranged at least in part to show some recognition of his work. Lenin was not someone who needed to be convinced as to the value of propaganda. "It is necessary to publish one hundred times more" he wrote to Joffe on 18 October 1918, when Joffe was the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin. "Hire translators! And we are not doing anything. Scandal."<sup>41</sup> The Russian authors of The Internationalists stated that Lenin "personally directed on an everyday basis the activity of the foreign groups, including the Anglo-American Group".<sup>42</sup> This was probably an overstatement, but there can be no doubt of the importance that Lenin attached to propaganda. On the occasion that Price met Lenin he shared the interview with Robert Minor and Joe Fineberg, and it is remarkable how closely Fineberg's and Price's accounts corroborate not only each other but also the statements made by the authors of The Internationalists. "Lenin read every pamphlet and suggested improvements where these seemed sensible" wrote Fineberg. "He put himself out to explain to us in the most meticulous detail how we should print,

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<sup>41</sup> A few days earlier Lenin had written to Berzin, his representative with the publishing house Promachus, Bern Belp in Switzerland (see F/N 82 below): "It is necessary to hire translators in order to publish in four languages: French, German, English and Italian. You have nothing in the last two. Scandal! Scandal! (V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, English translation, Moscow 1970, Vol.44, pp.153-154 and 155.

<sup>42</sup> The Internationalists pp.547-548.

pack and send out literature so that it would find its destination whatever the obstacle".<sup>43</sup> Price, in My Three Revolutions<sup>44</sup> described how Lenin had showed them "minute photographs of secret messages which could be carried on a slip of paper in a pocket or notebook without anyone suspecting what they were."

It is not certain when this meeting took place. In his diary for 1918 Price has it down for 1 November, but with a question mark after it, as if he had tried to locate the meeting in time later on, from memory. He certainly got the date wrong in My Three Revolutions, when he put it in "August or early September".<sup>45</sup> The conversation he reported would have made no sense in the historical context of August; by early September Lenin was fighting for his life. When Price saw him he noted that Lenin was recovering "and he assured me that he was getting on well." He devoted only one paragraph to the meeting with Lenin in his Reminiscences<sup>46</sup> but considerably more in My Three Revolutions.<sup>47</sup> He was frequently asked to describe the occasion, particularly at the time of the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the November Revolution. What follows is an account he sent to Pravda at that time; it is substantially the same as what he had just written for My Three Revolutions, although this had not yet been published.

"...M. Zhicherin arranged that I should see Lenin in his room in the Kremlin. It was the same room that one can now see and looks very much as it was then. After my enquiries about his health, we talked about the general situation and I soon began to notice a cautious realism in his conversation which I had

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions p.140.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p.139.

<sup>46</sup> Price: Reminiscences pp.345-6.

<sup>47</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions pp.345-6.



seen in his speeches ever since the Bolsheviks had come into power. It was quite clear to me from this conversation with him that he did not share the prevailing optimism since the Red Army had recaptured Kazan and had beaten back the Czechoslovak troops on the Volga. Nor had he any illusions about the imminence of world revolution. The previous autumn, it was he who had insisted on the seizure of power in spite of the opposition of some of his colleagues, but to hear him speak now, it seemed that he had come more and more to the opinion that many obstacles lay in the way of the Revolution and of any world movement which might support it. I had noticed this during his great fight in favour of accepting the German-dictated peace at Brest-Litovsk and later when he had criticised his own followers for being "slaves to phrases" and impractical people. In answers to questions which I put to him, he seemed to think that, if the German Imperial system broke down in Central Europe, the Soviet Republic might be exposed to new and greater dangers. His eyes were clearly fixed on the shores of the Black Sea where he seemed to discern Allied naval forces passing through an open Dardanelles and landing well-trained armies equipped with tanks on the coast of Southern Russia.<sup>48</sup> "What can we put up against this if they really send them" he said "and if the Allied soldiers really obey their rulers and march?" "And" he added in a thoughtful vein, "I fear that the social revolution in central Europe is developing too slowly to provide us with any assistance from that quarter."

When I first saw Lenin at the Peasant Congress in Petrograd in April of the previous year, he had not impressed me greatly. He seemed to have an inelastic mind and was fanatically devoted to a fixed idea. That may have been true at the time, when the Russian revolutionary movement was emerging from underground and when ideological discipline was needed. But when I met him in the Kremlin some fifteen months later, he was becoming a world statesman. He had had to compromise and to force his followers to do likewise in order to save the revolution in Russia. It was not what he wanted, but he had the wisdom to realise what was possible and what was not.

His whole life had been devoted to the idea of world revolution. It was a religion to him. He did not at first see that other countries had different history and traditions to Russia, but when I met him he was clearly beginning to see this. If world revolution did not come now, it would come some day and meanwhile the Russian Revolution must be saved. This was how his mind seemed to be working. When I asked him if he thought he had convinced his followers of the need for this temporary

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<sup>48</sup> Ironically, while Lenin was looking anxiously towards the Black Sea for signs of an Allied landing, the Allied Naval Council was equally alarmed at the prospect of "Russo-Turko-German" forces (by which they meant captured Russian naval vessels repaired and manned by Germans) breaking out of the Black Sea into the Mediterranean and inflicting severe damage on the Allied fleets there. Memorandum by the Secretary of the Allied Naval Council, 24 September 1918. Milner Papers. The Great War. Box AB1.

compromise, he smiled and said nothing. He was not going to give away his inmost thoughts to me. Yet I think he was glad to see me, especially as I was British, and he knew there were few sympathizers in Britain for his Revolution at that time. I suspected while I was with him that, with his realistic outlook, he did not expect changes to come in Britain in the same way as they came in Russia, but, of course, he would not say anything definite to me. I could see that his main interest now was to save the Russian Revolution. What happened in other countries was for the moment less important.

I left him feeling that, with the philosophy he had, he must have been not only a humble but a happy man. He was humble because, as a good Marxist, he felt his personality did not count very much. There, of course, he was wrong. He mattered very much, not least to Russia. He was a happy man because he clearly enjoyed, in spite of its dangers, directing a great movement as long as Fate allowed him to do so.

Price had been introduced to Lenin at least once before and had heard him speak on innumerable occasions, but this meeting was the only opportunity he had to talk with him. The fact that Lenin referred to the slow progress of the social revolution in Europe and the threat posed to Russia by Allied troops who might soon be released from other fronts suggests that the meeting did, in fact, take place more or less when Price entered it in his diary: 1 November. The war was not yet quite over; the German revolution, such as it was, had not quite begun. Price had heard Lenin make the offer, in a speech to the Moscow Trades Unions on 30 September, of military and material help to the German workers "if" as Price reported it "they should overthrow the Kaiser's Government and get into difficulties with the Entente".<sup>49</sup> He had heard Kamenev, two days later at a meeting of TsIK, announce the appointment of Prince Max with the duty of making peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points. He had heard the "howls of derision" with which the announcement was greeted and commented later that the instincts of the Russian revolutionaries at that time had been "extraordinarily correct ... these persons ... were just puppets put up

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<sup>49</sup> Price: Reminiscences pp.343-44.



by distressed reaction to divert attention from the real issues".<sup>50</sup>  
 It was Price who sat up all night translating the Soviet Government's Note to Wilson commenting on this development, and pointing out that a general peace was precisely what they had proposed a year earlier. A few days later he spent the whole day walking in the great procession which marked the first anniversary of the November Revolution, but on 8 November he was back as a reporter, attending the second session of the 6th Congress, which was being held at the Bolshoi Theatre. Paquet describes how he ran into Price "in the orchestra stalls" where "Price told me in the midst of the excitement the latest news: radio message from Nauen: the sailors of the German North Sea Fleet at Wilhelmshafen, Kiel, Cuxhafen, Hamburg and Bremen have occupied and taken over the public buildings. But complete order. A central administration instituted. Looters shot on sight. Triumphant news."<sup>51</sup>

For a short time events in Germany continued to appear to belie Lenin's bitter realism. On 9 November the Kaiser abdicated, a national republic was proclaimed in Germany and a coalition government formed of Majority and Independent Socialists (the latter at that time still including the extreme Left Spartacists). The 6th Congress sent a message of congratulation to the independent Berlin Soviet and the following day was declared a public holiday in Russia. Price was invited to a party at the Kremlin at which toasts in honour of the German Revolution were drunk in coffee "nothing stronger being available" and Price danced "a very inferior Polish mazurka" with Mme. Litvinov. Lenin was conspicuous by his absence. "Perhaps" wrote Price in his Reminiscences<sup>52</sup> "he had an inkling of what

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Baumgart Von Brest Litovsk etc. pp. 224-225.

<sup>52</sup> Price: Reminiscences pp.343-44.

this 'revolution' really was, as his conversation with me a few days before seemed to suggest." In his unpublished autobiography Price recalled that for some days the popular euphoria continued and that even the Soviet Foreign Office "would not take the view that what had happened in Germany was only a removal of the Hohenzollern regime and there was no knowing who would replace it", although there may have been an element of hindsight in the recollection.<sup>53</sup> Writing only two years after the event, however, he already considered that many Russian communists "were guilty of grave errors of judgement at this time", and that by their wishful thinking, by their overestimation of the extent and authenticity of the German revolution they fatally compromised the Spartacists and helped to ensure their failure "by making them appear as warmongers, anxious to convert the national war into a revolutionary one".<sup>54</sup>

At the same time it was becoming clear to Price that the situation had altered for him personally, and that he was now no longer necessarily confined to the territory controlled by the Soviet government. Perhaps naively, he thought it would be "easier to communicate a true account of the situation in Russia" from Berlin "and thereby to escape the British censor."<sup>55</sup> Although he was very well aware that he had been the object of considerable attention by the British censor, clearly he still had no idea of how formidable the apparatus of censorship had become in Britain. He was also, characteristically, attracted by the idea of being the first Western Correspondent to arrive in Western Europe, after the end of the war, from the East. He therefore sent, on 21 November, a radiotelegram to the Foreign Minister of the German Provisional Government

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<sup>53</sup> Price papers Ms., Back Bench Traveller, p.727.

<sup>54</sup> Price: Reminiscences p.352.

<sup>55</sup> Price papers Ms., Back Bench Traveller, p.729.



a copy of which was picked up by Le Temps and printed on 18 December, eventually finding its way into the Foreign Office archives.<sup>56</sup>

Sir: on hearing that English and American journalists will soon be allowed to visit Berlin in order to describe in their papers the situation in Germany after the revolution, I respectfully request, as correspondent of the Manchester Guardian in Russia, your permission to visit Berlin for the same purpose. I need hardly remind you that the Manchester Guardian, since the beginning of the war, has forseen a policy of accommodation with the German democracy for the creation of a League of Nations. Yours sincerely Philips Price, correspondent in Russia of the Manchester Guardian.

On 27 November the German Foreign Office telegraphed back that his "journey to Germany in order to report on the situation there will meet with no objection."

In view of what is now known of the extent of his commitment to the Soviet Government at this time, it is inconceivable that Price made the decision to go to Germany in isolation. Indeed in an account of this period among his private papers he stated that it was Radek's idea that he should go.<sup>57</sup>

The mere fact that Price continued to write for Communist propaganda organisations from Berlin is further evidence that he had no intention of disassociating himself from the Group of English-Speaking Communists by leaving the country. Publicly he said that he discussed his proposal to go to Germany with Tchicherin and Radek and that they offered him a free pass on the Russian railways as far as the German frontier.<sup>58</sup> There cannot have been time to work out more than a very general plan of action; only eight days elapsed between the date Price sent his telegram and the date he received the answer, and three days later he was on his way to Berlin. Radek gave him introductions to Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

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<sup>56</sup> FO 371.3345.

<sup>57</sup> Price papers

<sup>58</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions p.147.

There appears to have been no doubt in his mind at that time as to his standing with the Manchester Guardian, and it does not seem to have occurred to him that Scott might be coming under pressure to disown him. He left Moscow believing that he could continue - but more effectively - to ride simultaneously the two horses of journalism and propaganda. His last few days in Russia were crowded. On the evening of the day that he received permission to go to Berlin (28 November) the Group of English-Speaking Communists celebrated their formal constitution. The entry "English Communist dinner" in his diary is the only indication anywhere in the whole of the Price papers that he had anything to do with the Group, although this may have been at least partly because he lost so many of his papers (see below p.342). The entry for 29 November reads "Arrangements to leave. Clothes.",<sup>59</sup> and for 30 November: "Arrangements to leave. Receive instructions from Radek. Theatre. Friend of the Family."<sup>60</sup> At 9 p.m. on 1 December 1918 Price left Russia almost exactly four years after he took up his post as correspondent there for the Manchester Guardian, and after travelling for five days he reached the German frontier.

"I left Russia with a heavy heart" he wrote in My Three Revolutions. "Russia had been my home for so long that I felt it had become part of me and I almost part of it. Yet I knew that something new and interesting was now happening in the West, especially in Germany."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Price's wife Lisa, describing their marriage the following August, wrote in an unpublished memoir that he wore his only suit, a Russian one, "which looked as if it had been made of birch bark and probably was." Price papers.

<sup>60</sup> Price papers. A striking feature of Price's (mainly engagement) diary for the period April-November 1918, when he lived in Moscow, is the number of times he appears to have been able to go both to concerts and to the theatre. This is corroborated in a letter to him from E. St. John Catchpool written in 1964 (see Chp.9 F/N.21) recalling the wonderful concerts they went to together at that time.

<sup>61</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions p.159.



But the first thing that happened, when he crossed the frontier at Eytunen, was that the German official acting on behalf of the local Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet

"relieved me of many of the papers I had brought with me, including all the copies of Izvestia... from the first days of the Revolution till the day that I left Moscow."

Price went on to note that he could sense

"at once, on entering Germany, that the Revolution was barely skin deep... By this time I knew a revolution when I saw it. But if not a revolution, what was it that I was coming into now?"<sup>62</sup>

Price arrived in Berlin on 6 December in the middle of an unsuccessful counter-revolutionary putsch. According to his diary he went at once to see Liebknecht, and was arrested, with him and others present, for three hours. For the next two weeks he seems to have spent most of his time meeting the leaders of the German Left, but his normally laconic diary is scattered with phrases like "petty bourgeois atmosphere", "not very revolutionary", "stiff compared to Russia", "very right atmosphere" and "some alarm in Soviet quarters." When he was not seeing people or attending meetings he recorded in his diary that he wrote pamphlets. He also wrote four despatches about events in Germany for the Manchester Guardian, all of which were printed,<sup>63</sup> and he wrote a letter to Scott, the fate of which will be dealt with below (see Chapter 11, p.398). He formed a "Committee of Foreign Socialists" and hired a room for it.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Manchester Guardian 16.12.18: 'Attempted Reichstag Coup'; ibid. 17.12.18: 'Germany's Unsolved Problem'; ibid. 20.12.18: 'The German Congress'; ibid. 27.12.18: (i) 'German Government's Stability' (ii) 'Wreck of Militarism'; ibid. 28.12.18: (i) 'Struggle for Power in Berlin' (ii) 'A Government Defeat'. All these articles were attributed to "Our Special Correspondent" without naming Price.

<sup>64</sup> Price papers: diary.

This suggests that he was, at least in his own mind and perhaps also under Radek's "instructions", simply carrying on in another setting the work of the Federation of Communist Groups to which, it will be recalled, the Group of English-speaking Communists in Moscow had been affiliated. It seems probable that Price was also, to some extent, helping to prepare for an expected visit to Berlin by Radek who must, by the end of November, when Price last saw him, have been either intending, or waiting for an invitation, to go there. As it turned out, Radek was invited by the Berlin Soviet to come to Berlin as one of the representatives of the Soviet Government at the first All-German Congress of Soviets on 16 December. The other members of the delegation were turned back at the German frontier, but Radek eventually got through under an assumed name. Price attended all five days of the Congress and learned at the office of the Spartacist paper Rote Fahne, where he went as soon as it was over, that "R. is here".<sup>65</sup> He wrote in his diary for the next day (21 December) "Papers announced R.'s arrival. Look for him but cannot find. Wrote pamphlets in evening." But next day he found Radek at the Rote Fahne office. "Great talk." In the following eight days Price lunched or dined with Radek four times. Radek made a more or less surprise appearance at an All-German Congress of the Spartacist Party on New Year's Eve, after which he and Price had supper together and Radek gave him "material for telegraph".<sup>66</sup>

The "telegraph" was the last that Price was to send to the Manchester Guardian for nearly 26 years. It was stopped by the Press Bureau, which had so unexpectedly allowed his four accounts of conditions in Germany

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



to go through only a few days earlier. The only copy of this despatch in existence was found in the Press Bureau's files, where the transcript shows that it was indeed, addressed to the Manchester Guardian.<sup>67</sup> It would seem that Price was not considered as dangerous to public opinion in Britain when he dealt with German affairs as when he dealt with Russia, and this particular despatch dealt once more with Russia. Consequently it was never printed. The following precis of that interview with Radek appears for the first time.

Price began by offering Radek a chance to clear up charges made in Allied countries that the Bolsheviks were agents of the ex-Kaiser. Radek countered that by negotiating with the Scheideman government, "consisting of men who licked the boots of the ex-Kaiser", and by making war on the Soviet Government in the Baltic Provinces "with the aid of soldiers of the ex-Kaiser's army" the Allies themselves were the collaborators. If they wanted "proof that the Bolsheviks had always been enemies of Prussian militarism" they had only to look at the documents relating to the armistice at Brest Litovsk. Price then asked Radek upon what conditions the Soviet Government was ready to open negotiations with the Allies for the avoidance of further bloodshed. Radek replied by reminding him that the Soviet Government had repeatedly offered in the spring of 1918 to enter into economic agreements with Britain and America but that the Allies had never given any reply to their repeated offers. Prompted by Price, Radek went on to say that the Soviet government was now "ready to open negotiations on the same terms, the more so because, thanks to the German revolution, the Soviet Government has been freed from the reparations levied on them at Brest Litovsk." But Radek was not hopeful, because, he said, the "present rulers of Allied countries have shown that their object in Russia is the establishment of counter-revolution

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<sup>67</sup> HO 139.35

wherever they come". Radek went on to point out that these activities had merely served to broaden the base of support for the Soviet government in Russia. "We await the future with confidence, knowing the justice of our case." By spring the Red Army would be one and a half million strong, "and if the Allies continue their present policy they will be too busy putting down revolutions in Germany and Austria to attend to us." Price concluded the interview by asking Radek about the conditions of British prisoners of war taken on the Archangel front. Radek's reply was:

"their relations need not worry... If they wish to return the only difference their friends will find in them will be that their ideas about society have changed."

Something needs to be said by way of epilogue on the relationship between Radek and Price: in many ways two ill-assorted men who nonetheless appear for a while to have worked closely and successfully together.<sup>68</sup> It is

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<sup>68</sup> KARL RADEK (1885-1939) was born in Poland and graduated in the socialist revolutionary movements of Poland and Germany, like Rosa Luxemburg. Despite their common background, however, Rosa Luxemburg disliked and distrusted him and Radek found his talents more appreciated as a journalist and general emissary in Bolshevik Russia. Although it was he who persuaded the Spartacists that a separate German Communist Party was necessary, he quickly realised, having done so, that the situation in Germany in January 1919 was not ripe for revolution, and he spent the next five years trying to restrain "putschist" tendencies in the KPD. When Price noted in his diary that he must write to Radek about the need for coming to an "understanding" with the USPD he was preaching to the converted. Radek, who had entered Germany illegally in 1919 and subsequently spent the better part of a year in the Moabit prison, nonetheless returned to Germany on innumerable occasions and Price met him more than once while he was Daily Herald correspondent in Berlin. There are 9 references to Radek in his Reminiscences and 21 in My Three Revolutions. In his article 'November' (Krasnaya Nov October 1926 pp.139-175) Radek wrote that Price kept him informed about "the British movement... and through him it was possible to establish some kind of connection with it." Price's last words on Radek (My Three Revolutions pp.182/3) suggest that he was still smarting, forty years later, from some occasion when he felt his friendship had been abused. In his Appendix to Carr's article (see below) he noted that Radek had used him to fly a journalistic kite and that he had been unwise enough to do so without first checking the



inconceivable that the pamphlets which Price was to write during his first four months in Berlin were written without Radek's prior knowledge. It is, indeed, more likely that he had already asked Price to write at least some of them before he left Russia. For Price, Radek must have been the last embodiment of his links with the Bolsheviks and for some years after he left Russia those links remained strong. But documentary evidence is thin, as is often the case when a relationship is presumed to be ongoing, and Radek was not an important enough figure for Price to have made a point of collecting or keeping material about him at that time (as he did in the case of his letters from Sir Charles Dilke). In his diary for 1919 he noted on 26 February "wrote article for R" and on 28 February "Talked with Müller and Markovsky and agreed an understanding between USP and Communists absolutely necessary. Shall write to R in this sense." The allusions to Price in Radek's letter to Ransome of September 1919 (see above p.333) were amused and affectionate. Towards the end of 1919 Price, by now a former resident himself of the Moabit prison (see below p.424) went to visit Radek there. They appear to have talked entirely about the already-receding prospects of revolution in Britain. Among the Price papers is an autographed photograph of Radek dated "Berlin, 10.12.19." on which Radek had also written - what must have been a private joke at the time - "Dear Philipp! I say: Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right". The two men certainly met in April 1922, when Radek

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facts. For a man who himself wrote so much, there is very little in print about Radek in English. His only biographer is Warren Lerner: Karl Radek: the Last Internationalist (Stanford 1970). E.H. Carr's 'Radek's Political Salon in Berlin, 1919', with an Appendix by Price, appeared in Soviet Studies 3 (1952) pp.411-430. His activities in Berlin in December 1918/January 1919 are described by J.P. Nettle: Rosa Luxemburg, Vol.2, Chp.17 (Oxford 1966). There are accounts in German by Mary Louise Goldback: Karl Radek und die deutsch - sowjetischen Beziehung<sup>en</sup> 1923 (Bonn/Bad Godesberg 1973) and Dietrich Möller: Karl Radek in Deutschland (Köln 1973).

represented both Russia and the Third International at the meeting of all three Internationals in Berlin, and they met again, probably in secret, at Hamburg in May 1923, which was almost certainly their last meeting.<sup>69</sup>

Radek appears to have known better than anyone else how to make use of Price's particular abilities, yet Price never gave the slightest indication in later life that he had ever been closely associated with him. Radek's implication in the Moscow trials must have been painful to Price but he never spoke of it. Of course he knew more than one of the defendants, but none as well as Radek. But whereas he heavily and frequently underlined the text of Bukharin's last plea in the official transcript of the trials, thus proving that he read them, there is not a word in the margins

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<sup>69</sup> In the early 1920s several attempts were made either to keep the Second International alive or to set up a new Socialist International, not so much in opposition to the Third International as providing a non-communist alternative. An organisation, unkindly known as Two-and-a-Half, began to emerge from a meeting in Vienna in February 1921 and resulted in the Berlin meeting of April 1922 at which both the Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union were represented. This was to be, in the words of the invitations, which were sent out by the British Labour Party, a "general international conference of class-conscious proletarians". Radek was one of the representatives of the Third International and played a prominent part, as noted by Price in My Three Revolutions (pp.195-196). The Third International withdrew, in the course of subsequent attempts to organise a follow-up conference, but, in May 1923 delegates of 41 parties from 30 countries representing all shades of socialist tendency except communism, met at Hamburg and formed themselves into the Labour and Socialist International, which lasted until 1939. Radek, obviously, was not officially at Hamburg and Price did not mention either the conference or Radek in My Three Revolutions, but it seems that Radek was there secretly, since Price began a letter to him in June 1924: "I have been wanting to write to you for some time, first to tell you about my doings since I saw you in Hamburg last May..." (Price papers). For further reading about the Internationals, see Julius Braunthal, History of the Internationals Vol.I 1964-1914 (English translation London 1966), Vol.II 1914-1943 (1967). Chapters 11 and 12 of Vol.II deal with the immediate post-war period. See also Jane Degras: The Communist International 1919-1943 Documents selected and edited in three volumes (1956); and E.H. Carr The Bolshevik Revolution Vol.III.



of either the examinations or the last plea of Radek. Price's last reference to Radek, written in the late 1960s for My Three Revolutions, suggests that somewhere along the line Radek had been too clever for Price and had offended him:

"I found Radek one of the most acute minds I can remember. He could size up a situation in no time and my poor slow brain could hardly follow his mental gyrations. I realised also that he could be quite unreliable and an arch-intriguer".<sup>70</sup>

(ii) Journals: The Call and Kommuna

The first number of The Call was printed in Moscow and issued on 14 September 1918. The paper continued to be printed weekly from then on until at least the end of 1919. By January 1919 the regular printing of the paper was 15,000 copies.<sup>71</sup> The fact that Joe Fineberg, who had previously worked on the journal of the British Socialist Party which bore the same name, was closely involved in the production of the Moscow paper almost certainly accounts for its title. Price was thought to have edited it for a while but there is no firm evidence of this and indeed Fineberg categorically stated that he was the editor (see Chapter 9, Footnote 5). On the other hand Radek said that Price edited it (see Chapter 10, p.333). If so, it can only have been until the end of November 1918, when he left Russia. It must be said that there was a marked change in the tone and style of The Call in the course of the autumn of 1918. An analysis of the first 17 issues is given in Appendix IX.

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<sup>70</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions pp.182-183.

<sup>71</sup> The Internationalists p.548.

The policy of The Call was stated over what would have been the leader column in a more conventional journal: "The Call is published by the Central Executive Committee of the Council of Workmens' and Peasants' Deputies with the object of convincing its English-speaking fellow workers that the interests of the workers of all lands are the same, and to urge the need for establishing that solidarity of international labour upon which alone the peace of the world can be secured. The Editorial Staff hopes to keep its readers informed of the progress of the class struggle at home and abroad."

All the articles which appeared in The Call were unattributed, the only proper names to appear being those attached to direct quotations from the speeches or writings of Lenin, Trotsky and Tchicherin. What follows is an attempt to identify the articles that Price probably contributed during the first months of its existence. This will be done on the basis of his style, the use of words or phrases characteristic of him at that period, subject matter that had already demonstrably interested him in the past or of which he had special knowledge, or subject matter of which it is unlikely that other - mainly Americanised - members of the Group of English-Speaking Communists would have had special knowledge (as the English wool trade in the seventeenth century). It is easy enough to identify the articles he did not write because of the American spelling which characterised an increasing number of them as time went on.

The first number of The Call contained a short article which fits exactly into the category of those which it is difficult to imagine anyone other than Price having written, in Moscow, at that time. Moreover in terms of layout it occupied a place roughly corresponding to that of a leading article in a more conventional journal, and it would not be surprising



if an article by him had been given a place of honour in the first number. Price had taken a leading part in the formation of the Group and his commitment to the Soviet cause at this time was, as has already been noted, both recognised and appreciated by some, at least, of its leaders. In any case the article, short as it was, strongly echoed The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia which he had finished writing only a few weeks earlier. Entitled "Two Expeditions", the piece contrasted the first British expedition to Archangel in the seventeenth century with the one currently taking place.<sup>72</sup> Then, the Englishman had come to Russia "as a friend", to trade. Now the English were "trying to cover their friendliness under the threat of machine guns and artillery." The article briefly recapitulated the Soviet Government's attempts to get material aid from the British earlier in 1918 but concluded that the Allies never had any intention of helping the Russians; they intended, rather,

"to punish them for daring to abolish the sacred rights of property... We are convinced that if the truth were known the British workers and soldiers [would] refuse to be the tools of their own exploiters."

The second issue (21 September) contained the first of what was to become one of the more regular features of the journal: a column, sometimes more, on the "Progress of the Revolutionary War." It is tempting to ascribe these to Price, at least until the end of November 1918, because as a

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<sup>72</sup> Price got the century wrong. In 1553 a group of London merchants sent three ships to seek a north-east passage to the Indies. Two were lost with all hands but the third, captained by Richard Chamberlain, was shipwrecked in the mouth of the Dvina, much to the surprise of the local inhabitants who had never seen or heard of foreigners before. He was taken to Moscow carrying a letter with which he had had the forethought to provide himself, from Edward 6 to Tsar Ivan 4, asking for permission to trade. This episode was to result in the formation of the London Muscovy Company with charters from both the English and Russian governments. A short account of this episode is given by Geraldine M. Phipps: "Manuscript Collections in British Archives relating to pre-Petrine Russia". Canadian American Slavic Studies Vol.6 (1972) p.400.

former war correspondent this kind of reporting had become second nature to him, whereas most of his colleagues on The Call were more purely political and polemical writers. Another article in the second issue, entitled "Four-Square against all Imperialists" also seems likely to have been contributed by him. Despite its title it was merely a plain account of the reasons why Russia had been compelled to get peace at Brest Litovsk; the article then described some of the unexpected consequences of that peace so far as Germany was concerned. German troops had come under the influence of Bolshevism; it had proved almost impossible to get any food out of the Ukraine; the German warlords saw "the Napoleon's fate awaits them". It was not, said Price, surprising that the Supplementary Treaty of Brest Litovsk just concluded had contained a number of major concessions favouring the Soviet Government.<sup>73</sup>

The third issue of The Call (28 September) contained nothing which suggests the hand of Price; if he did contribute it must have been in the capacity of editor, in which case the results were not distinguished. The entire issue was composed of 21 excerpts from Allied and neutral papers. The fourth issue on the other hand included what might again be described

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<sup>73</sup> The supplementary treaty of Brest Litovsk was signed in Berlin on 27 August 1918. Under its terms Russia was further penalised to the extent of 6 billion marks of reparations, the cession of Estonia and Livonia, the recognition of Georgian independence and the promise to Germany of 25% of all the oil from Baku. But Russia gained in return a German undertaking to withdraw from Bielorussia, to occupy no more territory and to cease supporting counter-revolutionary movements in Russia. Price, in his Reminiscences (p.343) notes that the Bolsheviks were "jubilant" about the terms of the supplementary treaty, and regarded them as a vindication of Lenin's diplomacy. In his diary he noted that he had discussed the treaty with Radek on 9 September. Kurt Riezler, at that time First Secretary at the German Embassy in Moscow, recorded that in a secret Appendix the Germans offered their own and Finnish troops to help evict Allied intervention forces from North Russia and Baku. See also Konrad H. Jarusch: "Co-operation or Intervention? Kurt Riezler and the Failure of German Ostpolitik 1918", Slavic Review (1972) pp.381-398.



as a leader, which not only bore a strong imprint of Price's style but also contained a reference to Goethe: one of Price's favourite poets.

Hung upon the newspeg of the Austrian peace proposals,<sup>74</sup> the author itemised the reasons why Austria could be expected to sue for peace at that time.

"So ... the dove of peace goes forth with its message. But it finds cold comfort in the camps of the imperialists... The French Government laconically replies that Austria can always have peace if she wants it, on the condition, of course, that she first allows herself to be throttled... [The British Government] only went to war to protect small nationalities, still it could not possibly think of returning the German colonies in which English bankers have become so touchingly interested."

The article concluded that the Austrian peace proposal contained a lesson for all the world.

"And it is this. Peace will not be made by the Governments of the ruling classes but will be made over the heads of those governments by the people of all lands."

At least part of an article in the fifth issue (12 October) might have been written by Price. The main body of it, under the title "The Crash

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<sup>74</sup> By mid-August 1918 the German High Command had realised that Germany could not win the war, but were not yet ready to make peace on the basis of abandoning all their war aims. A conference of the political and military chiefs of the Central Powers was held at Spa with both Emperors present. On 30 August the Emperor Karl warned the Kaiser that Austria could on no account carry on through the winter. It was then that he first proposed that the Allies should be invited to send delegates to a neutral country for confidential and non-committal discussions, with the object of agreeing on a basis for peace negotiations. Despite every effort by the Germans to prevent him from doing so, Karl did precisely this in a public invitation to the governments of all the belligerents issued on 14 September. It was rejected by all the Allies, although the Queen of the Netherlands offered to make her residence available for such a meeting. On 4 October, when Germany finally sent to President Wilson a proposal for peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points, Austria sent a similar Note, but while negotiations between Germany and the Allies were still proceeding, the Emperor Karl informed the German Government that he was going to sue for a separate peace. Austria surrendered unconditionally on 3 November. See R.B. Mowat A History of European Diplomacy 1914-1925 (1927) Chapter 14, and Lloyd George, War Memoirs Chapter 85 Parts 1 & 2".

of World Imperialism", was about developments in Bulgaria, a country in which he had taken a keen interest and about which he had written at some length for the Manchester Guardian, although these despatches, too, had fallen foul of the censor. But the lead-in and concluding paragraphs drew conclusions about the significance of those developments to which it is unlikely that Price, at that time, subscribed, since he recorded his continuing reservations about the imminent demise of Imperialism even after the German revolution had broken out, a month later.<sup>75</sup> The "Progress of the Revolutionary War" column in this issue contained another indicator that Price was probably its author, being an account of class divisions among the Cossacks, a subject on which he had often written before. The front page article of the sixth issue (19 October) could have been another collaboration. The subject matter and scope of the article are typical of Price but the style is uneven and contains more revolutionary clichés than Price usually employed. (On the other hand he often said, decades later, that he thought his use of the English language had been the main victim of this period in his life.) The article argued that class war was the common factor in developments both in the Ukraine and in Bulgaria, and that the subjection of Bulgaria by the Allies<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> In his Reminiscences, published only three years later, Price did not permit himself to express the doubts he remembered half a century later, although he recorded the reservations expressed to him by Lenin (pp.345-356). In My Three Revolutions (p.142) he described the atmosphere in Moscow in October 1918 as apocalyptic: "a modern form of Slav mysticism which makes Russians often difficult to understand". He illustrated what he meant with his own reaction to seeing a newspaper headline: "World Revolution has Commenced!" "...Even I, who had in general now abandoned much of my former objectivity, began to feel doubts of this interpretation of events, especially after my interview with Lenin."

<sup>76</sup> The collapse of Bulgaria was a turning point in the process of bringing the war to an end. As the result of an Allied offensive on the Salonika front in September 1918 the Bulgarian Government sued for an armistice on 28 September. Hindenburg is reported to have said, on hearing of this: "Who would close the gap if Bulgaria fell out once and for all?" The terms of the armistice signed between Bulgaria and the Allies on 29 September made it clear that Bulgaria was, indeed, to be left wide open, and that both Hindenburg and Price, from very different stand-



could only mean one thing:

"... a footing for a grand invasion of Russia across the Balkans and the Black Sea." [This was] "sure to be one of the results of the penetration of Russian revolutionary influence in Germany, the Ukraine and Bulgaria."

The article went on to argue that the appointment of Prince Max of Baden as the head of a caretaker government in Germany was merely a device by the Kaiser to save his crown.<sup>77</sup> The Prince's willingness to negotiate with President Wilson on the basis of the Fourteen Points was another device, for "befogging the minds of the English and American working classes." Was this not "nothing more than the ghost, called from the grave, of the Holy Alliance?" Contemporary parallels with the Holy Alliance in one form or another were not infrequently cited by Price. This (sixth) issue also contained a "Progress of the Revolutionary War" column, this time dealing almost entirely with the way in which the Allied Governments had taken advantage of the Czechs in Russia:

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points, were right. The armistice provided for the immediate evacuation of all territories still occupied in Greece and Serbia and the demobilisation of the Bulgarian army, its arms to be deposited at points controlled by the Allies. The Central Powers were given four weeks to withdraw their troops, military organisations, diplomatic and consular representatives from Bulgaria. Lloyd George War Memoirs pp.3257-3258 and 3261-3262.

<sup>77</sup> Lloyd George described the creation of a German government that would pass for a democratic one as "a dummy facade imposed as an emergency war measure by the Emperor". This was fair enough insofar as the reconstruction of the German government was seen by Ludendorff as a precondition of armistice negotiations, and represented it as such to the Kaiser, who reluctantly signed the necessary decree on 30 September 1918. Next day Hindenburg let it be known that unless Prince Max von Baden agreed to form a new government he would sue for an immediate armistice. The Note to President Wilson was not, however, sent until 4 October, as Prince Max himself thought that the German High Command did not appreciate the implications of the Fourteen Points; moreover he was unconvinced that the High Command were not, in reality, playing for time in which to re-group their armies. Prince Max appears to have understood the situation rather better than Price gave him credit for doing. For instance, as early as 15 October he had written: "We are already in the middle of a revolution". But from where Price was sitting he could hardly have been expected to know that. See Memoirs of Prince Max of Baden (New York 1928) Vol.II pp.24, 68, 85, 87, and Lloyd George, War Memoirs Chapter 85, specifically pp.3283-3286.

"...for the real interests of the Czechoslovak peasants they cared not a rap, as can be seen from the plight in which they have left the Czechoslovak soldiers on the Volga."

The seventh issue of The Call came out on 26 October and its front page article took as its theme a passage in the Prussian paper Kreuz Zeitung about which Price had already written in an unpublished article for the Manchester Guardian (see above p.314).

It is quite possible that Price was the author of an article in this issue on the implications of that proposition, although if he was he came out much more strongly than he had done in any of his previous writings, calling upon the troops of the intervention to arrest their officers and refuse to fight the Red Army. Another column-long article in the same issue was almost certainly written by Price. Its theme was that, far from having no revolutionary tradition the English should remember that they had a very long one, beginning with the Peasants' Revolt, developing through the Civil War, and last heard from during the Chartist movement. If Ernest Jones and Bronterre O'Brien,

"names that should still be green in the memory of the British working class... could see what work British soldiers in Russia are engaged in, they would rush back to their graves in very shame."

The eighth and ninth issues of The Call were particularly well put together but there is not one item in either of them which has the impression of Price's style or reflects his particular interests. The main articles contained a number of American spellings and Americanisms perhaps reflecting the gradual change in the style and content of The Call which is perceptible in the course of the autumn of 1918 and which is dealt with in Appendix IX. At this time, in fact, Price must have been heavily engaged in writing his second major pamphlet which, when published, was



dated November 1918 (see below p.367). However articles which read as if he could have written them continued to appear, notably the intermittent series "Progress of the Revolutionary War". There were instalments under this title in both the tenth and eleventh issues of The Call (16 and 23 November). The first described the behaviour of the retreating Czechs on the Volga front, matched by that of advancing White Russians in Siberia, where the Allies were helping "to save the 'real' Russia from Bolshevik-German hands". In the Don and the Caucasus, continued the report, the Red Army was doing well, but since the re-opening of the Dardanelles<sup>78</sup> Krasnov would be looking for more assistance from the Allies.

"If British Tommies and Jacks don't want the eternal disgrace of going down to history as the hired bandits who helped to re-establish a bloodstained tyranny, let them be men enough to refuse to do this foul crime against humanity."

The eleventh edition of The Call had banner headlines: WAR IS ENDED on the front page. There were two items in it which could have been written by Price. One was the "Progress of the Revolutionary War" column, the subject of which was the apparent formation in the Caspian area of "'a joint Anglo-Turco-Russian counter-revolutionary alliance". The other was an account of the first Conference of the Committees of

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<sup>78</sup> By 9 October 1918 the Allies had already drafted and approved armistice terms for Turkey. Five days later Turkey joined with the other Central Powers in sending a Note to President Wilson, on similar lines. But the Turks could not wait for a conclusion to the negotiations and on 20 October sent their former prisoner of war, General Townsend (whom they had captured at Kut in April 1916) to sue for peace at Mudros. The British Admiral Calthorpe was empowered to accept the Turkish surrender and an armistice was signed on 30 October. The terms included Allied occupation of the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus and other strategic points; the use of Constantinople and other ports on the Black Sea as naval bases; Allied occupation of Baku and Batum, of those parts of the TransCaucasian railways then under Turkish control, and the withdrawal of the Turks from their positions in TransCaucasia and North West Persia to behind their pre-war frontiers. Lloyd George War Memoirs pp.3264-3266, 3312.

poorer Peasantry of the Northern Commune (as it was described) which had just taken place in Moscow. Though there is no mention of it in his engagement diary, this was exactly the sort of meeting to which Price was likely to have gone. His interest in the problems of agrarian reform had been evident throughout his time in Russia. His colleague-contributors to The Call, insofar as they can be identified, were almost certainly better grounded than he in the politics and economics of the industrial proletariat, but there can have been few who were better informed about the problems of the land. The article contained a remarkably succinct account of the various attempts to solve the problems of land distribution and food distribution since the Bolshevik revolution.

The twelfth issue of The Call appeared on 30 November, two days before Price left Russia for Germany, and not surprisingly there was no sign in it of any contribution by him. However five more articles appeared between then and January 1918 which he could well have written and left behind for use if needed, since all of them dealt more with the background to news than with news itself. In the thirteenth issue (7 December) there was an article indignantly headed "Under Whose Laws!" This referred to a recent declaration by the Allied governments that they would be invading South Russia to restore 'law and order'. This had stated that

"all the unhealthy elements of the populations of Russia, the Bolsheviks and their sympathisers, are declared outside the law."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> The following is an extract from Price's Reminiscences (p.357):  
 "On November 16 the Neue Nachrichten, organ of the German forces of occupation in the Ukraine at Berdiansk, printed a manifesto of the Allied command in South Russia. It ran as follows: 'We inform hereby the inhabitants of Odessa and the neighbourhood that we have arrived on Russian territory with the object of restoring order and of freeing



The writer of the article in The Call was

"deeply grateful to the Allied governments for at last tearing off that thin veil of hypocrisy with which they have till now made fitful attempts to hide the cynicism of their imperialist designs."

He noted the "touching solidarity" between the Allied commanders and their former enemies, Generals Mackensen and von Falkenheim

"now careering about Europe offering their services to every oppressor of freedom they can find... A Holy Alliance indeed. ...to force capitalist 'law and order' on a people who, for the first time in the history of the world have made working class law and order."

The chief reasons for tentatively attributing this article to Price are stylistic and idiomatic.

The fourteenth issue of The Call (14 December) contained a column and a half on the history of events in the Ukraine since the March revolution; the Ukraine had long been one of Price's areas of special interest. The next issue (21 December) contained a column headed "Why Are You Fighting Us Now?" which could have been written at any time in the second half of November. One reason for - again tentatively - attributing it to Price is that the sense and style of it followed on from a leaflet entitled

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the country from the Bolshevik usurpers. Both the Germans and ourselves have come here not as conquerors, but as champions of right. Hence their objects and ours are identical... All unhealthy elements of Russia - that is the Bolsheviks and their adherents - are hereby placed outside the law. Persons harbouring them will be handed over to court-martial. We do not recognise any organisation except those which are fighting them - the Volunteer and Cossack Armies as well as the troops of the Constituent Assembly." A footnote to the page reads: "This manifesto was sent out by radio on November 20 and I saw a copy of it in Moscow a few days later. It was also reprinted in the Vorwärts for December 6 and in the Manchester Guardian for January 2." Price pointed out further down the page that the German military authorities could not have printed it in the Berdiansk Neue Nachrichten, under the nose of the Allies, if it had not been true, and no one could have sent the text out by radio from South Russia but the Allied commanders themselves.

Why Have You Come to Murmansk? which was definitely attributed to Price by the Russian historian Seleznev (see below p.361). The leaflet quite obviously related to the early days of the intervention; the article so to speak brought the story up to date. The writer challenged the Allies' pretence that they had invaded Russia in order to rescue her from Germany and set out the reasons why, if it was not true before it was less than ever true then. The intervention had all along been intended to destroy the Russian revolution. Ever since March 1917 the spread of revolutionary ideas in Europe had increasingly frightened the Allies; they were therefore bound to try all the harder to destroy Bolshevik Russia. Allied troops still fighting should be clear why it was they were fighting.

It was

"to keep the world safe for Plutocracy. Is such a cause worth dying for?".

Finally, on 1 January 1919 there appeared an article entitled "Destruction and Reconstruction" which could also have been written at any time in the preceding three months. It dealt with the capitalist press myth that the Bolshevik revolution had been nothing more than "an orgy of destruction" and outlined the process by which the industrial proletariat, educated by experience and guided by the Supreme Council of Public Economy, had learned from its initial mistakes and had succeeded in reconstructing much of the heavy industry which lay within the sphere of control of the Soviet government. Price was, at that time, very much impressed by the Supreme Council, as will be seen in some of his pamphlets (see below.)

The authors of The Internationalists state that the first number of another journal, Kommuna, appeared on 7 November 1918.<sup>80</sup> Produced by the

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<sup>80</sup> The Internationalists pp.352-3.



Petrograd Section of the Central Federation of Foreign Groups it was, like The Call, primarily intended for distribution to Allied troops on the Northern front, printed in several other languages as well as English. The authors quote from ten separate issues of Kommuna (identified in their footnotes) and name other writers who contributed to it, among them Lunacharsky and Gorky. Presumably, therefore, articles in Kommuna attributed by them to Price are so attributed because they were either signed or in some other way identified, and there is no reason to doubt that he wrote them. Although one of them did not appear until after he left Russia, it is as true of this one as of the others that he may have written for The Call, that he left them behind for use if wanted.

In the 14 November edition of Kommuna there was, on the basis of this evidence, an article by Price entitled "On the German Agents" which began by describing how he, as an Englishman, felt "dizzy" when he read the English newspapers. Public opinion in Britain and the USA did not know what was going on in Russia. Price refuted the allegation that the Bolsheviks were German agents and quoted the - by now familiar - passage from the Kreuz Zeitung to support his assertion that Germany and the Entente powers were planning to collaborate to destroy the Soviet state. He also pointed out that many soldiers from foreign countries, including Entente countries, were serving in the Red Army. Were they to be described as agents of the Kaiser?

On 2 January 1919 Kommuna carried another article by Price called "Their Real Objectives". Aimed at English and French soldiers, it pointed out that the war had been started under false pretences, as the Secret Treaties had subsequently shown. Now that the war was over, why had

the Allied troops not gone home? Why were they still being sent to suppress revolutions in Hungary and the Ukraine?

These summaries are, of course, taken from secondary sources, but the subject and style of them are compatible with Price's other work during this period.

(iii) Leaflets

In the course of his work as a translator for Narkomindel it is reasonable to suppose that Price was responsible for the English language versions of at least some of the early propaganda material put out by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. At the beginning of August 1918 Price had as yet little experience of propagandist writing, but he was by now an experienced writer with an increasingly distinctive style, and this would have been bound to influence the presentation of any text he was given to translate. At least one of these texts: Why Have You Come To Murmansk? was definitely attributed to Price by Seleznev, despite the fact that it appeared in two versions (leaflet and poster) one of which - the leaflet - was signed by Lenin and Tchicherin.<sup>81</sup> The poster was unattributed, and it is unlikely that the authorship of this text can now ever be definitely established. However it appeared to be addressed exclusively to British troops, and began by telling them not to believe that they had been sent to Russia solely for the purpose of defending the Murman railway against the Finns and the Germans. "Comrade, it is not true." The author invited readers to look at the map and see for

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<sup>81</sup> Seleznev. See above F/N 15.



themselves that the roads and railways from Finland ended hundreds of miles short of the Murman railway. If the Finns wanted to go any further they would first have to cross hundreds of miles of marshy forest land "and you know how difficult it is for an army to do that." If the Germans wanted to get to the railway they would have to take Petrograd first, and this they could not do without again declaring war on Soviet Russia: an unlikely event.

"You have been brought here to occupy our country in the interest of Allied capitalists. You have been brought here to overthrow our revolution and bring back the reign of Tsarism ! ! ! "

The leaflet/poster went on to support this allegation with quotations from the British press, and to explain that the Czechs were already being used for this purpose. The British landing in Murmansk was part of the scheme to co-operate with the Czechoslovaks. British troops were being asked to fight, not enemies but working people like themselves.

"Comrades! Descendents of the great Chartists! You have always expressed sympathy with the Russian revolution, are you going to assist the first efforts of working people to free themselves from their sweaters and exploiters?"

If Price wrote this it would have been the first time that he employed such a direct appeal approach. And yet the invitation to the soldiers to look at the map, it must be said, sounds very much like him.

Two other leaflets, issued later by the Group of English-Speaking Communists, could have been written by Price. One, Parliament or Soviet? was addressed "to American and British soldiers" but most of the points it makes were illustrated from British labour history and the British constitution. It made the case, in language which appeared over and over again in Price's pamphlets, that the Soviet provided a more truly representative form of

democracy than Parliament. The moderate appeal to troops with which it ended: to form their own "Soldiers' Councils" and demand to be sent home, is also typical. Price seems never to have brought himself to incite mutiny in so many words. One other leaflet, Socialist Russia - Capitalist England, has many features characteristic of Price, who always assumed that he would be understood and that the people to whom he was addressing himself shared his interest in the subject about which he was writing or speaking. His style was, in consequence, unemphatic, factual and rarely rhetorical. This leaflet, in a mere eight hundred words, describes with considerable lucidity how a socialist society - Bolshevik version - worked.

"Is it such an awful bogey? Do you think it is your business as working men to try and crush it? Compare the social system in Russia with what goes on in England."

The leaflet went on to remind the reader who owned the land and who produced the wealth of Britain; who got the benefit of the production, and what happened to a British worker when he grew old or if he lost his job.

"This is Capitalism. This is the system you are defending when you fight against Bolshevism. ... Which do you think should be crushed, Bolshevism or Capitalism?"

Again the leaflet called on the soldiers to demand to be sent home, but it ended more boldly than the other:

"...when you get there take your reckoning of the gang of plunderers who have devastated the world for their own profit. Sweep Capitalism from England as we have done in Russia..."



## (iv) Pamphlets

Between August 1918 and April 1919, when he became Daily Herald correspondent in Berlin and presumably had to begin spending more time on journalism and less on propaganda, Price wrote the texts of at least six pamphlets. A seventh, which seems to have appeared only in America, was an amalgam of three of those six. All but one of them were signed, and the unsigned one can be attributed to him with virtual certainty. Copies of fifteen different versions have been collected, involving eleven publishers and translations into four languages (German, French, Polish and Norwegian) besides the original English. There is no evidence that all his pamphlets were equally widely translated, but there is also no knowing whether more were not translated than it has been possible to find. For that matter, he may have written more than it has been possible to find. They were printed on very poor paper (although the design and type-setting was often remarkably good), and so far as the troops, at least, were concerned, it was not found advisable to be found in possession of one of them (see Chapter 11 p.404). Most of the pamphlets contain some indication of the month in which they were written, but some show only the year of publication.

The first appears to have been a straightforward translation, without any gloss: The Constitution of the R.F.S.F.R., published by the Department of Foreign Literature of Narkomindel, dated Moscow 1918 and not, of course, signed. Price wrote, however, in his Reminiscences, that while working as a translator for the Soviet Foreign Office he had made a translation of the Constitution. The chances are that this was one of the first things he did as a translator, and that he did it at the very beginning of August 1918 because by the second week of August, again according

to the Reminiscences, he was hard at work on The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. The pamphlet version of the Constitution appears to have been translated into at least one foreign language, because on the back of another of his pamphlets, listed among the publications of the Communist Party of Germany/Austria in 1919, is one attributed by name to M. Philips Price, entitled Die Verfassung der Russischen Räterepublic (The Constitution of the Russian Soviet Republic).

The second pamphlet was The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia, the first edition of which was published in August 1918 by Sovprop. A French translation was published in the same year in Berne;<sup>82</sup> and a second English edition, with a Foreword by J.F. (presumably Joe Fineberg) was published by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. It is quite possible that it was also published in the "Scandinavian languages" referred to by Radek in his letter to Ransome in September 1918 (see above p.333), but no copy has so far been discovered.

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<sup>82</sup> At the end of May 1918 a small Soviet news agency, Russische Nachrichten, was established in Berne, a location from which it was hoped to distribute propaganda material to France, Germany, Italy and - to a lesser extent - Great Britain (a realistic assessment being taken of the chances of getting much past the British censor). The agency proved remarkably successful in placing material in the European press, and it was decided to branch out into publications. Arrangements were made with a small and sympathetic Swiss publishing house, Promachos Verlag, in Belp (near Bern) to allow its name to be used as the publisher of translations of a number of works by Lenin, Trotsky and Radek. It also published pamphlets, including Price's The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia and Sadoul's Notes sur la Revolution Bolchevique. A detailed account of Soviet propaganda activities in Switzerland is given by Alfred Erich Sann, Diplomacy and the Revolution: the Soviet Mission to Switzerland 1918, University of Notre Dame Press 1974, Chapter 7 pp.111-127. An account of Russian propaganda production in Switzerland sent to the Foreign Office by the British Ambassador, is to be found in FO 371.4369.



The first sentence of this pamphlet, already quoted above (Chapter 7, p.210) bears re-stating:

"One of the most deadly weapons wielded by the ruling classes of all countries is their power to censor the Press."

Price went on to illustrate the effect of the exercise of that power in his own case, which had led him to take the way of the pamphleteer in order to lay the facts before the British working man, so that he could judge for himself whether he approved of British policy towards the Russian Revolution. Price went on to show that both the March and the November revolutions had been characterised by the desire to secure a universal peace, but that the second revolution had recognised that only a radical restructuring of society would remove the causes of war. From the moment they realised that this was happening, the Allied governments had begun to "plot" for the overthrow of the Russian Soviet government. Price then dealt with Brest Litovsk and disposed of the allegation that the Bolshevik leaders were German agents. The Russian army had been finished as the result of Allied pressure for a summer offensive in 1917. The Soviet Government had no alternative, in the winter of 1918, but "to bow to every ultimatum which the tyrants in Berlin send them." Price went on to describe the ruined state of the Russian economy and the refusal of the Allied governments to help in the work of restoration. Instead they had financed the Czech uprising in Siberia and completed the task begun by the Germans in Ukraine, cutting off Central and Northern Russia from all their main sources of food and raw materials, "condemning the workers and peasants of Muscovy to famine and their industries to destruction." What the British government was doing on the Murman was asking the British soldier "to impose fresh tribute on the Russian people... to still further increase their misery, indescribable as it is at present"

on the pretext that they were restoring law and order.

"Where is the order which brings war to a land that is already exhausted by three years of slaughter?"

Price concluded by reminding his readers that the tradition of freedom was "firm in the memory of the British working man". It was the British ruling classes who had tried to suppress movements for freedom in the eighteenth century in America and France. They had not succeeded then and they would not succeed in Russia now. But to bring this about

"the workers of England must know the truth and knowing it must dare to act."<sup>83</sup>

In November 1918 Price wrote another pamphlet: The Old Order in Europe and the New Order in Russia. This was signed and dated and first published by Sovprop. Another edition was published by the Socialist Publication Society of Brooklyn.<sup>84</sup> Yet another edition of it was published in

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<sup>83</sup> On p.700 of his Ms. "Back Bench Traveller" Price wrote: "I cannot see that there was anything treasonable in this. I was not to hear the last about this pamphlet for some time, and in some circles it has been held against me for the rest of my life. But if I had to live through this time again I would write and do exactly the same." Price used this passage in the edited version of the Manuscript, My Three Revolutions (p.135) but added to the penultimate sentence "and no doubt affected my career when I got into Parliament."

<sup>84</sup> The Socialist Publication Society began publication of a bi-monthly magazine The Class Struggle at 15 Spruce Street, New York in May or June 1917, almost certainly as a result of Trotsky's influence during his short period of residence in Brooklyn. At some point it moved to 431 Pilaski Street, Brooklyn where it continued to publish The Class Struggle but also began to publish pamphlets. Two of the first ten were by Price and one by Ransome. Theodore Draper in The Roots of American Communism (New York, Viking Press 1963) stated that "about half" the pro-Soviet pamphlets available in the United States in 1918-19 were written by British or American journalists, and he added Albert Rhys Williams to their number. It is not known whether publishers other than the Socialist Publication Society were involved but if so, no trace of them remains. The Society, too, disappeared when, as the result of the rivalries accompanying the formation of the Communist Labour Party, its editors split and the Party took the publication over.



May 1919 by the British Socialist Party in London, but for some reason they changed the title to Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia. A German translation was published in Berlin in 1919 under the title Die Wahrheit Über Sowjet Russland a title which, when translated back into English, is confusingly like that of his pamphlet, The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. It contained less argument and more information than the former, however, being in effect a short history of the origins and organisation of the Soviet Government. The chaos resulting from the failures of successive Provisional Governments had paved the way for the Bolshevik Revolution, Price wrote, and the immediate priorities confronting the first Council of People's Commissars had been self-evident: the ending of the war and the public ownership of industry and land. Price did not spend much time on defending Brest Litovsk in this pamphlet. Instead he gave a detailed account of the make-up of the national debt inherited by the Bolsheviks, and their realisation that if they were to secure any improvements for the population they would have to take over the banks, annul the internal war debt and repudiate the Tsarist government's foreign loans. He went on to describe the fissiparous tendencies which then emerged in the Russian economy: the Factory and Shop Stewards Committees, the Workmen's Councils and the Professional Alliances, and how the need had been perceived in January 1918 for the creation of some form of organisation which would reconcile all these conflicting interests in the national interest.

"The Supreme Council of Public Economy was the tool designed to create the new order in Russia; the Soviet was only the temporary weapon to protect the hands that worked that tool."

Price went on to make startlingly large claims for the Supreme Council.

He thought it would eventually become

"the economic nerve centre of public life ... destined to replace parliaments elected on a territorial basis without any qualifications to deal with the problems of industry, transport, foreign trade, finance etc. ... Free from the need of defending itself from enemies without, [the Supreme Council] combines legislative and executive functions and concentrates under its control the whole industrial and scientific apparatus of a modern state."

The pamphlet then described how the Soviet Government had begun to deal with "the third great problem of the revolution: the land." The Land Law of January 1918 had provided for what was in effect a three-option or three-tier system: state land departments, labour communes or co-operatives, and "peasant communes of the old style". But the law did everything to discourage the "old style". Committees of Poorer Peasantry had become

"the advanced guard of the revolutionary army, educating the backward peasantry in the remote rural districts during the summer of 1918 and incidentally ensuring that food began to come again from the villages to the starving towns."

The pamphlet concluded with a spirited denial that the Bolshevik Revolution had brought anarchy and chaos to Eastern Europe: rather the reverse.

Moreover, Price stated unequivocally:

"conditions are being created in every country of the world which are forcing the masses to liquidate the old social and economic system." The Russian Revolution was "...a signpost on the road of Time, marking the orderly progress of human society."

It is ironical that this relatively buoyant account - because Price did not, in November 1918, personally subscribe to the view that the German revolution signalled the imminence of world revolution - should have been translated into German when most of that early hope had already been



confounded by the events of January 1919.<sup>85</sup> The German version of this pamphlet differed, however, from the other versions in two respects: it was preceded by a long and thoughtful introduction by the German Socialist Ernst Däumig, and it contained a number of passages obviously written in especially for the German reader.<sup>86</sup> Däumig's introduction called attention to the pamphlet's relevance in Germany at a time when all the machinery of state propaganda had been directed towards making the man in the street frightened of Bolshevism, to the promotion of counter-revolutionary opinions, and to making it impossible for the frightened working classes to take any further steps along the road to Socialism. Däumig had gone on both to make distinctions and to draw parallels between the German and the Russian revolutions. The German Republic had "erected barriers between the German and Russian workers which must be pulled down as quickly as possible", but to do this "a clear account of the state of affairs in Soviet Russia was needed", and that was what Price's pamphlet provided.

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<sup>85</sup> Price published his own account of events in Berlin in January 1919 in his book Germany in Transition (1923) Chapter 2 pp.18-33.

<sup>86</sup> Ernst Däumig was a German Independent Socialist who had strong connections with the Revolutionary Shop Stewards: the German counterpart of the British Clydeside Shop Stewards. He organised political strikes against the war as early as 1915. He played an active part in the German November Revolution but considered that the Revolution had "committed suicide" when it rejected the soviet or council system of democracy and opted to retain the parliamentary form. He refused the offer of the post of Minister of War in December 1918. At the same time he was not a Spartacist. Price appears to have met him for the first time on 4 January 1919 and noted in his diary having a talk with him on 13 January, in the middle of the Spartacist uprising. Däumig, according to Price, considered it ill-timed and "disastrous" because the mass of returning soldiers were "not ready for the first steps of revolution". Däumig's introduction to Price's pamphlet does not, however, appear to indicate any loss of faith in the future of revolutionary socialism. He held a number of government posts in the Weimar republic and was murdered in the Black Forest in 1924. There are frequent references to Däumig in A.J. Ryder The German Revolution of 1918 (Cambridge 1967).

For the benefit of German readers Price wrote an entirely new preliminary section to the pamphlet, showing how the Bolshevik government had been systematically vilified by foreign powers and misrepresented "as a kind of castle held under a spell and the Soviet Government as Kundry." Not just the Entente powers but the Kaiser's government also had "convinced themselves that they had found everything about Tsarism in Russia good and the country in a healthy state." Price also wrote an extra paragraph about the Provisional Government, explaining that its weakness had enabled "the British and French financial wirepullers to persuade themselves that nothing had happened." That was, until the November Revolution. After that "It was useless to pretend that nothing had happened" and both the Entente and the Central Powers had "found themselves in trouble, united through the dangers by which the ruling classes of Western Europe felt threatened."

Another special section was introduced before that in which Price dealt with the Supreme Council of Public Economy, perhaps designed to calm any apprehension the reader might feel about the pace of change. In Western Europe, Price explained, societies had developed unevenly, capitalism both could and would hold out longer and a period of transition would be necessary before the working classes of Western Europe would be able to enjoy the benefits of socialised production. Price also interpolated an explanation, for this version, as to why the Soviet had felt obliged both to sign the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and simultaneously to appeal for economic help to the Entente powers, going so far as to offer them as a quid pro quo the partial recognition of Russia's obligations in respect of war debts, and concessions in respect of raw materials.

"This proposal for a commercial relationship with the Allies was like throwing a leg of mutton to a wolf with the intention of holding up the pursuit long enough for the sledge to get



to the safety of the next village. But the proposals were not taken up because the wolves thought that a whole sheep would be better than a leg of mutton. That is the real reason for the intervention of the Entente in Russia... They went there to destroy a regime in East Europe, the stability and example of which threatened the internal order which prevailed in their own countries."

In his next pamphlet Price addressed himself to the task of, if not justifying then certainly explaining the Red Terror. The text originally appeared as an article in the Norwegian paper Social Demokrat on 12 February 1919. It was signed by Price, then still described as Manchester Guardian correspondent in Russia, but a reference to the date of his departure from Russia makes it clear that he wrote the piece in January 1919. The same text appeared again as the middle section of a compendium edition of three pamphlets by Price published by the Socialist Publication Society of Brooklyn, under the title Red and White Terror in Russia.<sup>87</sup> It began, without defensiveness:

"In a country where the capitalistic system holds sway, persons who have committed high treason or who have taken part in conspiracies against the State are condemned to death or in any case to a long term of imprisonment."

Price did not have to look far back into history to find an example of what he meant: the execution of Sir Roger Casement. He went on to acknowledge that according to their own lights capitalist governments were perfectly entitled to defend their privileges. But in order to do so they needed to imbue their wage slaves with the spirit of militarism. The slaves of one country were trained to hate the slaves of other countries in the name of patriotism, or "pseudo-eros". Under the Soviet system patriotism could be equated with the international solidarity of the working classes, but this form of patriotism threatened the very foundations

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<sup>87</sup> The compendium pamphlet, called The Soviet, the Terror and the Intervention consisted of the texts of The Soviet System in Russia, Red and White Terror in Russia and The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia.

of the capitalist world and the expropriated classes of Soviet Russia were fighting for what they considered to be their rights, so the Soviet Government was compelled

"to make reprisals against those... who refuse to recognise the new social system."

When capitalists shouted "terror" to the Soviet Government they were hypocritically protesting against methods of class warfare which they themselves employed. Price went on to assert that the Soviet Government had not taken action against their class enemies until the latter had themselves begun to employ terrorist methods. He gave examples of Allied support for counter-revolutionary terrorist activities in Russia in the summer of 1918, mostly by Czechs and Right S.R.s. These had been serious enough to warrant the declaration of a state of siege, and during that period

"It is probable that three to four thousand agents of the counter-revolution met their death."

These were people who were convinced that the Soviet Government was about to fall, and nothing could shake that conviction except a show of strength.

Price distinguished between Red Terror, which was mass terror directed against a class, and White Terror, the agents of which were mainly Right S.R.s, a party which had traditionally dealt in individual acts of terrorism. The Red Terror, in conformity with Marxist principles,

"was not concerned with executing A or B but with keeping them as hostages for the good conduct of a large number of people who were representatives of the ruling classes."

But the Bolsheviki held no monopoly of these tactics. Price gave examples of mass terror practised by Krasnov and Kolchak, and by the armies of



all the belligerents, for that matter, in occupied territories: Belgium, Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria. Price did not balk at describing the Red Terror as a "frightful period". But he claimed that it had been

"abolished as soon as the Soviet Government had organised their internal forces so far as to be able to ignore those persons who did not recognise their authority... It has retired to the background and protects proletarian discipline and order. Its admonitory war-cry is Revolutionis salus suprema lex."

A translation of the article was sent from the British Embassy in Christiana to the Foreign Office in London. On the Minute accompanying the translation Sir William Tyrell, then as Assistant Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, wrote: "For perversion and inaccuracy this statement would be difficult to beat."<sup>88</sup> The Brooklyn Socialist Society's version of this pamphlet differed in respect of idiom from the translation made at the British Embassy; it may, of course, have been the original English version as written by Price, but unfortunately no other version has been discovered with which to compare it. But the American edition also differed in another interesting respect. It omitted a reference which Price had made to the virtual outlawing in America of the Industrial Workers of the World, about which he had written, in the original:

"He who commits the crime of being a prominent leader of that party may expect to be punished by death."<sup>89</sup>

Price must have written the text of his fifth pamphlet early in 1919; it could easily have been one of those he wrote while waiting to find

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<sup>88</sup> FO 608.181.

<sup>89</sup> It is not surprising that the sentence was left out, since it did not accord with the facts. Membership of the I.W.W. was never punishable by death although members of the I.W.W. lost their lives because of their membership. What Price was probably thinking of was the systematic harassment of the organisation by the American government. In September 1917 the Federal Justice Department, having failed to show

Radek in Berlin. It appeared that year in German, as Das Räte-System in Russland (The Soviet System in Russia) and it was also translated into Polish. The only version of it to survive in English appeared, untitled, in the Brooklyn Socialist Society's compendium edition. The 2,500 words of this pamphlet fall into two parts, one describing the political organisation of the working class in Russia and the other its economic organisation under the Soviet system. In the first part Price described with considerable honesty the chaos which had followed the Bolshevik decree on workers' control. He admitted that there had been "a modicum of truth" in the criticism levelled by the Menshevik Internationalists and the Novaya Zhizn group,<sup>90</sup> that this was not socialism but anarcho-syndicalism. The Bolsheviks, though determined to put an end to industrial anarchy, were "nevertheless by no means ready to magnify the centralised state",

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that the I.W.W. was receiving money from Germany, contrived to construct charges of various types of criminal conspiracy against 166 members, by quoting selectively and out of context from the masses of I.W.W. literature which they had confiscated by raiding the party's offices throughout the USA. In addition to wartime and anti-Bolshevik hysteria, there is little doubt that an attempt was also being made, by imprisoning the I.W.W.'s leaders, to break its hold on the lumber industry and pave the way for the more amenable A.F.L. Despite having to endure every kind of harassment, membership of the I.W.W. was, however, never a capital offence. Most histories of the movement were written either just before or immediately after the First World War; the first major reappraisal to appear was written by J.S. Gams, The Decline of the I.W.W. (New York, first published 1932, reprinted 1966). This was followed by P. Renshaw: The Wobblies. The Story of Syndicalism in the United States (1967). The most recent and most detailed account was given by Melvyn Dubofsky: We Shall be All. A History of the Industrial Workers of the World. (Chicago, 1969.)

<sup>90</sup> Novaya Zhizn was a daily paper, published from May 1917 to July 1918, and closely associated with the Menshevik Internationalists. It was edited by A.N. Tikhonov but is better known for its association with Maxim Gorky. Sukhanov was also a member of the editorial staff. It was closed down by the Soviet government in July 1918. Throughout its short life it retained its independence, sometimes supporting the Provisional Government and sometimes the Bolsheviks. Kamenev and Zinoviev, two Bolsheviks who had reservations about the wisdom of the timing of the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1917, did so publicly in the columns of Novaya Zhizn.



historically the main institutional support of capitalism. The recognition that some form of political organisation was required evolved gradually as a defence mechanism. Once the threats posed by imperialism and counter-revolution had disappeared the political organisation would "gradually cease its activities". However that day had not yet come, and in the meantime the political organisation of the state was vested in the Soviet system, which Price proceeded to describe. The central point of it, he argued, was that its highest authority was

"chosen by bodies of the people who are united by a common economic interest... Instead of being driven to the ballot box by some agent of a capitalist political party ... the voter of the future must join a workers' organisation ... a class-conscious proletarian whose right to vote was based on the fact of his status as a worker."

A decision-making executive composed of delegates who understood the real interests of their voters was, Price claimed, infinitely more representative than a system based on geographical district and political party. But the only real task of the Soviets consisted of

"defending the Republic against external and internal enemies, forming a frontier guard, maintaining connections with foreign capitalistic states, signing treaties and controlling foreign policies."

The real foundation of the new social order, Price maintained, was its central economic organisation, and the second half of this pamphlet was devoted to an account of its two main organs: the All-Russia Union of Trades Unions and the Supreme Council of National Economy (Vesenkha).<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Price always referred to Vesenkha as the Supreme Council of Public Economy, but more recently historians appear to be employing the term Supreme Economic Council or S.E.C. The original theoretical role of Vesenkha was to preside over the transition period of Soviet Communism until the elimination of the state became feasible. Almost at once the theory ran into opposition from the facts, above all the resistance of other organisations (workers' and peasants' interest bodies) and the devastating effects of the intervention and the civil war.

Price traced the development and organisation of industrial unionism in Russia and favourably compared its highest body with the British TUC, doomed "to pass resolutions which are thrown into the waste-paper basket by the factory owners". The Russian system was frankly syndicalist. But to eliminate the risk of inter-union anarchy, the Bolsheviks had invented the Supreme Council of National Economy to regulate relations between industries. Founded early in 1918 with, initially, a purely advisory function, Price described how it had quickly assumed an executive authority and had become incorporated with the Soviet of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) under the supreme control of the Central Executive Committee (TsIK), and "considered by the theoreticians of the revolution as the nerve centre of the future Socialistic state."

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In one sense, also, the history of Vesenkha is the history of the transition from war communism to NEP. Price noted the signs of opposition to it when he attended its very first public meeting (Reminiscences p.214) and observed that the representatives of both factory committees and trades unions were united in their suspicion. By the spring of 1918 Vesenkha was also encountering the hostility of the Left Communists. Although listed in the same category as the People's Commissariats in the Soviet Constitution of July 1918, responsible for carrying out the government's nationalisation programme, the days of its paramount influence were already numbered. By December 1918 Vesenkha's centralising tendencies and its use of bourgeois specialists came under increasing fire. In the course of 1919 even Lenin began to question its relevance and by the end of 1920 Vesenkha's status had been reduced to that of a commissariat with responsibility only for enterprises of a national character. One of the best accounts of Vesenkha is given in an unpublished doctoral thesis by Herbert Ray Buchanan: 'Soviet Economic Policy for the Transition Period: The Supreme Council of the National Economy 1917-1920' (Indiana, 1972). There is useful information about it in S.A. Smith: Red Petrograd (1983) pp.213-224; E.H. Carr deals with Vesenkha in considerable detail scattered throughout Vol.II of The Bolshevik Revolution, notably on pp.74, 103-104,, 114 and 180. See also Samuel A. Oppenheim: 'The Supreme Economic Council 1917-1921' Soviet Studies 25 (1973) pp.3-25. The last days of Vesenkha are described by Sheila Fitzpatrick in Soviet Studies Vol.35 (1985) pp.153-172: 'Orzhonikidze's Takeover of Vesenkha: A Case Study in Soviet Bureaucratic Politics'.



In April 1919 Price wrote the last of what must be regarded as this series of pamphlets as a more or less official apologist for the Soviet Government. But he had by now been away from Russia for several months, and there are signs in the text that he had begun to adopt a wider perspective. This was a booklet written in Berlin in April 1919 and published in London by the People's Russian Information Bureau<sup>92</sup> under the title The Origin and Growth of the Russian Soviets. In this, by far the longest of his pamphlets, Price allowed himself the luxury of not one short paragraph but five long ones on the history of the ideas and the economic and political factors which had brought about the March Revolution. He was able to feed into this account generalisations drawn from his own experiences both as a war correspondent and during his travels in the Russian provinces during the autumn of 1917 and the spring of 1918. He used these generalisations to illustrate and explain the origin of the soviets:

"the creation of the free spirit of man which had just burst the bonds

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<sup>92</sup> In May 1918 Sylvia Pankhurst, the suffragist/socialist whose paper, the Women's Dreadnought had changed its title to Workers' Dreadnought in July 1917, was approached by an intermediary and asked to assist in creating an organisation for the promotion of knowledge about Soviet Russia in Britain. What emerged was the People's Russian Information Bureau (PRIB), which began to operate in October 1918 in two rooms at 152 Fleet Street. The staff of the Workers' Dreadnought also produced the PRIB publications, and the same press was used. The PRIB was undoubtedly subsidised from Moscow, first through Litvinoff and then through Theodore Rothstein. The PRIB printed or reprinted and distributed material received from Russia and elsewhere. The following pamphlets printed by the PRIB are collected in the Marx Memorial Library: Seymour Cocks: Russia and her Allies; Douglas Young: British Consul Replies to Anti-Bolshevik Slander; George Lansbury: My Impressions of Soviet Russia; René Marchand: Letter to Poincare; John Rickman: An Eyewitness from Russia; Captain Jacques Sadoul: The Socialist Soviet Republic of Russia; Lenin and Tchicherin: Are You a Trade Unionist?; M. Philips Price: The Origin and Growth of the Russian Soviets; and three pamphlets whose authors are not named: Red Paper on Executions and Atrocities Committed; Russian Code of Labour Laws and The Russian Soviet Constitution. Information about the PRIB is scattered throughout Walter Kendall: The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-1921 (1969). The Sylvia Pankhurst papers are at the International Institute of Social History at Amsterdam.

of an archaic, now useless form of society." It was as though he had not heard of the 1905 Revolution, but his oversimplifications possibly had the virtue of catching the imagination of the reader and holding it while he proceeded to deal with the more mundane matter which formed the second section of the booklet, Order Out of Chaos. In this Price described how the desire for peace, originally articulated by the soldiers' soviets, had developed in parallel with the attempts of the workers to run industry by factory committees, and the seizure of land by the peasants. "None had heard of the Bolsheviks in those days". Kornilov's attempted coup had temporarily united the people in defence of the revolution but it had also strengthened anarchic tendencies. "If the Bolsheviks had not put themselves at the head of the movements, some other unknown group would have done so."

The next section dealt with Brest Litovsk. "There is probably nothing more tragic in modern history than the picture of revolutionary Russia struggling with the German war lords and deserted by the Allies." Price described the bitter conflict between the realists who recognised the need for a breathing space, and the idealists who would have preferred death to peace. He claimed that Brest Litovsk had given the German people "a taste of peace" which "broke their will to war", an opportunity of which the Bolsheviks had taken full advantage with their massive propaganda offensive, resulting in the further demoralisation of the German army. The breathing space had created an opportunity to begin building up the Red Army and to reconstruct the economic life of the country upon socialist principles. Price went on to describe how, instead of helping in the work of reconstruction the Allies, in the spring of 1918 had begun actively to support counter-revolutionary generals on the Volga, the Don, and in the North Caucasus, and to mislead and entrap the Czechs into



joining forces with them. (His account of the involvement of the Czechs makes greater allowances for the fact that they had been deceived than anything he had written about them hitherto.) In somewhat hyperbolic language Price then recounted the achievements of the Red Army in the Volga during the summer and autumn of 1918. "But it was too late to bring up food for the starving towns, for the ice had begun to set in." Meanwhile the counter-revolution had found another leader in Kolchak, and between them the counter-revolutionaries had succeeded in cutting off the people of north and central Russia from all their sources of raw materials. Gradually, however, their tactics had turned the inhabitants of the occupied territories against them. In the Ukraine, when the war ended and the Germans went home "the Red flood was indeed let loose... Everywhere along the western and southern borders of Muscovite Russia there has come into being a chain of labour republics. They sprang up everywhere like mushrooms, as soon as the artificial force of the foreign bayonets had been dispelled, like an unhealthy miasma before the pure wind of heaven" (an example of the occasional but striking metaphorical infelicities which have sometimes helped to identify Price's work). Remarkably, Price made only a slight passing reference in this section to the Allied intervention in North Russia.

The second half of the booklet is devoted to an account of the soviet system in practice. In it he enlarged on the account he had given in Das Räte-System in Russland. He also described more fully than in anything he wrote before his Reminiscences both the problems of agrarian reform in Russia and the various attempts which had been made to solve them, devoting some 2,000 of the 11,000 words of the booklet to this subject. It is noteworthy also that in his account of the structure of the economy he makes no reference to the Supreme Council of National

Economy, for which he had made such extravagant claims in the earlier pamphlet, referring only briefly to the existence of "a State Congress for managing the internal affairs of the different branches of industry." Instead he now appeared to be attaching more importance to the All-Russia Union of Professional Alliances - "the real labour parliament" - although his inconsistent use of titles makes it difficult to be sure to which body he was referring.<sup>93</sup> Price went on to make a lively defence of the democratic credentials of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets as compared with the short-lived Constitutional Assembly, in a passage which was perhaps aimed especially at British readers with a lingering nostalgia for the sort of representative institutions with which they were familiar. The booklet concluded with a direct appeal to "the working classes of England, France and America" not to listen to horror stories about Russia in "the inspired press of Western Europe" but to listen, rather, to the voice of the Russian people, who asked only for peace and economic assistance. The Soviet government would enter into relationships with

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<sup>93</sup> Price used at least four different titles by which to describe at different times what would appear from the context to have been the same body: the All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions. (The titles he so confusingly interchanged were: Central Trade Union, All-Russia Executive of Unions, All-Russia Union of Trades and All Russia Union of Professional Alliances.) Trade Unions were late to emerge in Russia and tended to be industry-based. The first All Russia Conference of Trade Unions took place in June 1917 and it elected an all Russia Council of Trade Unions but the first All Russia Congress of Trade Unions only met for the first time in January 1918. During most of 1918 the Unions were primarily occupied with the rivalry of the Factory Committees movement and the effects of the Decree on Workers' Control (14 November 1917). Factory Committees and Unions saw eye to eye only in their initial hostility to Vesenkha (see Footnote 91 above). By May 1918 the unions had begun to make common cause with the government (through Vesenkha) against the Factory Committees, and by the end of the year had gained ground over both. In January 1919 the Second All Russia Congress of Trade Unions was strong enough to require and enforce compulsory trade union membership, to declare that its decisions were binding and to begin to construct a wages policy. See E.H. Carr The Bolshevik Revolution Vol.II pp.62-63, 74, 103-104, 180, 198; S.A. Smith Red Petrograd pp.159, 213, 220-224. The standard work on Soviet Trade Unions is, of course, Isaac Deutscher, Soviet Trade Unions: Their Place in Soviet Labour Policy (1950).



capitalist governments on their terms if it had to, but

"if English, French and American workers take these matters into their own hands they will find in Soviet Russia a friend and ally."

There is one more pamphlet which is a borderline case. It is tempting to attribute it to Price although there is no firm evidence for such an attribution. Called Civil War and Red Terror it was published by the Group of English-Speaking Communists. There is no date or place of origin upon it and the only known copy to survive is in the Archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow. The title is the only indication of the time it was written. The temptation to attribute it to Price begins with the fact that he had already written one piece on the same subject, and it is not unreasonable to infer that he had written that one because he had been asked to do so by his old associates in Moscow. Civil War and Red Terror is in no way a revamped version of the piece which appeared as an article in Social Demokrat and was subsequently published as a pamphlet by the Brooklyn Socialist Society. It is longer and it is tougher, but it still reads as if Price had written it. The illustrations used to support the argument are all taken from English history. Although Fineberg, brought up and educated in England, is obviously a possible author of the piece, it somehow does not come across as if he did. Subject to this caveat, the pamphlet will therefore be summarised with the others of which it is known that Price was definitely the author.

The central argument of the pamphlet was that the Red Terror was as much a necessity of the class war as of the civil war. In this sense a clear line of development can be traced from the concluding statement of the

earlier piece: Revolutionis salus suprema lex. It began by accusing the capitalist press of hypocrisy on the subject of the horrors of the civil war in Russia. The capitalist classes had themselves started "the most dreadful war in history". What right had they to point an accusing finger at Russia?

"Civil war is the accompaniment to every revolution, and revolutions mark the stages of a nation's development."

The author cited Magna Carta, the Peasants' Revolt, the "Cromwell Revolution" and the Anti-Corn Law Riots as the landmarks of development in English history. The dominant class in society at any given moment was that which controlled the methods of production. Political struggle inevitably accompanied changes in the methods of production and such struggles tended to be violent. The author illustrated his thesis with two examples from the seventeenth century in England: the imposition by Charles I of a tax on wool exports, which had severely damaged sheep-rearing; and the ship tax which precipitated the civil war. The merchant class thus entered into a struggle with the King and the aristocracy which it won; but after the Industrial Revolution it, in turn, lost power to the manufacturing class. The struggle this time turned not on export but on import duties, notably the Corn Laws. In all these struggles the masses, who had done most of the fighting under the delusion that they were doing so in their own interests, always found that "their efforts only resulted in the enfranchisement of the class immediately above them." Under the capitalist system only one class now stood between the workers and power. The revolutions in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany had been "the first shattering blows against capitalism". But the Russian workers had learned from history, and made sure that after the successful outcome of the struggle of both capitalists and workers, combining



against the Tsarist autocracy, history did not repeat itself by installing capitalism as the sole oppressor.

"Russian politics in eight months completed a process of development which has not yet been accomplished by the workers of Western Europe during a period of more than a hundred years."

But inevitably, the very success of the revolution made civil war inevitable.

"...the ruling class has never, in any period of history, quietly accepted defeat. It is the overthrown class that instigates civil war... So it is in Russia."

This was why, the author went on, the revolution could not pass immediately into a period of complete freedom. Revolutionary discipline was essential until the revolution was secure, because "the deposed class will use the most treacherous means to secure its ends." In Russia they had not hesitated to call in both the Allies and the Germans "to murder their fellow-countrymen." Their officers had not only created the White Guard; they had also infiltrated - in order to sabotage - the Red Army. A reign of terror had begun early in 1918 in Finland, the Ukraine and the Don. The author devoted three paragraphs to the atrocities committed by counter-revolutionaries in those areas. The working class had to defend itself. "False humanity" was

"treachery to the lives and liberties of the workers. The Red Terror is not an evidence of the savagery of revolutionaries. It is called out by the White Terror employed by the ruling class back to slavery."

In a concluding paragraph which called for the ruthless suppression of resistance to workers' power, the author called for realism on the part of the workers of Western Europe; they must not be "misguided into believing that revolutions are as pleasant as a picnic."

Chapter 11. Philips Price and the Formation of Opinion  
on the Russian Revolution.

Throughout his life Philips Price was considered to be some sort of an authority on Russia even by people who did not agree with him about anything. His books saw to that. Although he was distrusted on the Right as a renegade and on the Left as a bourgeois intellectual, he nevertheless retained the reputation that he earned during his four years in Russia to the end of his life. There is, however, strikingly little hard evidence that his reports to the Manchester Guardian, especially those written in the period immediately before and during the Intervention, exercised as much influence on his contemporaries as is often imagined. The Press Bureau saw to that. The fact that he had been the Manchester Guardian's correspondent in Russia from 1914-1918 was, of course, the essence of his reputation, but it could be argued that this was based at least as much on what he wrote after he left Russia as on what he wrote from Russian soil. It is still unusual, even after 70 years, to find a serious book on the Russian Revolution which does not include his Reminiscences in its bibliography or make some other form of acknowledgement to material provided by Price. However the purpose of this thesis was to discuss what he wrote at the time of the revolution, and to show how effectively he was, in the end, muzzled. This is not, however, the end of the story, and it is not to say that his work was without effect or influence at the time. It is only to suggest that a good deal of hindsight has been brought to bear on the subject, and that when he is credited as having been one of the great journalists of the Russian Revolution it is of the articles that he wrote later on that many people may be thinking, since so much of what he wrote at the time never appeared in print. Indeed even when he was filing those of his despatches which did get through, there is some



evidence that they were not as highly or as widely regarded as those of Arthur Ransome except by a coterie. Yet Ransome left Russia in July 1918 and Price remained on the spot until December of that year.

Ransome, writing from Stockholm was, though by his own account censored, not suppressed. Price, writing from Petrograd, Volgograd and Moscow was effectively and selectively dealt with by Whitehall from as early as February 1918. It should be borne in mind, moreover, that during the period when Price was getting his despatches through more or less unscathed, that is between November 1917 and February 1918, he had not yet made up his mind how far he supported the Bolsheviki, and on the basis of his writing could by no means be regarded as their apologist.

An attempt will be made to assess the impact of his work under five main headings:

(i) on the contemporary left and liberal press and thus on the opinions of those who read it;

(ii) on those who read his propagandist writings, whether troops or civilians, at home and abroad;

(iii) on Whitehall and Westminster generally;

(iv) on the Union of Democratic Control in particular;

(v) and on the Labour party in Britain, which during the years immediately after the First World War was, perhaps, not as Little England as it subsequently became and enjoyed a greater sense of involvement with <sup>the</sup> European socialist movement.

## (i) Journalism: Price and The Left and Liberal Press.

The Left press had to take most of its foreign news at second hand, and most of its news from Russia was therefore taken from the despatches of Price and Ransome, but with the exception of Labour Leader, very little of what was reprinted was attributed to Price. He was completely ignored by The Call and hardly mentioned except venomously in Forward. The Workers' Dreadnaught took him up, but not until 1919. The Nation referred to him a few times and Common Sense used him virtually as an unofficial correspondent, but there was not a single reference to him in two other journals otherwise considered liberal: the New Statesman and the Cambridge Magazine. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Price's reputation on the Left as a reporter of the Russian Revolution was based on direct readership of the Manchester Guardian and owed very little to any reverberations in the Left Press. Robin Page Arnott, interviewed in 1983, recalled that after his release from imprisonment as a conscientious objector he found that Price's writings were being eagerly discussed by journalists in every pub in Fleet Street. Lord Fenner Brockway, interviewed in 1985, described how conscientious objectors newly arrived in prison brought Price's articles, taped to the soles of their feet to avoid detection when they were stripped on entry, which he then copied out for his clandestine prison newspaper.

Labour Leader (of which Fenner Brockway was editor until his imprisonment) was by far the most generous in its acknowledgement of Price's work. On 3 May 1917 it asked

"Who of us but a short six months ago could have conceived of the staid Manchester Guardian printing on its main editorial page the wonderfully fine and vividly picturesque article by M. Philips Price?"



On 19 July two paragraphs in the same journal began, as if becoming used to the idea that the Manchester Guardian was worth quoting:

"Socialist students of living history ought to make a point of reading M. Philips Price on the 'Kronstadt Commune' in the Manchester Guardian for July 17."

On 23 August Price's Kerensky-inspired telegram about the Stockholm Conference (see above Chp.3 p.95 ) was given prominence second only to the casualty figures in 'Notes of the Moment'. On 6 September Labour Leader's leading article on 'Finland's Bourgeoisie' contained the sentence:

"We confess to an amused curiosity as to how the bourgeoisie of Manchester read the immensely interesting and informed articles on 'Finland and the Russian Revolution' written by Mr. Philips Price on Friday last, apparently from Helsingfors."

There were no references to Price for the next three months, which is not surprising since Price was during that time travelling in the Volga provinces and nothing from him was appearing in the Manchester Guardian either, but Labour Leader quickly picked up his 'Through the Russian Provinces' series when they began to appear, describing them as "a series of intensely interesting articles", some of which were summarised in the 13 December issue. On 24 January 1918 a piece on the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly referred to

"Philips Price's admirably sincere articles in the Manchester Guardian".

The 28 February issue quoted three paragraphs of a despatch by Price entitled 'Russian Restoration' (printed in the Manchester Guardian on 21 February). On 7 March Labour Leader described his article on 'Russian Revolutionary Tactics' (Manchester Guardian 4 March) as

"yet another finely true description of the forces at work in and around Russia."

On 14 March there were extensive quotations from his articles 'Russia's Unratified Peace' (6 March) and 'What they fight for in the Ukraine' (7 March). On 30 May a section headed 'Philips Price's Testimony' described as "most interesting" his account of Pan-German intrigues in the Caucasus (28 May) and quoted the whole of its last paragraph. On 13 June:

"Friends of the Russian Revolution are still mainly dependent for news upon the special correspondents of the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News."

At the end of October nothing from Price had been printed for more than three months and Left journals were forced increasingly to rely on Ransome's despatches in the Daily News from Stockholm. The Manchester Guardian's reputation was sustained through its leading articles. On 31 October Labour Leader noted that

"The capitalist daily press, with the Manchester Guardian as an honourable exception, seems determined to bar out news of Russia."

Price was referred to for the last time after a gap of five months when, in the issue of 13 March 1919 he and Ransome were referred to in the same sentence as "reliable authorities" on Russia.

But even Labour Leader now seemed to switch its allegiance to Ransome. Price's pamphlets in English were hardly noticed. The issue of 29 May contained an advertisement placed there by the National Labour Press for Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia but it was never reviewed by Labour Leader. By 19 June it was not even included in the box of National Press publications which advertised, among other works,



Ransome's Six Weeks in Soviet Russia as "The Book you have been waiting for". Price was, perhaps, 1918's story. The redoubtable Joseph King, reviewing Ransome's pamphlet for Labour Leader on 12 June 1919 had so far forgotten Price as to write of Ransome:

"No one in his position had the courage and insight to prepare the Allies as he did for the collapse of Tsardom and the withdrawal of Russia from the fighting line."

As noted above (Chp.1F/N68) Forward's columnist Rob Roy had a very low opinion of Price's work, and only a few perfunctory references to Price's despatches in the Manchester Guardian were made in Forward between the Bolshevik Revolution and the Intervention. In one instance (8 February 1918) in which references were made both to Ransome and to the Manchester Guardian, the omission of Price's name appears deliberate. On 25 August 1918 Forward reprinted the whole of Ransome's Letter to America under the heading "The Truth About the Bolsheviki At Last!" On 26 October Forward repeated the Times Stockholm correspondent's report that

"Mr. Philips Price, the late correspondent of the Manchester Guardian... has joined the service of the Bolsheviks and is editing a Bolshevik newspaper."

On 19 March 1919 Forward reported Commander Bellairs' question about Price and The Call in the House of Commons (see below p.422) under the heading 'A British Bolshevik'. It also reprinted in full Scott's final disavowal of Price (see below, p.400).

The Workers' Dreadnaught throughout 1918 only mentioned Price by name once, and then not until 24 August, when Sylvia Pankhurst herself wrote in the leading article:

"No confidence should be placed in the Russian news which appears in the press unless the telegrams come through the Bolshevik agency. Philips Price in the Manchester Guardian and Arthur Ransome in the Daily News are the most reliable of the capitalist correspondents."

Price was not mentioned again that year, although articles by Ransome, John Reed and Albert Rhys Williams were reprinted. The Workers' Dread-naught made amends on 3 May 1919, however, when in a special Soviet number to celebrate May Day the whole of the front page consisted of a reprint of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. The editions of 19 and 26 July and 2 August also reprinted Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia in three instalments. (These were misleadingly called The Truth About Russia being a translation of the title given to the pamphlet in its German version (see above Chp.10 p.368).

Moving on to The Call (the London version), Price was only mentioned by name once between January 1917 and May 1919. On 17 January 1918 it acknowledged that the Manchester Guardian was an "honourable exception" to the suppression by the capitalist press of all references to Trotsky in connection with Brest Litovsk, but it did not mention from whom the Manchester Guardian was getting its information. The omission of virtually all mention of Price in The Call is not really surprising because it had, in a sense, its own correspondent in Russia in Joe Fineberg. Indeed the only really puzzling feature about The Call during the period under review is that though there was an oblique reference in it on 31 October to the formation of the Anglo-French Group, there was never any report of what became of the group. Nor was there ever any reference to its fellow-journal, the Moscow-produced The Call, on which both Fineberg and Price worked together, in whatever capacities. The editors in London must have known.



The Nation was renowned for its thoughtful and open-minded attitude to Russian affairs throughout this period, and its commentators obviously read widely and used every scrap of information they could find in building up and interpreting a picture of what was going on in Russia. But it quoted from Price only four times, twice attributing the material to him personally and twice noting only that it came from the Manchester Guardian. The Nation seemed to set more store by Ransome, described on 1 September 1917 as "the only correspondent whose telegrams are in any degree illuminating". Indeed in two articles on the Secret Treaties (1 and 9 December 1917), supposedly Price's greatest scoop, the Nation made no reference to Price and on 2 March 1918 was once more naming Ransome as the one "who alone of the correspondents seems able to use his opportunities".

The Herald took very little notice of Price apart from its one short-lived attempt to designate him as its Special Correspondent. On 12 May 1917 a short leading article had deplored the failure of the British press to make the position in Russia "either clear or comprehensible" and added:

"We must however make an exception in the case of the Daily News and the Manchester Guardian, especially the latter, whose correspondent at Petrograd is at great pains every day to explain the true position of affairs."

On 24 November 1917 the Herald printed one article by Price, possibly the least well-written of his career (see above, Chp.6 F/N2). It reads like the work of a very tired man, which he must indeed have been, and he either sent nothing else to the Herald or was not invited to contribute to it again. Since the Herald was constantly using material derived from the Manchester Guardian there would have been very little point, in any case, in adding to the paper's overheads by employing

its own correspondent. Moreover the Herald already had its own interpreters of Russia in Brailsford and Farbman, than whom there could hardly have been better men for the job.

Three generous tributes were paid to Price by leading figures of the Left in later years. In 1957 Harry Pollit wrote

"To their eternal credit two British writers, Philips Price and Arthur Ransome tried in the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News to give some objective account of what was taking place in Soviet Russia."<sup>1</sup>

In 1978 Harry McShane described how he and his fellow-workers "studied every report" of the March Revolution:

"The best were those written by Philips Price in the Manchester Guardian; he was their Russian correspondent, very sympathetic to the Revolution, and from his articles we could work out what was going on."

McShane also noted:

"The revolutionary element, including some of the I.L.P., began to understand workers' democracy for the first time. For the Glasgow socialist movement the new Soviet system was a revelation. From Philips Price's reports we got to know the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets' and to get some idea of what they were..."<sup>2</sup>

In the Golden Jubilee Souvenir edition of Labour Monthly in 1971 Palme Dutt made the handsomest acknowledgement of all. Noting that the Manchester Guardian had recently celebrated its 150th anniversary he went on:

"Mention of that journal of the old heyday of liberalism calls to mind one of its most distinguished foreign correspondents, Philips Price, who fulfilled an historic service

<sup>1</sup> Harry Pollit. 'The October Revolution and the British Labour Movement'. Marxism Today, October 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Harry McShane, No Mean Fighter (1978) pp.89 and 94.



when he gave, backed by the courageous editorship of C.P. Scott, the first truthful reporting in the non-socialist press of the Russian Revolution."

Although the names of Ransome and Price, of the Daily News and the Manchester Guardian, were so often yoked together, in admiration or in obloquy, it was the influence of the Manchester Guardian and of Scott personally that the anti-Bolshevik establishment in the Foreign Office most feared. The strongest evidence in support of this proposition comes from Lenin himself - a man not known for wishful thinking, when in a speech to the 6th All Russia Congress of Soviets on 8 November 1918 he said:

"The English bourgeois newspaper the Manchester Guardian of October 23 writes that, 'if the allied armies still remain in Russia and still operate in Russia, their purpose can only be to effect a revolution in the internal affairs of Russia.'

The allied governments must, therefore, either put a stop to their military operations or declare that they are in a state of war with the Bolsheviks. I repeat that the importance of this small quotation, which sounds to us like a call for revolution, like a most important revolutionary appeal, the importance of it lies in the fact that it was written in a bourgeois newspaper which is itself an enemy of the socialists, but it realised that it is impossible to conceal the truth any longer. If the bourgeois newspapers talk in this way, we can picture to ourselves what the masses of the British workers say and think."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin was, of course referring to one of Scott's leading articles. Between the beginning of August and the end of October 1918 he wrote nine, in which he questioned every aspect of Allied policy in Russia: military and political. On 5 August he concluded regretfully that armed intervention had only become possible because President Wilson had succumbed to pressure from the French Government. On 10 August he deplored the fact that the British Government had appealed over the

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<sup>3</sup> Lenin. Collected Works (English Translation) Vol. 28 pp.162-163.

head of the Russian Government to the Russian people, and wondered to whom they thought they were addressing themselves. He protested that this appeal had been published the day after Parliament had risen for the summer, so that the explanation which was "still due to the public" could now not be given, "but it is the sort of thing to which we are becoming accustomed." On 17 August he suggested that there were better ways of protecting the road to India than by sending a derisory token force to Baku. On 26 August he deplored the logistical folly of intervening via Vladivostock. "Much has been forgiven to Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay but they would never be pardoned if they defeated Marshal Foch in Siberia". On 30 August he asked what Allied policy viz-a-viz the Czechs really was: the Allies were supposedly "getting them out", but were they not "rather keeping them in and using them as a disintegrating force to upset the existing order in Russia?" The Allies had protested non-interference in the internal affairs of Russia, but by their actions were making it clear that "the Russian people may have any Government they like except the Government they have got, and that we will not interfere in their internal affairs except for the purpose of destroying that Government."

On 6 September Scott declared that the murder of Captain Cromie had, indeed, been an abominable crime, but devoted the rest of his leader to the argument that the murder was indicative not only of worsening relations between London and Moscow, but of increased danger of a war "which threatens to unite Moscow and Berlin." On 11 September he raised (not for the first time) the question of what - or whom - the Allies wanted to put in place of the Bolsheviks if they succeeded in bringing them down. Did they want to restore the Romanovs? "Have the Allies a political policy for Russia? If so, what is it?" On 20 September, after



the announcement that British forces had been withdrawn from Baku, he could not resist observing that he had pointed out the folly of the exercise from the start. The lesson should be learned, and the Allies should withdraw the Czechs, who were now running into stiff resistance from the Red Army in the Volga area, along the Trans-Siberian railway. On 23 October, in the article quoted by Lenin, the last major leading article on Russia before his thundering denunciation of British policy of 6 December (see above, Chp.9, pp.313-316), he pointed out, as the war in the West was clearly drawing to a close, that when the Allies had ceased fighting the Central Powers they would still be fighting in Russia. Why? If it was, as the American Government had stated, to get the Czechs out of Russia, the Czechs could get out of Russia whenever they wanted to, "...only they show no signs of getting out". So, he went on,

"Is it our intention and purpose to wage war against Lenin and Trotsky, or against the Soviet system, or against Bolshevik Socialism?...When blood was being poured out in floods everywhere the English people were not very curious about a minor stream of it. But when British blood stops flowing everywhere except in Russia, they will want to know the reason for this exception."

Except in the case of his article of 6 December 1918 in which, as has been noted, Scott appeared to be directly influenced in his choice of words by Price's despatch of 31 October, there is no other indication that any specific leading article was based on any specific message from Price after June 1918. But it is a matter of record that Scott sent Dore to look at them and report the gist of them to him, and it is a measure of the importance which he attached to those reports, that when Dore could not go to the Press Bureau and read them, Scott sent somebody else to do it (see above Chp.7 F/N109). It is not intended to suggest that Scott would not, in any case, have taken the line that he did on

Russia. But it may reasonably be proposed that the despatches he was receiving from his correspondent there gave him a great deal of support.

For all the talk in Whitehall, very little appears to have been done to put pressure on Scott until the end of 1918. Paradoxically, indeed, while his civil servants were beginning to assemble material for a White Paper on Bolshevik atrocities, Lloyd George was still speaking of the need to get more accurate information about Russia into the press. At a Cabinet meeting on 23 December he talked of the need to put home-based journalists in touch with "anyone who had returned from Russia". "There was" he was reported as having said,

"a Manchester Guardian correspondent who had just come back with a glowing account of Russian prosperity under Bolshevism, and it was desirable that all the information describing the true state of affairs in the country should be made public."<sup>4</sup>

It is inconceivable that Lloyd George was not referring - even if somewhat inaccurately - to Price's message of 31 October, an intercept of which had been circulated by the Press Bureau, and a copy of which could easily have found its way into his box. It would even appear that he knew that Price had left Russia, though he was wrong about his having "come back". The relationship between Scott and Lloyd George may still have counted for something, and it is not difficult to imagine that nobody was in a hurry to tackle Scott about his correspondent in Russia.

On 27 December Price wrote to Scott himself from Berlin. All that survived of the letter is a lengthy quotation from it which was included in a PID Fortnightly Report circulated during the spring of 1919. (Since only part of the report survives and there is no date on it, only the

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<sup>4</sup> FO 371.3346, War Cab.45.



season can be inferred. It included material dated between 27 December 1918 and 6 April 1919.)<sup>5</sup> The following is what appeared in the report.

"At last ... I am able to communicate direct with the Manchester Guardian again. I have during the autumn made attempts, probably futile ones, to send despatches ... about what was going on in Russia, for I determined that when the Allied Governments decided on intervention it was my duty to stay behind and redouble my efforts to explain to the outer world the folly and criminality of what they were doing... I see from back numbers of the Manchester Guardian that you have got an absolutely correct appreciation of the Russian situation, and are continuing the uphill struggle against the hailstorm of lies and wickedness... I have now absolutely given up all hope of persuading the ruling classes of England or, for that matter, of any country of listening to the voice of reason. Having lived through two revolutions in Russia, and living through a third in Germany, I have been forced to see that the world is now passing through a gigantic class struggle, in which the whole foundations of society are being constructed on more equitable lines. The war... was only one of the scenes in the drama... We cannot expect those interested in the maintenance of the old social order to voluntarily commit suicide. The war of the Allies against Russia is just part of the great class war which seems to me now inevitable throughout Europe, as the sole means of creating a stable peace and an equitable form of society. After the revolution in Germany I sent a radio to the Foreign Office in Berlin, and obtained permission to come... I felt that from here I could communicate what was going on in Russia and Germany better than from Russia... I had the good fortune to get here in time for the first All-German Soviet Congress, which I describe in two telegrams, copies of which I sent you... Please communicate with me and let me know if you get what I send."

It is impossible to know if Scott ever got the letter, since it was clearly intercepted, as was a packet Price sent off to him on 3 January containing, among other material, a copy of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. The contents of the packet were summarised in the same edition of the PID report as the one which contained Price's letter to Scott. By now, in any case, Scott must have known that Price had been described on the cover of the pamphlet as "correspondent in

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<sup>5</sup> F0371.4372.

Russia of the Manchester Guardian", even if he had not yet seen the pamphlet with his own eyes. Scott had also heard from Aylmer Maude, who was acting as a special correspondent for him with the British forces in North Russia. In a covering letter to Scott enclosing some of his despatches, Maude informed him on 17 January 1919 of Price's "present activities" as editor of The Call and author of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. He asked whether Price "has still any right to call himself a correspondent of the Manchester Guardian?"<sup>6</sup> Maude wrote this the day before Price, in effect, sacked himself and eleven days before Scott finally wrote to him. Scott's letter, too, appeared in the same PID report, which, in fact, contained no less than five references to Price. On 28 January 1919 Scott wrote as follows:

My dear Price,

I've been wanting to write to you, but have not known your address, and I'm not sure whether this will reach you. I'm sending you a wire to ask you to discontinue the correspondence for us. That would be necessary in any case because very little of what you telegraph gets through. But there is a further reason. It doesn't do for you, as our correspondent, to be carrying on Bolshevik propaganda. That may be right or wrong, but we ought not to be in any way mixed up in it, as I see we are in a pamphlet of which a copy has been sent to me, where you are described as our corr. in Russia. This may have been done without your authority, but obviously it involves our responsibility in a very considerable way.

I'm so sorry to have to complain at all after the splendid work you have kindly done for us in all these years, but you will understand our point of view. You must have had a terribly rough time in Russia lately but are I hope all right again now. When will you be coming home, I wonder?

Yours very sincerely,

C.P. SCOTT

Price never saw this letter until a few years before his death, when the historian of the Manchester Guardian, David Ayherst, found a copy

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<sup>6</sup> FO371.3341.



in the paper's archives.<sup>7</sup> It is not known, either, whether he received Scott's telegram, but the watchful eyes of PID picked this up too. It was addressed to a Mrs. Saxe Sluyters in Holland, for retransmission, and it apparently simply asked him to discontinue the correspondence.<sup>8</sup> PID also picked up a letter from Price to George Lansbury dated 18 January 1918 "offering his services as cable and mail correspondent to addressee's new labour daily" and enclosing "an article written in his characteristic strain of Bolshevik propaganda". (From the PID summary of it, this would appear to be Price's article on the Red Terror for Social Demokrat.) It is fairly clear, therefore, that Price himself, by mid-January 1918, considered that his relationship with the Manchester Guardian had come to an end.

On 21 February, after reporting Commander Bellairs' question about Price in the House of Commons (see below p.422), the Manchester Guardian printed the following succinct account of that relationship:

"Mr. Philips Price is a member of a well-known and distinguished family and was at one time Liberal candidate for Gloucester. He is a great traveller, and though he has never been a regular correspondent for this paper, he has sent us valuable letters from time to time from Persia, Armenia and elsewhere. He appears recently to have become a convert to the economic doctrines of Bolshevism, but we should be slow to believe him guilty of any dishonourable act. Since we were informed of his connection with Bolshevik propoganda we have requested him to cease to correspond for us."

After this obituary notice, nothing more was said in public about Price's relationship with the paper; after Scott's death in 1932 Price began to write occasional articles for it once more. But an estrangement took

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<sup>7</sup> John Ryland University Library of Manchester. Scott Papers A/P53/17.

<sup>8</sup> FO371.4372.

place between Price and Scott which appeared to widen rather than narrow with the years. In some ways Scott appears actively to have promoted the rift. Any attempt to explain it would be pure speculation, but an account of Scott's attempts to disavow his connection with Price as late as 1924 is given in Appendix XI. What matters is not how it ended, but what it tried to achieve while it lasted.

(ii) Propaganda

Quite early in the autumn of 1918 word was already reaching Britain of Price's propagandist activities. On 14 September the Times (as already noted in the extended footnote at the end of Chapter 9) contrived in its column 'Through German Eyes' to turn a perfectly factual quotation from an article by Paquet in the Frankfurter Zeitung into an allegation. According to the Times Paquet "charged" Price and Ransome with "pro-Bolshevik propaganda". The Times then proceeded to give a straightforward translation of Paquet's summary of 'The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia'. With something like unconscious humour the Times then quoted Paquet's own comment at the end of the summary:

"Doubtless the isolated protests of subjects of the Entente States against the policy of their Governments in Russia will not for the present stay the course of events. Both in England and in France nothing will be left undone to prevent these protests from becoming known. Nevertheless they will be heard."

Perhaps only readers of the small print appreciated Paquet's conclusion. In Price's own family reactions to the piece in the Times were mixed. Tuffet wrote an anxious letter to Trevelyan professing himself "greatly



concerned" for the position in which Price would find himself if and when he returned. His brother, on the other hand, was "delighted" by the piece but observed, also in a letter to Trevelyan, that "'friends and relations' will now be able to indulge freely in the words 'pro-German'". On 23 November the Times printed a Reuter fantasy from Stockholm, headed 'A Bolshevist for England', which reported

"advice from Petrograd... that the Bolshevists are hard pressed and intend making a supreme propaganda effort abroad, sending as special delegate to England Mr. Price, who will be styled President of the English Internationalist Group in Russia."

On this his brother commented, again to Trevelyan:

"If he comes he'll have more courage than I could have thought possible in any man. Either, he knows our people can't touch him or he doesn't care."

Neither hypothesis was the truth.

a) The Armed Forces

Evidence of the effect of Bolshevik propaganda literature on the armed forces - whether written by Price or by anybody else - is not abundant for obvious reasons. Official files containing any such evidence have either been pruned or are still not available to the public. But that it made an impact upon some of those who read it cannot be doubted, and some evidence of this is to be found. The most conclusive is in the Government's own White Paper on "The Evacuation of North Russia 1919",<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Newcastle University Library - C.P. Trevelyan papers. CPT82.

<sup>10</sup> The Evacuation of Northern Russia CMD818 (HMSO 1920) p.25.

which acknowledged that

"of the troops of several nationalities under British command on the Archangel front, the Director of Military Operations at the War Office reported in March 1919 that their morale was so low as to render them a prey to the very active and insidious Bolshevik propaganda which the enemy are carrying on with increasing energy and skill."

Enlarging on the low morale factor, a memorandum from the General Staff of 15 April 1919 which was included in the White Paper stated that, having issued a "frank statement of the danger of the present position" to the Press,

"For obvious reasons... the most alarming feature which is that constituted by the lowered morale of the Allied forces, could not be made public."

Troops in the conditions - both physical and mental - prevailing in North Russia in the winter of 1918/19, when some of their comrades even in England were striking for speedier demobilisation,<sup>11</sup> offered a soft target to the organisers of Bolshevik propaganda. "Every morning" Ironside wrote in his book Archangel 1918-19<sup>12</sup>

"we found placards pasted on the walls of buildings and tracts and pamphlets in many different languages were stuffed into the letter boxes of offices and private houses. Many had been printed quite lately in Moscow and must have found their way across our lines. They were well-written and always sent out in the names of Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik Foreign Minister Tchicherin. One of the cleverest appeared over the name of an Englishman."

That this was 'The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia' would seem to be corroborated by Lindley in a telegram from Archangel dated 3 January 1919.<sup>13</sup> It must have been sent in response to an enquiry from

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<sup>11</sup> An account of these strikes is given by Andrew Rothstein in his book The Soldiers' Strikes of 1919 (1980).

<sup>12</sup> Archangel, 1918-19 by Field Marshal Edmund Ironside (1953) p.58.

<sup>13</sup> FO371.3950.



London which in itself suggests that Whitehall was already worried about the effects of Bolshevik propaganda, because it began:

"Your telegram No. 435. There is no fraternising of troops."

He went on immediately to illustrate the cause for concern.

"Every effort is made to spread Bolshevik literature amongst them by pinning leaflets to trees and other means, but I am assured that men regard this as a game in which they do their part by scattering anti-Bolshevik leaflets... I will forward by first available safe opportunity collection of Bolshevik literature being distributed. Most poisonous and least honest is signed as correspondent of Manchester Guardian by a renegade Englishman named Philips Price known to Lockhart. Letter addressed last May by Mr. Ransome correspondent of Daily News to President Wilson is circulated amongst American troops with preface by Radek. Successful conclusion of war has of course robbed this stuff of many of its arguments and discredited prophecies."

Lindley sent on 16 January 1919 what appears to have been a covering letter for a memorandum by Ironside

"illustrating the unfavourable reception which is given to Bolshevik attempts at fraternisation, also specimens of the literature which is dropped over the lines by Bolshevik aeroplanes."<sup>14</sup>

He added that he was still "endeavouring to obtain" copies of the pamphlets by Price and Ransome. The fact that he could not easily lay his hands upon them may have been due to the fact that they were generally either destroyed (by the officers) or hidden (by the men). Andrew Rothstein recalled in 1986 that an old man had come into the Marx Memorial Library in the 1960s and presented them with a copy of the leaflet 'Why Have You Come to Murmansk?' He had volunteered the information that the local girls used to hand this sort of material out to the troops, but that if the officers found their men reading it they confiscated it.

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<sup>14</sup> FO 175.7.

Some, at least, of the men had obviously been interested enough to hide it from their officers. Possibly more remarkable still was the discovery, in January 1988, that Price's pamphlet The Old Order in Europe and the New Order in Russia, which was not written until November 1918 and had been presumed to be directed at a much more general readership than the troops in Murmansk, was also apparently distributed on that front in 1919, for a copy of it was presented to the Killam Library, Dalhousie University by a Canadian veteran of that campaign many decades later.<sup>15</sup> Another unsolicited testimonial came from a Major in the Royal Scots, who wrote in the Official History of the Brigade: "...the Bolshevik newspaper The Call supplied our men with their most regular and accurate information."<sup>16</sup>

In addition to working on the troops in the lines, Bolshevik propaganda was also directed to Allied prisoners of war. A PID memorandum written in November 1918 stated that there was already

"evidence that Bolshevik propaganda is at work among British prisoners of war in Russian hands. These prisoners have come to regard the Bolsheviks as their true friends who treat them as their own."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Killam Library, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Russian Microfilm. Supplement to Special List No. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Major John Ewing The Royal Scots 1914-19 (1925) (Two Volumes) pp.738-758. Ewing went on to observe that by the spring of 1919 the men were "puzzled why the fighting should continue in Russia when the armistice had put an end to hostilities in all other theatres. It seemed uncommonly like interference in the internal affairs of another nation. Such doubts had often invaded the minds of the men during the winter months... and none knew better than the Royal Scots that there was little prospect of stirring up in the minds of the Russian peasants an active hatred against the new Bolshevik Government."

<sup>17</sup> FO.371.4377.



A Government Committee was set up 'On the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War' and this dealt with prisoners of war released from Russian as well as from other theatres. An unattributed note in what remains of a file on this subject spoke of the need to keep prisoners returning from Russia under supervision "if and when" they returned and some, at least, of them were interviewed by the Special Branch.<sup>18</sup> Most of the transcripts of these interviews that survive mentioned The Call as having been the chief source of news available to the men. One of the officers, a captain in the Royal Engineers who was taken prisoner in March 1919, identified the Group of English-Speaking Communists as the source of much of the English-language propaganda which was distributed and noted, as if the names were familiar to him:

"Philips Price has, I believe, left for Germany. I am not certain whether the Daily News correspondent is still in Moscow or whether he has left. We were given a number of his pamphlets."<sup>19</sup>

An Engineer Sub-Lieutenant taken prisoner in an attempt to land two Russian agents referred to the widespread distribution among prisoners of war of The Call and of pamphlets by Price, Radek and Ransome.<sup>20</sup>

A number of soldiers: prisoners of war or in some cases deserters, were singled out by the Bolsheviks for special attention and brought to Moscow,

"where an attempt was made to help improve their understanding of the modern world."<sup>21</sup>

Some were then sent back to their units "loaded with proclamations and appeals".<sup>22</sup> Others actually contributed to The Call themselves: the

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<sup>18</sup> FO 371.3939.

<sup>19</sup> FO 175.1.

<sup>20</sup> FO 371.3941.

<sup>21</sup> The Internationalists pp.560-562.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

30 November edition contains letters from four soldiers testifying to the humaneness of their treatment by the Russians. The most famous apostate was Private Lapham of the Royal Scots, taken prisoner in October 1918, whose letter to his "brother Scots" was printed as a Bolshevik propaganda leaflet. Lapham appealed to his comrades to "think things over" and to

"ask yourselves is it worth while killing each other to please people who care not what happens as long as their pockets are being filled at our expense."

There is an echo of Price's propagandist style in Lapham's letter, and it is, indeed, possible, that the two men met, since Price was still in Moscow when Private Lapham wrote it, and had referred to the condition of British prisoners of war in language that suggested first-hand knowledge, in his last messages to the Manchester Guardian.

In addition to working on troops and prisoners of war on the Northern front, Bolshevik propaganda either written in French or translated into French was in circulation in the south. This was well attested by French Intelligence; Bolshevik tracts were found on French warships even before the troops they were carrying could be landed.<sup>23</sup> A French translation of 'The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia' is in the Institute of Social History at Amsterdam. On 12 July 1919 Sylvia Pankhurst wrote in Workers' Dreadnaught, after returning from Russia, about the powerful effects of

"Soviet propaganda carried on through literature distributed by aeroplane and by oral agitation in the rear and on the front

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Jabara Carley: Revolution and Intervention: the French Government and the Russian Government War 1917-1919 (1983) pp.117 and 144/145.



of the invading armies. The extraordinary power of this propaganda was illustrated by the breakdown of the discipline amongst the French troops, 70% of whom, according to a statement of General d'Anselmes, the commander of the French army of occupation in the Southern Ukraine and the Crimea, have been affected by Bolshevik propaganda. Unfortunately Comrade Jeanne LaBourbe and a dozen other comrades were shot as traitors for carrying on this propaganda."<sup>24</sup>

At present it is impossible to assess the effect of Bolshevik propaganda in Britain at this time, since the Home Office files on so-called subversive activities are closed until the year 2020. But in an article published in October 1957 Harry Pollitt revealed that

"copies of the appeals of the Bolshevik leaders distributed to the British soldiers and sailors inside Soviet Russia became available in Britain. They were reprinted by the revolutionary workers and distributed in the factories, labour organisations, streets, and inside and outside military depots."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In a speech delivered to the First All-Russia Congress of Working Cossacks in March 1920 Lenin alluded to the propaganda warfare which had been part of the Intervention in the following words:

"True we had only tiny sheets, whereas in the British and French press propaganda was carried on by thousands of newspapers and every phrase was publicised in tens of thousands of columns. We issued only two or three quarto sheets a month; at best it worked out at only one copy for every ten thousand French soldiers. I am not certain whether even that many reached their destination. Why, then, did the French and British soldiers believe them? Because we told the truth, and when they came to Russia they saw that they had been deceived. They had been told that they were to defend their own country, but when they came to Russia they found that they were to defend the rule of the landowners and capitalists, that they were to curb the revolution. The reason we were able to win over these people in two years was that although they had forgotten that they had once executed their own kings, the moment they stepped on to Russian soil, the Russian revolution and the victories of the Russian workers and peasants reminded the soldiers of France and Britain of their own revolutions, and thanks to the events in Russia, they recalled what had once happened in their own countries."

Lenin, Collected Works, English Translation, Vol.30 p.385.

<sup>25</sup> Harry Pollitt 'The October Revolution and the British Labour Movement' Marxism Today, October 1957; reprinted from the Soviet journal Questions of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, also October 1957.

## b) Abroad

Evidence of concern about the effects of Bolshevik propaganda on neutral countries is not quite so scarce. In a PID memorandum of 2 November 1918 on 'Switzerland as a Bolshevik Centre'<sup>26</sup> it was noted that one of the "latest achievements" of the Bolshevik publishing house, Promachus Verlag (see above, Chp.10 p.365) was the publication of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia. On 9 November the British Ambassador in Berne forwarded to the Foreign Office a report by a former director of the Tsarist Press Bureau at Berne which described the various kinds of Bolshevik propaganda now being produced there and the ease with which it could be obtained in libraries and news-stands.<sup>27</sup> Price's pamphlet, subtitled (in this report) 'How the English Government is Strangling the Russian Revolution', was named as an example of the type of material in question. The earlier report had also warned, at some length, that it would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of Switzerland as a source of Bolshevik "contagion". Austria-Hungary, North Italy and South Germany were all at risk. Even the Entente countries, said the PID report, could supply "evidence as to the importance of Switzerland" as a source of supply for Bolshevik propaganda.

In the same month Whitehall was receiving alarm signals from British diplomats in Scandinavia. On 30 November the British Minister at Stockholm forwarded a report from the former Austrian Vice-Consul in Moscow which gave an account of the organisation of the Bolshevik propaganda machine in Moscow and named Price as the chief editor of the British edition of a propagandist organ designed to spread the idea of world

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<sup>26</sup> FO 371.4369.

<sup>27</sup> FO 371.3317.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



revolution.<sup>28</sup> A lot of the superficial detail of the account does not tally with what is now known, but in essence it was probably true enough. On the same date the British Minister at Christiania sent a secret memorandum of the discovery by the Norwegian Government of a large quantity of Bolshevik literature in the boxes of a Russian courier.<sup>29</sup> The Norwegian Government had not at that time recognised the Soviet Government, but the boxes were addressed to the representative in Norway of the Soviet Government. The boxes were opened by the Norwegian police and found to contain

"inflammatory literature in English, French and German" and "specially written articles by such persons as Trotsky and Mr. Philips Price."

Attached to the British Minister's covering letter (in the Foreign Office archives) is a report that "Norwegian Bolsheviks" had purchased the newspaper Social Demokrat, "formerly a fairly moderate and pro-Ally newspaper". While the term "Norwegian Bolsheviks" is probably hyperbole, the fact that this paper was soon to print an article by Price about the Red Terror (see above Chp.10 p.372) tends to suggest that there was an element of truth behind the rumour. Indeed Price himself made no bones about what he was doing. In a letter to Charles Trevelyan written on 12 May 1919 he said:

"I am writing in the Dutch, Italian and Norwegian left Socialist press and also... in Berlin, the Republik"<sup>30</sup>

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28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Newcastle University Library, C.P.Trevelyan Papers, CPT 100.

## (iii) Whitehall and Westminster

It is ironic that the best indicator of the effects - or feared effects - of Price's propaganda work is the amount of agitation which it appeared to inspire in Whitehall. By the beginning of September 1914, the mere fact that none of Price's messages had been passed by the Censor for the past five weeks suggests that some at least of the staff of the Foreign Office were well aware of his record as a journalist; certainly Gaselee, their link man with the Bureau, was. The news of his transition to overt propaganda seems, however, to have come as something of a surprise, despite the early warning given by the Times. The first account of his activities in this direction to reach Whitehall was written on 18 September by W.J. Oudenyk, the Netherlands Minister in Petrograd who was temporarily in charge of British interests in Russia. In a letter to Balfour primarily about negotiations for the release of British subjects held prisoner in Russia since the breaking-off of diplomatic relations, Oudenyk went on to report that he thought it was his "duty" to bring to the notice of the British Government information given to him by Captain Hicks of the British Mission about the activities of two Englishmen who were

"exerting a not inconsiderable influence on the situation in Russia by persuading the Bolsheviks that they may count on a large measure of support from the working classes in England."

One of these was Ransome, about whose movements Oudenyk proceeded to give a remarkably inaccurate account. The other was Price, about whom he appears to have been better informed.

"The case of Mr. Price is, if anything, worse, for he is working at Moscow in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on pro-Bolshevik propaganda. Among other things he is preparing literature for issue to the Allied troops in the North calculated



to spread sedition and has already sent off radio messages which suggest that the Allies have had a hand in the murder of Uritsky and the attempt on Lenin."<sup>31</sup>

Oudendyk's account was taken word for word from a letter written to him by Hicks from the American Consulate General in Moscow, which had been taken over by the Norwegians and where some of Lockhart's staff, including Hicks, had taken refuge. A copy of Hicks' draft, by means unknown, came into Ransome's possession and his marginalia to the passages concerning himself include "rubbish" and "show this to Lockhart, who knows that every word is untrue."<sup>32</sup>

Oudendyk's letter was received in London on 7 October. J.D. Gregory, the first to see it, commented

"With regard to Mr. Ransome and Mr. Price, we have long known about their activities."

The correspondence was then sent to the Director of Military Intelligence, whose comments do not survive, and to Stephen Gaselee, who did not comment. When it reached the office of the Parliamentary Under Secretary, Cecil minuted:

"Steps should be taken to consider whether any criminal charges would lie against Ransome or Price if they returned to England and their employers should be informed."<sup>33</sup>

The next news of Price came from Clive, the British Minister in Stockholm. Sent on 27 September, his telegram arrived at the Foreign Office on 11 October.<sup>34</sup>

"I learn from a reliable source that Price, correspondent of the Manchester Guardian in Russia, is actively associating

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<sup>31</sup> FO 371.3342.

<sup>32</sup> Ransome papers, Brotherton Collection. Brotherton Library, Leeds.

<sup>33</sup> FO 371.3342.

<sup>34</sup> FO 371.3374.

himself with anti-English propaganda in Petrograd and that he has written a violent pamphlet against English intervention at Murman. Previous information given to me by recent English refugees stated Price was actually running Bolshevik propaganda department and had presided at an anti-English demonstration two days after the murder of Captain Cromie."<sup>35</sup>

This telegram arrived at the Foreign Office via the Director of Military Intelligence who enclosed a note to Cecil suggesting that it might be possible

"to induce the Manchester Guardian to withdraw Mr. Price, their correspondent in Russia, if the facts are as stated in the telegram."

Failing appropriate action by the proprietors of the Manchester Guardian

the DMI proposed that Price's passport should be withdrawn "if it is possible to communicate with him." This led to a flurry of Minutes.<sup>36</sup>

E.H. Carr thought the most satisfactory solution would be to "disown" him, since "we cannot anyhow communicate with him." Gaselee added "You will have to find somebody who has some influence with Mr. Scott" and Sir William Tyrell, Director of PID, helpfully offered to "mention" the matter to Scott "if it is thought desirable", since Scott already had an appointment to see him within the next few days. Sir George Clerk was more circumspect:

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<sup>35</sup> This may well have been a garbled reference to the fact reported in Izvestia, that Price had presided over the first meeting of the Anglo-French Group. See Chapter 10 p.325.

<sup>36</sup> FO 371.3342.



"Even if the Manchester Guardian agree, which is not certain, I am not sure Mr. Price may not do more harm here or in a neutral country than in Russia.

I think we should rather collect such evidence as we have or can get as to his pernicious activities and consult our legal authorities, as already suggested by Lord Robert Cecil... and then, if we have a case, wait for him."

Clerk, writing on 23 October, was clearly referring to Cecil's suggestion after reading the letter from Oudendyk, and when Clerk's Minute accompanying Clive's telegram reached Cecil he merely added

"Please act on it."

By 30 October a copy of the Swiss edition of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia had come into Gaselee's hands. He forwarded it to the Russia Department of PID with the comment

"Its appearance in English is significant - it is doubtless meant for introduction into this country."<sup>37</sup>

Gaselee had obviously realised that the Swiss edition was intended for a wider readership than the Allied troops in North Russia. He went on:

"I do not know whether Mr. Philips Price is still writing for the Manchester Guardian (I have not seen anything of his there lately); but if he is, I should have thought that this pamphlet was quite sufficient ground to ask Mr. Scott to sever his journal's connection with him."

The pamphlet was now sent to the Foreign Office legal department for an opinion as to whether there were any grounds for a prosecution under DORA. Meanwhile on 8 November, Lockhart having returned to Britain with a copy of the Russian edition of the pamphlet and the first two copies of The Call in his luggage, he sent them direct to Balfour with a covering letter.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> FO 371.3341.

<sup>38</sup> FO 371.3342.

of The Call he wrote:

"This newspaper I know from the best possible source is edited and run by the Bolshevik Foreign Office. I have the very strongest reasons for believing that Mr. Price, is, if not the actual editor, at least one of the leading contributors.

I have known Mr. Price slightly for some years. He is a young man of about 32, undoubtedly clever and more sincere in his Bolshevik sympathies than a journalist like Mr. Ransome. Mr Price is a first cousin of Mr. Charles Trevelyan, the pacifist."

By now Gaselee had received an opinion from the legal department, written on 4 November by H.W. Malkin, as to whether either Price or Ransome were liable to prosecution under any law or Regulation then in force. The opinion given was that though both men had

"no doubt done many things which if done in England would have exposed them to prosecution under the Defence of the Realm Act Regulations"

the fact that they had done these deeds outside the country, and that neither the Act nor the Regulations had any extraterritorial application made it unlikely that an offence could be deemed to have been committed. Nor, in Malkin's opinion, was it likely that a prosecution

"for high treason committed abroad could be alleged, as I doubt whether the facts as disclosed in these papers could be held to amount to this."

Malkin concluded, however, that it might still be

"well to obtain an opinion from those responsible for the conduct of criminal proceedings, and I think we should submit the case to the Home Office and suggest that they should take the opinion of the Director of Public Prosecutions."<sup>39</sup>

On 16 November 1918 another flurry of Minutes was sparked off by the interception and circulation of Price's telegram of 31 October (see above,

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<sup>39</sup> FO 371.3342.



Chp.9,pp.313-315). This series began in the DMI's office, which was quite clearly aware of the Malkin opinion, one of the staff (signature unidentifiable) having "suggested some alterations" to the letter which Malkin had written to the Home Office. The file found its way to Sir Robert Clerk. Since prosecution under the Defence of the Realm Act had been ruled out, at least for the time being, Sir Robert resourcefully suggested that, rather than waste such a useful piece of evidence it should be sent to Sir W. Tyrell and PID, "who are working up the case against Bolshevism".<sup>40</sup> On the same day but in another place Balfour himself entered the lists, and sent a letter to the Under Secretary of State at the Home Office enclosing both the copies of The Call sent to him by Lockhart and the Swiss edition of Price's pamphlet. The Malkin opinion was used to anticipate that the difficulties of bringing any kind of action would be pointed out by the Home Office, but

"Mr. Balfour would be glad should the Secretary of State concur in the adoption of such a course, if the opinion of the Director of Public Prosecutions could be obtained as to the possibility of taking any steps against Price."<sup>41</sup>

A reply was received at the Foreign Office on 17 December, enclosing the opinions of both Basil Thomson and the Director of Public Prosecutions.<sup>42</sup> Thomson began by noting that Price was "believed" to be related to Trevelyan, was a member of the Council of the UDC and the author of The Diplomatic History of the War.

"He went to Russia, apparently about two years ago, and for some time since the Revolution Mr. Scott of the Manchester Guardian was in some anxiety about him believing him to be destitute. It now appears that he had taken very good care

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40 Ibid.  
 41 Ibid.  
 42 Ibid.

of himself by openly joining the Bolsheviks, and he and an American<sup>43</sup> are believed to be authors of some leaflets which were distributed among Allied sailors at Murmansk inciting them to mutiny. He was reported to be intending to visit this country to do propoganda for the Russian Bolsheviks, but a later telegram suggests that he is trying to go to Berlin. His pamphlet The Truth about the Intervention of the Allies in Russia (sic) and his articles in the first and second issues of The Call, published in Moscow, if published in this country would have rendered him liable to prosecution. I had a talk with Mr. Scott about him and he described him as an enthusiast; an impulsive kind of person who would take up any new political movement with enthusiasm."

The opinion of the Director of Public Prosecutions was that there was nothing in any of the documents sent to him upon which a prosecution for high treason could be founded.

"With regard to proceedings under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, if Mr. Price, or any other person, were to be found in this country with either of these publications in his possession, a prosecution could be instituted under the Defence of the Realm Regulations (Regulations 27(b), 27(c), and 42) and any person who was a party to the publication in this country, and any person in the United Kingdom who was a party to the publication there, of the documents in question might be proceeded against under Regulation 48. As the matter stands, however, there is no evidence of the commission of any offence punishable by the Courts of this country, because within their jurisdiction no offence has, thus far been committed. The two subsections of the two Sections in the Defence of the Realm Acts of 1914 and 1915, to which reference is made by Sir Louis Mallet,<sup>44</sup> only apply to the trial of offenders whose offences have been committed within the jurisdiction of our Courts."

The Foreign Office made the best of it. The first to comment on the accompanying Minute sheet was Professor J.Y. Simpson of PID

"Mr. Price is probably at present less harmful in Moscow or Berlin than he would be if in this country."

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<sup>43</sup> It is difficult to know who Thomson had in mind, but Bob Minor seems a likely candidate. Price and Minor had already, according to Paquet, been associating since August; Minor continued to be a friend of Price's in Germany in 1919; and none of the other American journalists or returned emigrants working in Moscow at that time were ever referred to afterwards by Price.

<sup>44</sup> Over the name Sir Louis Mallet somebody at the Foreign Office had written in pencil "Mr. Malkin(!)".



Simpson then added a lengthy afterthought, written in another hand (presumably dictated) but signed by him.

"Philips Price has been considerably more than 'two years' in Russia. I saw him in Tiflis in October '16 and he had then been more than 6 months in the Caucasus alone. He told me that he was a first cousin of Charles Trevelyan and had had a Cambridge (I think) career. His father was, I believe, an Indian Army officer who died when P.P. was a child. In October '16 he professed strong socialist views. I happened to meet him again in Petrograd in May '17, when it was quite evident where his sympathies were carrying him. He is a sincere and convinced Bolshevik and Republican in which he seemed to me to differ from Ransome, with whom Bolshevism seemed to be a pose."

Gaselee added:

"I have noticed one article by him in the Manchester Guardian in the last month or so, but only one, and that on a comparatively indifferent subject; a protest to Mr. Scott is probably no longer necessary, as Mr. Price is far remote and cut off from English journalism. If he should return to this country, we might reconsider his position."

Gaselee's comment was written on 27 December, and probably the articles he had seen were hardly about "indifferent" subjects, being those which Price had written and which had been printed about the German revolution; but as already noted, the Press Bureau seemed to find Price on the German revolution far less dangerous than Price on Russia.

Another, doubtless unintentional, tribute to Price's propaganda achievements was contained in a lengthy report by a returned businessman of Russian origin, Alexander J. Halpern, circulated in the Foreign Office in December 1918.<sup>45</sup> Halpern left Petrograd on 30 November and wrote his report on 16 December. It was predictably, indeed even understandably hostile to the Russian Government in the light of the experiences of the English community in Petrograd in the autumn of 1918. But hostility did

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<sup>45</sup> FO 371.3954.

not blind him to the achievements of the Bolsheviks in the production of propaganda.

"The Bolsheviks are doing wonders in this line, besides sending hundreds of millions of roubles (I know of 125,000,000 roubles sent to Sweden alone) to foreign countries. They have issued printed leaflets, pamphlets and periodicals in French, English, Swedish and German, being assisted therein by some Socialists from England, America and Germany whom they have in their pay."

Halpern then singled out Price, "whom the Bolsheviks have, as I understand, now sent to Berlin", and added:

"The news given out by Bolshevik employees like Price of the Manchester Guardian that the intellectual and bourgeois classes have allied themselves with the Bolsheviks is a deliberate falsehood."

Indeed the Manchester Guardian was in danger of beginning to suffer from a mild form of guilt by association with Price, and few opportunities were lost to draw attention to his connection with the paper, or vice-versa. In December 1918 the People's Russian Information Bureau reprinted as a small pamphlet Scott's denunciatory leading article of 6 December. When this reached the Foreign Office the only comment written on the Minute sheet came from Professor J.Y. Simpson of PID, who observed:

"The Manchester Guardian, which has supplied the material for this pamphlet, employs Mr. Philips Price."<sup>46</sup>

On 20 December Basil Thomson wrote to Scott informing him that he had received a copy of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia and that Price had described himself as "Correspondent in Russia of the Manchester Guardian" on the cover.<sup>47</sup> This was the first attempt on record by

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<sup>46</sup> FO 371.3346.

<sup>47</sup> John Rylands University Library of Manchester. Scott papers 335/65.



any official to implement Cecil's injunction in October to "act accordingly". On 13 January 1919 Thomson sent another letter to Scott: merely a covering letter enclosing some more pamphlets (unspecified), but in it he referred to his former letter in a way which suggested that Scott had not yet replied to it. Scott appears, indeed, to have been reluctant at this time to disown Price, although he was to do so later. Even Thomson, though now alarmed and alarmist about Bolshevik propaganda coming into Britain, was for some reason less than paranoid about Price personally. In a confidential report on 'The Progress of Bolshevism'<sup>48</sup> written by him as late as 28 January 1919 he acknowledged that several well-known and well-educated men (he instanced Gorki and Chaliapin) had thrown in their lot with the Bolsheviks, and that there were many "specious" aspects of Bolshevism

"designed to capture persons of all shades of opinion. It is not usually with the principles of a system of government that fault can be found but in the application of the principles... The rose-coloured accounts of the Bolshevik regime which are appearing in the Manchester Guardian are written by persons who have only the principles to go by."

To some extent he may have been thinking of Scott himself, but he must also have had Price in mind.

Serious pressure on Scott from Whitehall was in part unthinkable, in part unnecessary; pressure on Price was just beginning. The DMI's suggestion that Price's passport should be withdrawn had not been forgotten and on 20 January 1919 MI7(a), apparently still under the impression that Price was in Russia, wrote to the Press Bureau informing them that Price was

"possibly contemplating a visit to a neutral country. If he should go to a neutral country H.M. Representative there would

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<sup>48</sup> FO 371.3950.

probably be instructed to withdraw his passport. Will you please keep a look out for his arrival in a neutral country."

Across the bottom of the letter were written the words "Cable Room informed".<sup>49</sup>

The Foreign Office continued to pursue Price well into 1919. Since five questions about him were asked in the House of Commons between October 1918 and March 1919 they could hardly have done otherwise. On 24 April 1919 a telegram was sent to Paris, Brussels and Helsingfors informing the (presumably consular) officers there that Price, who was alleged in the telegram to have gone to Berlin "with Radek" had recently been sighted in Weimar.

"It is very undesirable that any kind of facilities should be granted to him. Please request Government to which you are accredited not to grant him any visas without previous reference to us."<sup>50</sup>

The common denominator in all the questions about Price which were asked in the House of Commons was the desire in some way to punish him, or at the very least to withdraw facilities from him. The first came from Sir William Bull, MP for Hammersmith, who, on 17 October 1918 asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs a number of questions about The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia and went on to enquire

"whether Mr. Price holds any documents authorising his work as war correspondent which are under the control of the British Government; and whether official facilities will be withdrawn from Mr. Price in respect of his journalistic work in Russia in view of the results likely to ensue from such criticism of British policy by British journalists in that country."<sup>51</sup>

Cecil, answering for Balfour, replied that he had not yet seen the pamphlet (indeed no copy of it had yet arrived in London), that Price held no

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50 HO 139.27

51 FO 608.188

51 Hansard 17.10.18. Col.340.



documents from His Majesty's government, and that it would in any case be impossible to communicate with him at that time. Nothing more was said in Westminster, although as has been shown there was considerable activity in Whitehall, until 20 February 1919, when Commander Carlyon Bellairs, Liberal MP for the Maidstone Division, asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he knew that Price had been editing a newspaper called The Call

"which is spread among British troops in the Murman territory; whether the newspaper has incited them to revolt; and whether full information has been collected in regard to this man with a view to his ultimate trial."

Bellairs was answered by the new Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cecil Harmsworth, who replied in the affirmative to all three questions.<sup>52</sup>

The possibility of punishing Price by preventing him from getting any money out of Britain was first raised by the Unionist MP Lt.Col. Walter Guinness on 27 February 1919.<sup>53</sup> Harmsworth replied that the question was receiving "careful consideration", although the surviving evidence suggests that it was not until April that really serious efforts began to be made to find out whether this could be done. Another line of approach was tried by Commander Bellairs on both 4 and 6 March, when he asked a whole series of questions based on the implication that Price had gone to Russia in 1914 to avoid military service and that as a man of property and a justice of the peace he ought to be deprived of any "honourable post" that he might still hold. Had steps been taken, he asked, to ensure that Price had "no control over his property in this country", that none of it was transferred to him in Russia by indirect means, and that the

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<sup>52</sup> Hansard 20.2.19. Cols.1103-4.

<sup>53</sup> Hansard 27.2.19. Col.1922.

Bolshevik government did not

"reimburse him in Russia in order that his property may be used for propaganda in this country."<sup>54</sup>

To this last ingenious proposal Harmsworth replied that he would take note of it. Whether he had taken any steps before, he certainly now proceeded to find out what he could do to prevent Price from getting any money out of the country. On 23 April he wrote to the Ministry of Blockade asking whether an exception could be made of Price when the black (or exclusion) lists of people not allowed to receive money overseas during the war were withdrawn.<sup>55</sup> The Ministry of Blockade consulted the War Office, the legal department of the Foreign Office and Basil Thomson, but all of them apparently replied that Price could not be singled out in such a way, as this would be a case of lex ad hominem. Harmsworth noted on the Minutes accompanying this correspondence that he was not happy with this opinion, since Price had been

"the subject of more than one question in the House of Commons and a very lively interest is taken in it. If there is an exclusion list I think he should be given a place on it."

The officials continued obdurate, and on 26 May Harmsworth accepted that since there were no longer any exclusion lists it was obviously impossible to put Price's name on one, but he added:

"We should however ascertain whether there exist other powers by which this 'very wealthy man' can be prevented spending his money in pernicious propaganda work abroad."

On 30 May the Ministry of Blockade advised him that when the peace had

<sup>54</sup> Hansard 4.3.19. Cols.187-188; 6.3.19. Col.582.

<sup>55</sup> FO 371.3951.



been signed there was

"no power whatever under any statute or under provision of the common law to prevent Mr. Price operating on his account in any method whatever."

Harmsworth accepted this verdict with what looks like an ill grace.

His final note on the Minute was "All right. C.H. 5 June 1919."<sup>56</sup>

It was perhaps no coincidence that less than a month later Price was arrested in Berlin. He was seized without a warrant during the night of 30 June/1 July and taken to the Moabit prison. His British journalist colleagues made "immediate and repeated protests" but it was not until 36 hours later that the German Minister of Defence, Noske, made a statement to the Press. He told them that Price had been arrested because of his political activities in Germany; that the German Government

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<sup>56</sup> The truth was that Price was trying to get hold of a large sum of money - £18,000 - but it was not with the intention of getting it out of the country, for himself or any other purpose. He wanted it paid to Lansbury, presumably to help with the cost of starting up the Herald as a daily paper again. From the letters which passed between Robin Price and Charles Trevelyan at this time it is clear that Price was both getting and receiving letters in Berlin, either via the Foreign Editor of the Daily Herald or via various addresses in Holland. The likelihood is that these letters were, however, read somewhere along the line and formed the basis of rumours that it was designated for "pernicious propaganda work abroad". As late as 7 July Robin Price was still under the erroneous impression that the Minister of Blockade was in a position to control payments out of Trustee accounts in Gloucester (which is where all Price's accumulated dividends for four years were being held), that he "allows no large sum to be paid of that account without permission, and he's never going to let it go to Lansbury. Possibly this order may be cancelled soon, but I doubt it." (Newcastle University Library, Trevelyan Papers, CPT Ex.81). No mention is made in any account of the Daily Herald at this time of any such sum having been paid over by Price, but Price's wife said, many years later, that it had been paid. Price himself never mentioned it.

itself had no particular interest in him, but that

"the British Government has the right to demand that Price be handed over to it."<sup>57</sup>

After his release five days later Price sent a note to the German Foreign Office in which he declared that

"the only thing alleged against him in cross-examination was that of propaganda among Entente troops in the occupied districts of Russia"

In his letter to Charles Trevelyan of 7 July (see F/N 56) Robin Price had referred obliquely to his brother's arrest:

"I suppose the German Government have either become frightened of Phil or have received orders from England to expel him."

On 18 July he wrote to Trevelyan again:

"I have a letter from Phil received yesterday. He says his arrest was engineered by 'khaki' 'west' of Berlin [sic] and that it was 'too near a thing to be exactly healthy' and that if they come for him again he will be 'well prepared'. That means he'll blow his brains out... He goes on to say he thinks the worst is over for him now and that he must return to England some day, where his real work is."<sup>58</sup>

The more improbable of these two forecasts was never put to the test and Price did not return to England to live for another four years, having been warned by a well-placed friend of Trevelyan's in the Civil Service -

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<sup>57</sup> Daily Herald 7 July 1919. The account of Price's arrest is taken entirely from the Daily Herald which, since Price was its correspondent in Berlin, may be assumed to have printed the most authentic version available. In the same account, it was noted that the American journalist Robert Minor, who had recently written some articles for the paper, was shortly afterwards arrested in Paris, allegedly at the request of the British authorities, and handed over to the American authorities at Coblenz. Jean Longuet, presumably on his way into Britain, had also recently been arrested at Folkstone and deported. "Our new secret police, the article concluded, "like the Tsarist model which they emulate are casting their nets wide and they are finding strange accomplices in their work."

<sup>58</sup> Newcastle University Library, C.P. Trevelyan papers, CPT Ex.81.



George Young<sup>59</sup> - that it would be better for him if he kept away for a while. Whether his "real work" was in England or whether he had already done it is another question.

iv) The Union of Democratic Control.

In attempting to assess the extent to which Price succeeded in reporting the Russian Revolution in the years 1917 and 1918, mention must be made of his relationship with the Union of Democratic Control, of which he was, as has been noted, a founder member (see above, Chapter 1 pp.28-29). By the year of the revolutions the UDC had a membership of 10,000, organised in four regional federations and fifty more branches unattached to federations. It was producing a monthly journal, U.D.C., and had published 24 pamphlets, 14 books and over 40 leaflets.<sup>60</sup> It was not uncommon for

<sup>59</sup> GEORGE YOUNG (1872-1952). Fourth Baronet. Educated at Eton and at universities in France, Germany and Russia, George Young entered the diplomatic service in 1896 and served in an unusually varied series of postings both overseas and at home until 1915, when he was First Secretary at Lisbon. When war broke out he asked to retire but was ordered to remain at his post until 1915, when he was told his services were no longer required. From 1915 to 1918 he served in an Admiralty Intelligence section and in 1918 he enlisted in the Honourable Artillery Company. From January to July 1919 he acted as Daily News correspondent in Berlin, when Price described him as his "fairy godmother". In 1923 and 1924 he stood for Parliament as a Labour candidate, and was appointed one of the expert advisers to the Labour Party (1920) and the Trade Union Congress (1924) delegations to Russia. His main occupations after the end of the war were, however, academic and literary. He was Professor of Portuguese and Examiner in Ottoman Law at London University from 1919 to 1922. His many publications reflect his postings and his travels and include a treatise on Ottoman Law (1904) and books on Nationalism and War in the Balkans (1914), Portugal (1917) and New Germany (1920). He succeeded to the title in 1930.

<sup>60</sup> Marvin Swartz. Union of Democratic Control p.48 fn.7, and Appendices B and E.

a printing of 10,000 copies of a pamphlet to be sold out within days and for several more editions to be necessary.<sup>61</sup> This in itself suggests that even the considerable size of its membership is not a sufficient yardstick with which to measure the influence of the UDC and the interest it generated among a wider public. As has also been noted (see above, Chapter 2 p.62) Price frequently referred to the UDC in his letters home as the only sign of political hope - as he saw it - in Britain. He was a regular and generous subscriber to its funds. In added justification of his decision to resign the Liberal candidature for Gloucester he told Trevelyan that the UDC could have all the money he had hitherto been obliged spend in nursing his constituency.<sup>62</sup> "He is a brick and no mistake" wrote Morel to Trevelyan, after an unexpected windfall from Price in 1916.<sup>63</sup>

In a letter to Trevelyan from Tiflis, written on 27 September 1916, Price said:

"I want to say how much I appreciate your letters both about me personally and also about the situation in England. I shall be most enormously delighted to receive such letters as often as you can spare time to send them and I in return will send you regular accounts of all that is going on in Russia. I hope that in this way I shall be of some use to the group around the Union of Democratic Control."<sup>64</sup>

By this time Price had already written ten of the thirteen letters or memoranda which were clearly directed to Trevelyan and of which there

<sup>61</sup> For example, the first edition - 10,000 copies - of Morel's pamphlet 'Tsardom's Part in the War', which came out in August 1917, sold out in 5 days and two further editions each of 10,000 copies had to be printed.

<sup>62</sup> Price papers, CPT, 6 June 1915.

<sup>63</sup> Newcastle University Library. C.P. Trevelyan papers, CPT 77. Letter from Morel to Trevelyan, 28 August 1916.

<sup>64</sup> Price papers.



are copies in the Price papers. Several of these refer to others of which no trace has yet been found. In both the Price and the Trevelyan papers there is evidence that many letters or parts of letters from Price to Trevelyan and to their aunt, Anna Philips, were copied and circulated. There is also evidence that at least some of those on Trevelyan's presumed circulation list were members of the UDC, and that he had been circulating copies of letters even before Price offered to write for "the group around the Union of Democratic Control". A copy of a long letter to Trevelyan, also written from Tiflis, on 30 March 1916, was found in the Ponsonby papers at the Bodleian Library. Another copy of the same letter was found in the Trevelyan papers in an unstamped envelope addressed to him at the House of Commons, clearly having been sent by hand.<sup>65</sup> A number of the copied extracts from other letters from Price in both the Price and the Trevelyan papers have the words "Please return to 14 Great College Street, C.P.T." written across the top in Trevelyan's handwriting. Considering the fragility of carbon copies and the limited number which could be made at any one time, it is remarkable that even this much evidence has survived. Another link between Price and the UDC was the fact that both the editors for whom he - officially or unofficially - worked: Scott and Hirst, were if not members certainly sympathisers with the Union. For example, on 25 November 1915 Hirst wrote to Trevelyan asking him to "do something" about the new consolidated version of the Defence of the Realm Act in the House of Commons before it got to the Lords,

"otherwise we may have a reign of terror between now and the reopening of Parliament... Of course the whole thing has a close bearing on the Press Censorship and I gather from the Press Censor that he holds that it is his duty to censor foreign policy."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Newcastle University Library. C.P. Trevelyan papers, CPT EX.75.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. CPT 73.

Most of the letters which Hirst later reprinted in Common Sense appear to have been addressed in the first instance to Anna Philips, but she, too, exchanged letters from Price with Trevelyan, and he made use of them in his way also. Clearly there were well-established links, through family and friends, between Price, the Manchester Guardian, the Economist, Common Sense and the UDC. It is unfortunate that the Economist's archives were destroyed in the Second World War, since among them there might have been further documentation.

One of the surprising things about Price's letters to his cousin and to his aunt is that they arrived at all. Only one typed copy, of a memorandum written in August 1917 (see below p.431) has a gap in it, filled by the words "CUT BY THE RUSSIAN CENSOR".<sup>67</sup> From its context, the missing sentence or sentences would appear to have been about the Kornilov rebellion. But as the war went on, and even more after the revolution began, Price referred more and more often to letters which he had sent and which had not, apparently been received, and this is more likely to have been due to British than to Russian censorship. The postal censorship in Britain was done in Liverpool not in London, where cables and intercepted wireless messages came more immediately under the eye of the Official Press Bureau and the Foreign Office. But some of Price's intercepted letters in 1918 came to light in PID summaries (see above, pp.397-400). Most simply disappeared, whether as the result of censorship in Russia, censorship in Britain, or submarine warfare. Thus those of his letters and memoranda to Trevelyan and Anna Philips which survive have a scarcity value which makes them more than usually interesting.

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<sup>67</sup> Price papers.



For example, in a letter from Petrograd written on 6 June 1915, a large section of which was typed for circulation, Price noted how the persecution of the Jews in Poland had helped further to disrupt the Russian economy. He also described in some detail, as being the only military initiative against any of the Central Powers which might have stood a chance of success, a Russian plan to capture Constantinople from the sea. But Russian defeats in Galicia, he said, had compelled the High Command to divert the troops assembled at Odessa for the purpose, to the Northern front.<sup>68</sup> In the letter from Tiflis of 30 March already referred to, he also wrote at length about the state of the Russian economy and the demoralisation of the soldiers with whom he had been talking - and these conversations must have been on the Caucasus front, where the war had been going relatively well for Russia. He reported that there had been food riots in Tiflis, Baku and Moscow, and that the Progressive Bloc were utilising public discontent not to agitate for peace but for merely fiscal reforms. "The days of the old regime are numbered" Price wrote, but "the autocracy and privileged classes will not yield up their position." An account by Price entitled 'The Background of the Revolution', written on 11 April 1917, appeared as the main article of the July 1917 edition of U.D.C. This was probably constructed from one or more of his letters, the originals of which have disappeared. It was supposed "to be continued" but the sequel appears not to have arrived. It is unlikely that if it had done so, it would not have been used. The only other article by Price actually to be printed in U.D.C. did not appear until December 1918 (see above Chp.6 p.186 F/N 39). but there were editorial references to his articles for the Manchester Guardian in the December 1917 edition, and at their meeting in February 1918 the General Council of the UDC resolved to convey

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

both to Price and to Scott their appreciation of the "admirable services" they had rendered to the work of the UDC by the publication of the secret treaties.<sup>69</sup>

Probably the most interesting of all the pages that he addressed to Trevelyan were three long memoranda which Price wrote in Petrograd on 17 and 18 August 1917 (see above, Chp.3pp.99-100). It should be remembered that at this time it had been agreed between Price and Soskice that the latter should write all the despatches on Russian government policy for the Manchester Guardian, and indeed Price wrote very little for publication during that month. These memoranda never appeared in print anywhere, but were certainly typed or retyped for circulation. In them Price described and explained many of the developments of recent months, but he also anticipated trouble to come. "Mediaeval serfdom" he feared "had given way so suddenly to international class consciousness" that as yet no "durable political structure" had been found for the expansion of ideas.

Hence the recent stages of the revolution have been marked by indecision and a certain lack of capacity to create in fact what is felt in the heart."<sup>70</sup>

In a letter to Trevelyan from Samara written on 22 September Price described the further disintegration of the Provisional Government and the increasing strength and "Maximalism" of the Soviets around the country.

"The masses in the country won't endure a coalition government which betrays the revolution behind their backs."<sup>71</sup>

The lengthiest of all the memoranda which Price wrote in 1917: 'The State of Russia between August and November 1917' was dated 2 November, three

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<sup>69</sup> Marvin Swartz. Union of Democratic Control pp.194-195.

<sup>70</sup> Price papers.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.



days before the Bolshevik Revolution (see above Chp.4 pp.114-116). There is a copy in the Price papers, but it was not typed on the typewriter that he had in Russia. There is no evidence that Scott ever sent copies to Trevelyan of what he himself was getting from Price and it therefore seems reasonable to assume that at the very least Price sent copies to both Scott and Trevelyan and that Trevelyan had his copy retyped. In addition to an extended account of what he had seen on his travels, the memorandum described the way in which "industrialists and bankers... with foreign assistance" had rendered the Democratic Conference in late September useless. It described the strength of support for the Bolsheviks among workers and soldiers in Petrograd but also noted the antagonism existing between peasants and the urban proletariat, which increased the likelihood of famine. Moreover the same combination of forces which had militated against any chance of success at the Democratic Conference were also hoping for the prolongation of the war, in the expectation that this would bring the revolution down. This explained the tremendous emphasis which "revolutionary leaders" were placing upon their campaign for a general peace.<sup>72</sup>

Although this memorandum cannot have reached Trevelyan until some time after the first news of the Bolshevik Revolution appeared in the British press, there was, it will be recalled, an interval of just over two weeks before the Manchester Guardian secured any reliable information from its own correspondent, and there was little hard news of any sort in any of the newspapers for several more weeks. Anybody able to read this last memorandum from Price would have been better briefed about the November Revolution than most, no matter when it reached Britain. Of course the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

extent to which Trevelyan made use of the material which Price sent to him is not something which can be quantified. What is certain is that he sent it to at least some of his colleagues in the UDC. But it is not, perhaps, stretching the point too far to suggest that the extraordinarily well-informed concern about British policy in Russia which was expressed in the House of Commons, primarily by MPs who were also members of the UDC, owed something to these private briefings.

Only two of the original signatories of the UDC manifesto were Members of Parliament: Trevelyan and Ramsay MacDonald. But within six months seventeen and by the end of the war twenty two MPs were also members of the UDC.<sup>73</sup> All but five were Liberals. For the first nine months of the war, as Ponsonby put it in a letter to Trevelyan,

"it was not the conduct of the war but the origins and the settlement about which we would wish to express ourselves" (Ponsonby's emphasis).<sup>74</sup>

The question of co-ordinating action across party lines did not then appear to arise. But by May 1915 Ponsonby was wondering whether the UDC should not now be expressing itself on subjects such as conscription, casualties and war aims.

"If we speak should not we decide on concerted action? Macdonald was rather in favour of our getting together our band and his collecting his Labour band and joining forces."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> At the second meeting of the General Council of the UDC, on 9 February 1915, the following MPs were present: C.P. Trevelyan, Ramsay MacDonald, Arthur Ponsonby, H.D. Denman, F.W. Jowett, W.H. Dickinson, W. Field, E.T. John, Sir Wilfred Lawson, Aneurin Williams, J.C. Williams, Sir John Barlow, Philip Snowden, Francis Neilson, H.G. Chancellor, D.M. Mason. Joseph King joined in October 1914 but was not present at that meeting. At the 4th Annual and 13th General Council Meeting on 31 October 1918 the following MPs were added: W.C. Anderson, R.C. Lambert, R.L. Outhwaite, Tom Richardson and J.H. Whitehouse. Hull University Library, U.D.C. Archives. Minute Book. DDC 1/1.

<sup>74</sup> Newcastle University Library. C.P. Trevelyan papers, CPT 74. Letter from Ponsonby to Trevelyan, 22 May 1915.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



By February 1916 this kind of collaboration was an established fact. On 3 February Trevelyan wrote to Ponsonby discussing who should propose and who second an Amendment to the Address on 15 February, Snowden being willing to do it "even if Ramsay still fights shy".<sup>76</sup> In the event Snowden led and Trevelyan followed up, not with an Amendment (as it had been put to them that this would imply a hostile motion) but with the first speeches in the debate of 23 February 1916 on the Consolidated Fund, in which they asked the Government for a statement of the terms on which it would be prepared to negotiate peace. Ponsonby and Outhwaite followed later in the debate. These four men became the nucleus around which formed a group which, for the next two and a half years maintained first a steady and later a relentless pressure on the government, particularly on three subjects: the desirability of a negotiated peace; the undesirability of censorship; and Russia. The most active were, as has been noted, Ponsonby, Trevelyan and Snowden, but they were closely followed by Outhwaite and eventually overtaken (if only in volume and sheer persistence) by King. Several MPs who were not members of the UDC, notably the Irish MPs Dillon and Lynch, and two particularly sympathetic - if not in all things - Liberal MPs, Pringle and Wedgwood, often joined with the other UDC MPs in backing up the main spokesmen.

Between them this group for the first time in the war divided the House on a Vote of Credit on 16 May 1917, when Snowden introduced and Lees Smith seconded an amendment calling on the British Government to issue a declaration of peace aims on the same lines as those recently endorsed by the Provisional Government of Russia. On 16 August 1917 MacDonald again divided the House on a Motion to curtail the forthcoming Parliamentary Recess, and in the ensuing debate Outhwaite, Snowden, Philip Morrell and

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<sup>76</sup> Bodleian Library. Ponsonby papers C 664.

King all managed to ventilate the subject of the Stockholm Conference. Between August 1917 and November 1918 the same group acted together in thirteen debates, nearly all of which had to do with British policy in Russia. On 16 May Ponsonby described, in a letter to Trevelyan, how he had co-ordinated tactics with Outhwaite and another member of the UDC in such a way as to compel Balfour to answer "specific points" in a debate on relations with Russia. "The only person who was enraged by our tactics was the Speaker. He actually gave orders... that none of us were to be called."<sup>77</sup> But as Ponsonby himself had said earlier in the year, when on 19 March he had seconded an Amendment proposed by Trevelyan calling for the appointment of a Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs:

"What are the opportunities for discussing foreign affairs in this House? The Foreign Office Vote, the Consolidated Fund Bill and the Motion for the Adjournment, and in addition questions. We can put aside the Consolidated Fund Bill and the Motions for Adjournment because everybody knows that questions can only be raised on these occasions in a very unsatisfactory way. The Foreign Office Vote is not always put down... It must be admitted, therefore, that the opportunities for discussing foreign policy in this House have, in recent years, been reduced to a minimum - they have arisen once or twice or three times perhaps in a Session."<sup>78</sup>

The value of the Parliamentary Question was quickly realised by members of the UDC, and by none more than Joseph King. In 1918 he asked 26 questions on Russia alone. As noted above (Chp.7 p.225), the Press Bureau could not prevent the reporting of speeches or of Parliamentary Questions although it could - and did - try to do so. With paper limited, newspaper reports of Parliamentary debates were not often very full except on great occasions, and even then the popular press did not devote much space to them. But most of the Left press had some kind of lobby

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<sup>77</sup> Newcastle University Library, C.P. Trevelyan papers, CPT 79.

<sup>78</sup> Hansard, 19.3.18. Cols.848-849.



correspondent (Ramsay MacDonald wrote regularly about Parliament in Forward, for instance), and the mere fact that the Government's policies on both Russia and censorship were endlessly and publicly questioned must have acted as some kind of restraint on the Government and, if only to a limited extent, promoted the circulation of views opposed to its policies. There can be no doubt not only that King made himself deeply unpopular through his endless questions about Russia, but also that everything possible was done to prevent them from being either asked, answered or reported. For example, on 27 February 1918, King having pre-arranged with the Foreign Office that he would be asking questions about the Russian Revolution and the Pope's peace initiative, Cecil pointedly left the House just before King could put the question.<sup>79</sup> When on 18 July 1918 he was told by Cecil that his question entailed military considerations King asked "Are there no political considerations?" The Speaker intervened, saying "The Hon. Member has had his answer."<sup>80</sup> In the debate which followed the Prime Minister's Review of the War, the last before the House rose for the summer, on 7 August 1918, not only was Murmansk not touched on in the Review, but not one of the UDC critics was called by the Speaker. It is inconceivable that none of them tried to catch his eye.

King appears to have had better - and certainly more compromising - information upon which to base his questions than sometimes the Foreign Office had with which to answer him. Until Tchicherin left Britain in January 1918 he would obviously have been a source, as indeed may have been any of his contacts through his work for the Russian Political

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 27.2.18. Cols.1499-1500.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 18.7.18. Col.1210.

Prisoners and Exiles Relief Committee. Though there is no evidence, it is unimaginable that King did not have equally easy access to Litvinov. He was certainly not unaware of what Price was sending to the Manchester Guardian as well as to Trevelyan. In the debate on Supply on 27 February 1918, he made a speech in which he contested the notion that the Bolshevik Government was not able to keep order in Russia and could not therefore be recognised. He pointed out that returning members of the U.S. Embassy staff at Petrograd had attested that the government was perfectly well in control, and added:

"the same judgement has been given by all the most experienced correspondents of the papers - the correspondents of the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News - about the only two daily papers which gave us warnings of the coming revolution and gave us the truth of the revolution when it did come."<sup>81</sup>

But it is difficult to believe that he was not being, even if unconsciously, influenced not so much by what had appeared in those two papers as by what Trevelyan had surely sent him privately. It is true that between November 1917 and February 1918 Price was sending, and able to get printed, a good deal of "the truth of the revolution", but his earlier warnings were almost entirely expressed in his memoranda to Trevelyan, at a time when he was writing relatively little for the Manchester Guardian except his accounts from the Russian Provinces, which did not in any case appear until after the November Revolution. That King was indebted - via Trevelyan - to Price for at least some of his information cannot be proved but does appear likely. One thing is certain, and that is that he continued to take an interest in Price after the end of the war and after he had lost his seat in the House. In a P.S. to a letter to Trevelyan

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid. 27.2.18. Col.s1495-1498.



on 1 January 1919 he wrote:

"I have a correspondence with Lord Beauchamp about Philips Price about which I want to speak to you."<sup>82</sup>

And in 1920 he asked Trevelyan for Price's address in Berlin.<sup>83</sup>

The success of the UDC in the years 1914-1918 was in its way proportionate to the success of British censorship. The extent to which Price succeeded as a reporter in Russia and the extent to which he failed was, it could be argued, almost as much due to the extent to which UDC Members of Parliament found their various ways round the restrictions, as it was to Scott's way of disregarding them. Asked to give his views on both the UDC and the Manchester Guardian in May 1985, Lord Fenner Brockway admitted that he and his friends had regarded the Manchester Guardian as a bourgeois newspaper but one which they would have read in any case,

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<sup>82</sup> The connection between Lord Beauchamp and Price is interesting. William Lygon, 7th Earl Beauchamp (1872-1938) was a convert to Liberalism. Made Privy Councillor in 1906, he was appointed Lord President in 1910 and again in 1914-1915, in the place of Morley who had resigned because of his opposition to the war. Beauchamp was also Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire from 1911-1931. There are five letters from him in the Price papers. In the first, written in 1912, he complimented Price on the way he had set about his Liberal candidature. In January 1914 he encouraged Price in his opposition to armaments: "Do put plenty of pressure upon us. It will all help and the influence of armament firms, direct and indirect, is very strong." In November 1914 Price sent him a copy of his Diplomatic History, which Beauchamp obviously read with great care and wrote three letters, on 10, 13 and 14 November, in which he politely but insistently contended that Price had distorted, in paraphrasing, part of a letter from Grey to Cambon. Unfortunately the page reference he gave is incorrect. But in Beauchamp's view Price had missed out a vital phrase which had provided for consultation between the French and British Governments so that "no amount of colloquing between the Staffs" could "in any way commit us without free opportunity to discuss each case on its merits. Without those words or something like them, several of us would have resigned then." Beauchamp supported the war but remained personally on good terms with Price. It would not be surprising if he had been asked, as a Privy Councillor, to put in a good word for Price when he was under fire in both Whitehall and Westminster.

Newcastle University Library. Trevelyan papers, CPT 78.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. CPT 102.

and that they did so the more readily because of Price's articles in it. But it had been a matter of surprise on the Left, he said, that it was the Manchester Guardian which printed such articles. Asked to account for the apparent lack of impact made by Price on the Left press, which he agreed was overwhelmingly dependent on other papers for its news from overseas, he replied that those who worked for the Left press regarded themselves as "a pretty exclusive bunch" and that it would not have surprised him if they had, at first, looked upon Price with some suspicion. Asked about the standing of the UDC on the Left, Lord Fenner Brockway said that it was very high, and that its members, and even those anti-war Liberals who were not members, carried more weight where opinion on Russia was concerned than did most members of the Labour Party. Thus, nearly 70 years after the Russian Revolution, an admittedly interested observer distributed the honours fairly evenly between the Manchester Guardian and the U.D.C. The denominator common to both was, of course, Philips Price.

#### v) The Labour Movement.

It could be argued that the best thing that Price ever did for the Labour movement in Britain was simply to come back in 1922, despite having been warned to stay away, and fight three elections in two years as Labour candidate for Gloucester, the first of which he lost by only 51 votes after three recounts. This in itself is some indication of the response of the British Left to the stand which he had taken in - and on - Russia. It can also be argued that his influence began to be politically useful even earlier, with the formation of the "Hands Off Russia" movement in



January 1919. This movement contained, of course, many Labour supporters but it also included Liberals and pacifists: exactly the same mix of people who had made up the constituency of the UDC. When the second meeting of that campaign was addressed by Lansbury in February 1919, Lansbury must already have been beginning to consider appointing Price as the Daily Herald's special correspondent in Berlin. Indeed it has been said that at this time Lansbury was making the affairs of Russia one of his principal concerns. "The Daily Herald never failed to contradict the more obvious falsehoods about Russia contained in other journals."<sup>84</sup> A connection with Price is surely inescapable. The need for the "Hands Off Russia" campaign appeared to have come to an end when in August 1919 the British Government decided to pull its troops out of northern Russia, but was revived a year later when it connected with the national Councils of Action campaign which played a considerable part in preventing the extension of assistance to Poland in her war with Russia. Again there is at least one indication that Price played some role by providing information which helped to support "Labour's unanticipated response": a phrase which Price heavily underlined in his review copy of the book in which it later appeared.<sup>85</sup> For at a public meeting in Gloucester on 14 December 1919 the following resolution was "carried with acclamation and unanimity":

That this meeting of over 500 citizens of Gloucester records its confidence in Mr. M. Philips Price, thanks him for the reliable information he has supplied, through the medium of his books, pamphlets, and the columns of the Daily Herald on the internal conditions of Russia and Central Europe, of the

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<sup>84</sup> Stephen Richards Graubard: British Labour and the Russian Revolution (Harvard and London 1956) p.56.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p.112. For further reading on both the "Hands Off Russia" and the Councils of Action campaigns, see also Stephen White: Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution (1979).

way in which he has so nobly and generously fought for the welfare of the toiling masses in all countries."

In reply Price sent an Open Letter to the Workers of Gloucester which was read at a public meeting on 11 January 1920. In it he set out the reasons why and how his beliefs had changed since he resigned the Liberal candidature, and accounted in detail his reactions to and actions since the Russian Revolution. One section of the letter is particularly relevant:

"...I can assure you that I am not wasting my time. I believe I can do more good in informing Labour in England about the Labour and Socialist movements on the continent than in returning to England. For the problem, as I conceive it, of the immediate future is to establish a sound, efficient Labour International, freed from all social-patriots, pseudo-socialists and weak-kneed compromisers. In doing my little bit to help in forming this, I believe I am serving your interests."

In a letter to Trevelyan on 22 January, W.C. Edwards, the leading Labour activist in Gloucester, later to become Price's Agent, neighbour and friend, related that the meeting had been very full and the press were present. "As you will suppose [it has] created a sensation here and in the country."<sup>86</sup> Edwards went on to say that at a special meeting of the Gloucester ILP it had been decided to issue the Open Letter nationally, as a pamphlet, and that 10,000 copies had been ordered for sale at cost (twopence).<sup>87</sup>

When Price returned to Britain in 1922 and lost his first electoral contest standing as an ILP and Labour candidate, he made no secret of his communist sympathies. Just after the election he joined a London branch

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<sup>86</sup> Newcastle University Library. Trevelyan papers, CPT EX.76.

<sup>87</sup> An Open Letter to the Workers of Gloucester from M. Philips Price  
Published by the Gloucester Branch, Independent Labour Party (Leicester 1920) Price papers.



of the CPGB but, on Page Arnot's advice, did not take his card back to Germany with him.<sup>88</sup> He left the party in 1924. By then he had been defeated twice more each time as Labour candidate for Gloucester, each time by a larger margin. In the late autumn of 1923 he brought his family back to England and lived on a farm in Gloucestershire for the rest of his life. His best-known book, his Reminiscences, had been published in both English and German in 1920 and continued to exercise a powerful influence on the Left throughout the 1920s and on historians subsequently, as one of the few serious contemporary personal accounts of the Bolshevik revolution in existence. Price continued to write in the Left press and to play an active part in the Labour Colleges movement throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. He was elected Labour MP for the Whitehaven Division of Cumberland (1929-31), when Trevelyan made him his Parliamentary Private Secretary, and for the Forest of Dean (subsequently renamed West Gloucestershire) from 1935-1959. Although his own political ideas moved steadily to the Right of the Labour movement he never lost his deep interest in Russian affairs or his love and hope for Russia. During the Second World War he was much in demand as a lecturer on Russian affairs and afterwards as a reviewer of books on Russia. He retired from Parliament in 1959 and died in 1973. Shortly before his death he was very pleased to be asked to write a short introduction for the proposed Russian translation of his Reminiscences, which has, sadly, not yet materialised.

At the age of 88 his draft included the words:

"Naturally I see things more in perspective today." But he went on to say: "I do not in the least belittle what I saw and wrote then. I still regard the Russian Revolution as the most important thing that had happened at that period of time."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Price Papers. Letter from Price to Albert Inkpin, 27.2.24.

<sup>89</sup> Price papers.

## APPENDICES

- I The Grand Duke Nicholas
  
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## APPENDIX I

## THE GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS

Stevens, the British Consul at Tiflis, reported to the Foreign Office that Price had come to see him directly after his interview with the Grand Duke and repeated what he had been told. In his despatch (which was addressed to Balfour personally) Stevens used almost exactly the same words as Price later used in his memorandum to Trevelyan: "The new Government of the Empire exists and must be recognised. He will allow no reaction of any kind for the new State of Russia must be founded upon a sure basis."<sup>1</sup> Stevens also reported an account given to him by the Mayor of Tiflis, Mr Matisov, of an interview that he had with the Grand Duke on the same day as Price. From this it appeared that one of the Tsar's last actions before abdicating had been to appoint his uncle Commander-in-Chief, but that the appointment had subsequently been confirmed by the President of the Provisional Government, Prince Lvov. (Price also reported the confirmation of the appointment in his Manchester Guardian article 'How the Revolution came to the Caucasus', written on 19 March though not published until 27 April). Stevens added that it was thought in Tiflis that the "ex-Viceroy" would leave either that night (18 March) or the next day to take up the supreme command of the Russian army.

In his memorandum to Trevelyan Price continued the story. "The Caucasus people... continued to be suspicious of him and began on the Monday [19 March] to demand his arrest. It was only express assurances from the Provisional Government at Petrograd that on his arrival in Russia

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<sup>1</sup> FO 371.2996

as Commander-in-Chief, he would be carefully watched, which prevented the people of Tiflis from arresting him on the spot. He left on the 20th in a great hurry. On the last day of his Viceroyalty in the Caucasus he summoned the representatives of the people and bade them preserve order and internal peace for the honour of Russia. Meanwhile the people were raiding his offices and arresting the police and other officials under him... Then the whole of the Cossack Bodyguard of the Viceroy went over to the revolution. On the Tuesday they accompanied the Grand Duke to the railway station waving red flags and singing the Marseillaise."

On the day of Price's interview with the Grand Duke (18 March) the British Ambassador in Petrograd, Sir George Buchanan, reported to the Foreign Office that he had been having discussions with the new Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government, Miliukov, about the undesirability of Russia becoming "committed" to republicanism<sup>2</sup> "One reason why I advocated in conversation with Miliukov for retention [sic] of the G.D. Nicholas as Commander-in-Chief is that if he wins the confidence of the army and can keep it well in hand there will be certain chance of the G.D. Michael or some other G.D. being eventually declared Emperor with powers clearly defined within the limits of a really liberal constitution. As neither the G.D. Michael nor any of the G.D.s next in succession have any son who can succeed them there is no reason why succession should not pass eventually to the present Tsarevitch."

Within twenty four hours Buchanan began to have doubts about the feasibility of this intrigue. On 19 March he telegraphed again to the Foreign Office<sup>3</sup> that in a further conversation with Miliukov "H.E. expressed

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<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> FO 371.2998  
Ibid.



opinion that H.I.H. would be induced to renounce [the appointment as C.-in-C.] himself". Miliukov, said Buchanan, was aware that there was "very strong and wide opposition in country" to the retention of the Grand Duke of the command of the Army. "Government had telegraphed to Rostov to stop his going to H.Q. and hoped to induce him to resign voluntarily. If he did not do so Government would be placed in a serious predicament." Buchanan went on to say: "I officially recognised Government today and consider it of first importance to give them all the moral support possible. I know appointment of Grand Duke would be desirable from many points of view but a refusal on his part to accept decision of Government would deal a heavy blow at prestige of latter and might be followed by disastrous consequences." On the accompanying Minute, over the initials of Sir George Clerk appear the words: "The army may yet have something to say." Clerk may not have been far out in his estimation. A message from Lindley on 1 April 1917<sup>4</sup> contained the words: "The appointment and subsequent retirement of the Grand Duke Nicholas must have confused men's minds, and I am informed that many of the higher officers find it quite impossible to accommodate themselves to the changed conditions." (For notes on Clerk and Lindley, see Chapter 7.) Indeed as late as June 20 the British Ambassador at Stockholm, Sir Evelyn Howard, reported to London that "there is a movement among Don Cossacks to elect Grand Duke Nicholas Emperor of Cossacks and then impose him on the rest of Russia."<sup>5</sup> His information came from "a Russian here who is very imperialist" and was almost certainly wishful thinking.

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<sup>4</sup> FO 371.2996

<sup>5</sup> FO 371.3013

On 23 March Buchanan had become so apprehensive about the genie he and Miliukov had let out of the bottle that he anxiously telegraphed General Hanbury Williams, British Military Representative at the Russian Army Headquarters, urging him not to press for the appointment of the Grand Duke.<sup>6</sup> "As a member of the Imperial family he is unacceptable to the majority of the Government and I believe General Russky is to replace him. It would seriously compromise us to press for the retention of the Grand Duke". On the same day Consul Stevens telegraphed about the uneasiness felt in the Caucasus "that mistake diplomacy has been made in allowing ex-Viceroy of Caucasus to take over supreme command of Army. This appears to be universally regretted as it is generally believed that notwithstanding his declaration to the contrary Grand Duke is liable at a given moment after taking over command to have his head turned and to form ambitious views which may have grave consequences."<sup>7</sup>

Despite the attempt to impose a news blackout on the Grand Duke's intentions, some rumours about them must have reached London. The New Statesman of 24 March noted that it had been a great day for Russia when the Tsar abdicated, "but it was possibly an even greater day when they decided that the supreme command of the Russian armies was not, after all, to be entrusted to his uncle, the Grand Duke Nicholas. For that decision, if it means anything, and if it stands, means the end of the dynasty."

According to Price (U.D.C. July 1917) the Grand Duke "quietly went into retirement at Livadia and has been heard of no more". According to Pares<sup>8</sup> he "entirely refused to be made a pawn in any calculation of the

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<sup>6</sup> FO 371.2995

<sup>7</sup> FO 371.2996

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Pares The Fall of the Russian Monarchy (1939) p.501.



emigrants, declaring that the Russian people must settle its questions according to its own wishes". Price did not live to find out why his story was stopped, but if he had known the reason it would have confirmed a certain respect that he always expressed for the Grand Duke Nicholas.

(NOTE: Appendix II appears at the end of Chapter 4, to which it is closely related.)



## APPENDIX III

## The Secret Treaties: Questions in Parliament and the Press

The first reference to the treaties in the House of Commons was made not in response to their publication in the Manchester Guardian but nearly six months earlier. On 7 June 1917 Charles Trevelyan asked if the British Government had received a request from the Provisional Government to publish them. Cecil replied for the Foreign Office, saying that no request had been received.<sup>1</sup> After the Manchester Guardian's disclosures on 28 November Cecil slightly changed his story, and denied that the British Government had refused a request from the Provisional Government to publish them, which was not quite the same thing as denying that any such request had been received.<sup>2</sup> But from now on the Government was on the defensive.

On 19 December both Trevelyan and Ponsonby managed to raise the question of the Secret Treaties in a debate on the Consolidated Fund. Ponsonby, himself a former diplomat, welcomed the "tearing down of the curtain which hung before the secret diplomatic negotiations that were going on before the war" and adduced a number of instances on which both Asquith and Lloyd George had, in effect, lied to the House of Commons about British intentions or aspirations in fighting the war. "The point is that the people of this country did not enter this war in order to give Constantinople to Russia, and if that object ... was undertaken the people of this country should have been openly and fairly told."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard 7.6.17. Col.s 294-295.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 28.11.17. Col.s 1986-1987.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 19.12.17. Col.s 2001-2003.

Trevelyan, later in the debate, argued that if Russia repudiated the treaties and Britain disclaimed responsibility for them, why could she not now repudiate them too? The reason, he alleged, was that there was a quid pro quo.<sup>4</sup> On 20 December Outhwaite reinforced this point when he asked why the British Government had denied that it had any territorial claims, at a time when the Provisional Government knew that denial to be false. Outhwaite went so far as to suggest that British refusal to repudiate the treaties was one of the causes of the fall of the Provisional Government, since it enabled Lenin to tell the Russian soldiers that they were fighting for the territorial claims of the Allies.<sup>5</sup>

On 12 February 1918 Trevelyan raised the question of publication again in the debate on the Address. "You may be as angry as you please with the Bolshevik Government in Russia for making public secret treaties, but the fact is that these treaties are now public property." Cecil was unimpressed and replied: "as long as those treaties exist ... we are bound by them."<sup>6</sup> On 27 February King told the House that he believed the reason why the American Government had chosen not to be formally represented at the Supreme War Council at Versailles was the continued existence and maintenance of "so many secret treaties."<sup>7</sup>

On 20 June, in the debate on the Consolidated Fund, Philip Snowden seconded a motion proposed by Phillip Morrell calling on the Government "to lose no diplomatic opportunity to settle the problems of the war by agreement" and with that object to revise the treaties. In his speech

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 19.12.17. Col.s 2070-2071

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 20.12.17. Col.s 2281-2282

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 12. 2.18. Col.s 219-223.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 27. 2.18. Col.s 1501-1502.



Snowden told the House that the situation was even worse than they had thought. Not only did secret treaties exist, and not only was information about them withheld on the ground that Britain was only one of a number of Allies and Allies must act in concert. "It is one of our complaints" said Snowden "that they do not do that. A number of these secret treaties which were exposed were made by particular Allies behind the backs and without the knowledge of others." Snowden went on to connect the British refusal to discuss war aims in the Paris Conference with defensiveness about the Secret Treaties. That, in turn, he alleged, "more than anything else was responsible for the overthrow of the first revolutionary Government."<sup>8</sup>

Between January and June 1918 mention was made in the House of Commons on a number of occasions and in different contexts to public discontent as a result of the secret treaty revelations. On 17 January, in the debate on the Second Reading of the Military Service Bill, the Labour MP William C. Anderson - a member of the UDC - referred to the treaties as having been made behind the backs of the people. "If 450,000 men are going to be flung into the cauldron of war they ought to know if there are still secret treaties for which they are fighting."<sup>9</sup> On 12 February Trevelyan drew attention to dissatisfaction among working people about the secret treaties in the debate on the Address.<sup>10</sup> On 27 February, in a question to the Foreign Secretary, Lees Smith asked if he was aware that the secret treaties "are one of the causes of labour unrest and that evasive answers were "noted in every industrial centre".<sup>11</sup> In the debate

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 20. 6.18. Col. 555.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 17. 1.18. Col. 500.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 12. 2.18. Col.s 219-223.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 27. 2.18. Col. 1349.

on Supply on the same day Joseph King observed that when addressing two public meetings recently he had got "a response from the audience and a quickening of interest which are very impressive" as soon as he mentioned the secret treaties.<sup>12</sup> Snowden in his speech seconding the motion referred to above on 20 June read out the full text of a resolution passed by the largest local Labour party in Britain, "the more remarkable because this Labour party has been almost alone among local Labour parties in the country in having maintained throughout the war the attitude of strong support for the war." The resolution spoke of the "utmost dismay and indignation" of the Birmingham Labour Party on learning the contents of the secret treaties, and its sense of having been "utterly deceived" into supporting the war in the belief that the war was being fought for the freedom of small nations and the sanctity of international law. The secret treaties "flagrantly violate every reason put forward by British statesmen in justification for the war." The Birmingham Party believed "the absolute repudiation of these treaties to be essential to a democratic peace" and was convening a "large and widely representative Midland Conference at as early a date as possible for the purpose of considering these important documents." Snowden concluded by saying that there was not a labour organisation in the country which would not endorse that resolution.<sup>13</sup>

Forty years later Harry Pollit recalled that "a considerable wave of anger swept through the progressive and peace-loving forces in Britain at the hostile attitude of Lloyd George's coalition government towards the Russian government. There has always been in Britain a traditional

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 27. 2.18. Col.s 1501-1502.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 20. 6.18. Col.s 560-562.



hostility to secret treaties, and the revelations now coming out of Soviet Russia rapidly led to a stronger opposition to them than ever before."<sup>14</sup>

The Home Office intelligence-gathering operation which focussed on labour unrest and anti-recruiting and peace campaigns picked up a reference to the secret treaties which formed part of a speech by James Maxwell at the Co-Operative Hall in Maesteg on 15 February. Maxwell referred to the treaties as "infamous documents." He went on: "The war, we were told, was for gallant little Belgium, or the rights of small nations and to destroy militarism. The secret treaties demonstrated the exact truth of the contention that the real factor was the ambitious schemes of the Tsar ... the translation of the secret treaties or the parts of them published by the Bolsheviks revealed the degradation of European diplomacy." The police transcript of this speech was forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who recommended that Maxwell be prosecuted under the Defence of the Realm Act.<sup>15</sup>

The Left wing press in Britain did not immediately make as much of the publication of the treaties as might have been expected. This may have been partly due to the fact, as Snowden wrote in Labour Leader on 6 December that "the archives of the Russian foreign office [have] not revealed much which was not already known to those who have closely followed international affairs in the last three years". The former editor of Labour Leader, Fenner Brockway, who was in prison as a conscientious objector at the time of the publication of the treaties, said in May 1985 that it was also possible that the Left press felt a little piqued by the fact that the revelations had been made by a bourgeois

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<sup>14</sup> Harry Pollit: 'The October Revolution and the British Labour Movement', Marxism Today October 1957.

<sup>15</sup> HO 45.10743 and 263275.

liberal journal. References to the treaties in Labour Leader were scanty, although on 28 February 1918 it gave an account of E.D. Morel's first public speech after his release from prison for a technical violation of the Defence of the Realm Act. "Mr. Morel spoke briefly but with great force of the change in public opinion that had taken place since the publication of the secret treaties." The Workers Dreadnaught, on the other hand, devoted almost the whole of its edition of 5 January 1918 to a reprint of the Manchester Guardian translations of November and December. On 26 January it introduced a reprint of the translation of the treaty with Italy with the words: "The Manchester Guardian has again performed a public service by publishing further 'secret documents' disclosed by the Bolsheviks". Workers Dreadnaught issued a special supplement on 9 February entitled Secret Diplomacy Unmasked in which it republished the material contained in its 5 January edition. The Call made one reference to the treaties (2 January 1918) and credited the Manchester Guardian with their exposure. Forward on 27 April 1918 printed an article by Morel in which he wrote:

"The Manchester Guardian is the only newspaper which has published the Russian revelations in full, and it is safe to say that not one citizen of these islands has the slightest idea that this government has entered into contracts behind his back which not only violate every public profession of lofty and disinterested war aims... but which respond to no conceivable national interest."

Predictably, perhaps, the organisation which took the fullest advantage of the publication of the secret treaties was the Union of Democratic Control. At the 11th meeting of the General Council of the UDC on 20 February 1918 it was resolved to convey to Price and to Scott the appreciation of the Council for the "admirable services... rendered to the work of the U.D.C." by the publication of the secret treaties. Seymour Cocks had by then already prepared a book with the full texts



of the treaties and notes, and the Executive at its next meeting ordered 4,000 copies. The book was ready just after Easter and by the end of April the first edition had sold out and a second had been ordered.<sup>16</sup> Ethel Snowden personally paid for a copy to be sent to each of the one hundred branches of the Women's Peace Crusade. At the Executive Committee of the 30 April E.D. Morel reported a meeting which he had had with the Leicester Trades Council at which he had "explained" a plan he had "for making the secret treaties more widely known among Trades Unionists".<sup>17</sup> The resolution of the Birmingham Labour Party referred to above may well have owed something to the proselytising work of the Union of Democratic Control.

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<sup>16</sup> Hull University Library, U.D.C. Archive DDC 4/29.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. DDC 1/4.

## APPENDIX IV

## RANSOME AND PRICE

"When the Germans began to advance to Petrograd about the middle of February and all the foreign Embassies (except the American) and most of the newspaper correspondents began to leave Russia, Ransome and I decided to stick to our guns and sink or swim with the Russian Revolution."<sup>1</sup> Through his life Price tended, in any discussion of the Revolution, to begin sentences with "Ransome and I". Yet (as has been noted) Ransome did not mention Price in his autobiography and there are only two references to Price in all his surviving papers in the Brotherton Library at Leeds. One of these may hold a clue to what otherwise appears to have been a totally baffling relationship. On 16 April 1918 Ransome wrote in his diary: "Get telegram about Price". It is difficult not to surmise that the telegram came from Whitehall, where Price must increasingly have been coming under suspicion since February 1918, when his cables began to be seriously interfered with.

There is considerable evidence in the Foreign Office archives that from November 1917 Ransome was being used as an unofficial agent, particularly in the weeks before Lockhart's arrival, but also afterwards.<sup>2</sup> On 2 April 1918, just two weeks before that entry in his diary, Ransome, according to Lockhart, had been acting as intermediary in talks with the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Trade about the possibility of Russia resuming trade with the Allies.<sup>3</sup> In July Lockhart justified to the Foreign Office his

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Price to Anna Maria Philips, 7.5.18. Price papers.

<sup>2</sup> FO 371.3018/3284/3296/3321/3316.

<sup>3</sup> FO 371.3313.



action in getting the future Mrs. Ransome entered as already being Mrs. Ransome on Ransome's passport, prior to their departure for Stockholm, on the following grounds: "They should be useful in giving us information of underground work of Bolsheviks".<sup>4</sup> Clearly, however, and not unusually, one branch of the British foreign service did not know what another was doing, for when in March 1918, Lindley, then at Archangel, had tried to use Ransome to convey a friendly message to Trotsky, Ransome wrote on the back of the telegram that he eventually received: "I think it possible that an earlier telegram was suppressed by someone who did not wish Lindley to have any communication with the Bolsheviks."<sup>5</sup> From Stockholm Ransome continued to be useful to the Foreign Office as a messenger, though not, perhaps, in quite the way that Lockhart had envisaged. For Ransome had his other foot in the other camp.

Ransome's relationships with members of the Soviet Government were, of course, the necessary concomitants to his usefulness to the Foreign Office. But they were also genuine personal relationships. On 21 May 1918 he wrote to his mother: "Not a single one of my English friends is left in Russia... My principle [sic] friends here are Radek and his wife."<sup>6</sup> Quite apart from the fact that this indicates clearly that Ransome did not consider Price to be a friend, the statement underpins the assertion he made in a long letter to his editor, written on 11 August from Stockholm

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<sup>4</sup> FO 371.3334.

<sup>5</sup> Ransome papers, Brotherton Collection, Brotherton Library, Leeds. After Buchanan returned to London Francis Lindley, the Counsellor at the British Embassy was put in charge of the remaining British mission. Lockhart's position was therefore always slightly anomalous, though he was supposedly independent within his terms of reference. In March 1918 Lindley was in Archangel with the title of Commissioner. In June he was designated Consul General in Russia and Head of Mission. See also bio-data at the end of Chapter 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ransome papers, Brotherton Collection, Brotherton Library, Leeds.

shortly after his arrival there.

"I had got to an extraordinary degree the confidence of the Soviet folk who certainly allowed me to see much more of what went on than was seen by any other foreigner, and were willing to talk straight to me when they would not do anything but put official representatives of England off with fair words... The Soviet people themselves had complained to me about the need of getting information out of Russia but lamented their shortness of hands and left me free to do what I liked, merely giving other people leave to help me."<sup>7</sup>

But in the same letter he had noted that

"...when there was no longer hope of preventing intervention... Lindley agreed with me that the best that could be done would be at least temporarily to put me into cold storage at Stockholm with a view to possibilities in the future."

Nonetheless he went on to describe rather proudly to his editor the arrangements that he had made with the Russian government to be sent a regular supply of information from Russia, the Ukraine and the Baltic provinces. He also clearly indicated, in the same letter, that Radek had been showing him confidential information from Berlin, and the contact with Radek undoubtedly continued in Stockholm. It was in a letter to Ransome asking how he was getting on with arrangements for the translation of Soviet propaganda material into Scandinavian languages that Radek mentioned, in passing, that "Little Price" had "joined the Party".<sup>8</sup>

Ransome did not, either, underestimate his own importance purely as a journalist. He told his mother on 1 May 1917 that he had been specially invited to a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, with no other journalist present, "because of the stuff I got through on their behalf before the Revolution". He repeatedly claimed, in his letters to his mother, that

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. See also Chp.10 p.333 and Chp.10 F/N 40.



he was the "only man" in a position to get a true picture of what was going on and to get it into print, although, as to this, he was to find that he was being tarred with the same brush as Price in the Press Bureau: another example of confusion in Whitehall. In his letter to the editor of the Daily News (quoted above) he noted that he had been informed by another department of the Daily News "that my telegrams were from 7 to 21 days late and arriving with whole sections missing and so often useless... I telegraphed a full account of the Left Socialist Revolutionary Revolt at the time but suspect it did not get through; suspect, indeed, that nothing on that subject got through." Just over a month later, on 14 September 1918, Ransome sent off two articles to the Daily News which were referred to in a PID Summary (from which the date is missing). One, according to the summary, was "unobjectionable" and had been "sent on". It was apparently entitled "The Germans in Esthonia." The other was called "Terror, Red and White", and in it Ransome had apparently pointed out that most of the bloodletting in Russia at that time was being done by Whites.<sup>9</sup> The decision as to its fate was not reported in the PID Summary, but nothing by Ransome about the Terror, whether Red or White, was ever printed. A Foreign Office Minute in October was headed "Dangerous Activities of Mr. Price and Mr. Ransome." J.D. Gregory commented: "We have long known about their activities".<sup>10</sup> But it was still necessary for Sir George Clerk to comment on a suggestion from the DMI that information about Ransome should be sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions: "He has worked to some extent - or claims to have done so - on behalf of our people under arrest and we have wittingly agreed to his remaining in Stockholm."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> FO 371.4362.

<sup>10</sup> FO 371.3342.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Another layer in Ransome's personality was constituted by his reiterated assertion that he hated politics and was essentially a literary man. On 27 May he wrote to his mother "I hate politics as much as ever, but when you are suddenly planted in the middle of a huge thing like this it is impossible not to be interested."<sup>12</sup> Again, in a letter from Stockholm dated 12 October, he wished he had stuck to writing "tales" and not allowed himself to be drawn into politics. "But as an honest man I could not and there is an end of it."<sup>13</sup> Still later, on 4 December, he told his mother (who clearly did not approve of his continued defence of the Soviet Government): "I'm not a revolutionary. I'm merely an observer of revolutions."<sup>14</sup> As an "honest man" he deplored, in another letter to his editor dated 10 December 1918, the fact that the British press appeared to be taking all its information from Russian refugees. "Only now and then does anything appear showing even the faintest effort to use imagination and to see exactly what the position is. In my mind all the time is the knowledge of this flood of stuff going over to England unbalanced by a single disinterested statement. The hidden or open object of the whole mass of stuff is to get us committed in Russia."<sup>15</sup>

It is small wonder that Ransome, a subtle and complex person whose emotions and loyalties were being pulled in so many directions at once, had little time for Price, who must have seemed to him positively simple-minded. His only other reference to Price in the surviving papers of this period came in a letter from Francis Hirst, written on 27 May 1918 and asking if he would like to publish his "Letter to America" as a pamphlet.

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<sup>12</sup> Ransome papers, Brotherton Collection, Brotherton Library, Leeds.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



He added as a p.s.: "I saw Price last night, in good condition, fat and cheerful".<sup>16</sup> It can only be concluded that Price's condition deteriorated dramatically between the end of May and August, when the German writer Alfons Paquet described him as "emaciated".<sup>17</sup> Paquet incidentally described Price to his editor as "the comrade in thought and fate of his colleague Arthur Ransome". (See Chapter 10 p.321). But Ransome could hardly have failed to say something about Price in a letter to Hirst; he must have known that Hirst was Price's friend and can hardly not have known that Price had been writing for Common Sense.

Ransome was a patriot. He believed that the war was a just one and if he had been fit, he would have fought in it. Price strongly opposed the war. This fact must have coloured Ransome's opinion of Price. Once in Russia, Price quickly took himself off to the Caucasus for two years while Ransome stayed for most of the time at the centre of political gravity. Clearly he was much better placed than Price to report the events leading to and following the March revolution, and he was probably not being immodest when he claimed to be the "only" man sending out accurate information about the Petrograd Soviet, though this was not true after November 1917. But from then until he went to Stockholm in August 1918 Ransome was working for two sides which were heading for a conflict which he would have done almost anything to avert. Constituted as he was, he could hardly have avoided doing as he did. Perhaps Price felt close to Ransome because they were both trying to say the same thing, but Ransome did not reciprocate Price's feelings because they were doing so from such different bases. Perhaps Ransome felt uncomfortable about his double role. Perhaps he was even a little envious of Price's simplicity.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See also Chapter 10 p.321.

In the 1920s Ransome and his wife became friends with Price and his family. It was Price's tench which disappeared, as described in Ransome's essay in Rod and Line: 'Failing to catch a Tench'.<sup>18</sup> But in one of the few letters he wrote to Price, not long before his death, he commented on the article which Price had written on the Russian Revolution for Survey<sup>19</sup> in revealing terms:

"I must tell you at once that you have been very handsome in your treatment of my performance on that stage. It must have been very hard for all you practised political philosophers not to be worse than impatient with the intrusions of so obvious an amateur."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Rod and Line (Oxford paperback 1980). Some indication of the relaxation which had taken place in the atmosphere between the two men is given by an exchange of verses, begun by Ransome when he wrote the following lines in Price's Visitors' Book after having failed to catch the tench.

Arthur Ransome to M.P. Price

Where is the man who'd use a cartridge  
 In April, on a sitting partridge?  
 Where is the man who finds it pleasant  
 To shoot the bantling July pheasant?  
 And where the man who blithely kills  
 Grouse in the time of daffodils?  
 O Philips Price! Did you not blench  
 To catch and eat a Maytime tench?  
 What wonder that a spell was thrown  
 When such a monstrous deed was done?  
 The affronted tench have gone for good  
 Ducks undisturbed eat all the food.  
 The anglers watching by the shore  
 Shall see the great fish roll no more  
 And Price's guests come late to meals  
 Bringing not tench but wriggling EELS!

M.P. Price to Arthur Ransome

Where is the man with knowledge slender  
 Who sought a crow's nest in November?  
 And where the boy who climbed a larch  
 To rob a magpie's nest in March?  
 Oh Arthur Ransome! You amaze  
 Me at your ken of Nature's ways;  
 For who has seen, when daffodil  
 Our meadows deck o'er dale and hill  
 A partridge sitting in April?

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<sup>19</sup> Survey 41 (1962) pp.14-26. M. Philips Price: 'Witnesses of the Revolution'.

<sup>20</sup> Ransome papers, Brotherton Collection, Brother Library, Leeds.



## APPENDIX V

## THE MILNER MISSION

The so-called Milner Mission was actually merely one of a series of Inter-Allied conferences, but it was the first to take place on the Eastern Front, and it was dominated by the very high-powered British delegation to it. Led by Milner himself, it included Lord Revelstoke, a Director of the Bank of England and Chairman of Barings Bank, which had massive interests in Russia, General Sir Henry Wilson, Major General John Headlam (an artillery expert), and Sir George Clerk, head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, the department responsible for Russian affairs. The Conference lasted from 1 - 25 February 1917, and in view of the known state of the Russian economy, it was distinguished from other Inter-Allied conferences by the fact that for the first time strategy, finance and supply were all included on the agenda.

On his return to Britain Milner tried to put it about that he had found no cause for concern in Russia. The Press Bureau's decision to distort or suppress virtually all news about the activities of the Mission was perfectly in line with its established policy on news from Russia. Yet from his confidential reports it would appear that Milner had not been at all blind or deaf as to what was going on. He complained bitterly of the poor organisation of the conference, but Sir Henry Wilson described him as "in depression, tired and worried and listless", convinced that the defeat of Germany on the Eastern Front was impossible and that peace terms would have to be considered.<sup>1</sup> The confidential minutes of

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<sup>1</sup> Lloyd George: War Memoirs Vol.III p.1584.

the proceedings prepared by members of the British delegation conveyed, in Lloyd George's words, "the impression of a general state of chaos and disorganisation, of open corruption and incompetent leadership which made most of the work which the conference attempted to carry out as futile as cultivating a quicksand".<sup>2</sup>

Despite attempts by the Russian government to keep members of the British delegation away from Russian liberal leaders (Sir George Clerk noted that the Mission had been kept "in a sort of ring fence" to prevent "the liberal and anti-government faction" from using the Mission "as a demonstration in favour of the principles for which they were fighting"),<sup>3</sup> Milner succeeded in meeting quite a few of them; or perhaps it might be truer to say that they succeeded in meeting him. His contacts included Rodzianko, the President of the Duma; the Kadet leader Miliukov; a leading Progressist, Riabushinskii (who had taken a leading part in the creation of another pressure group, the Union of War Industries Committees); the head of the All Russia Union of Zemstvos, Prince Lvov; and the head of the All Russia Union of Towns, also Mayor of Moscow, Michael Chelnokov.<sup>4</sup> Milner noted that the latter had sought to impress upon him that the present state of things could not possibly continue and that Prince Lvov had expressed his fear that nothing could avert the revolution that was threatening.<sup>5</sup> The British representative on the Russian equivalent of the Ministry of Blockade, Samuel Hoare, persuaded its Chairman, Peter Struve, to write two briefing memoranda specially for Lord Milner: one on the food situation and one on the political situation in Russia.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.1585.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.1590.

<sup>4</sup> Pearson: The Russian Moderates pp.134-135.

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd George: War Memoirs Vol.III p.1590.



In the latter Struve stated that Russia was "face to face" with revolution. The Russian government signally failed to isolate Milner from the facts. Indeed, after news of the Revolution had been confirmed in Britain, Milner apparently commented that the Provisional Government consisted "mainly, perhaps entirely, of our friends".<sup>6</sup>

Yet Lloyd George recorded that although both Wilson and Milner returned from Russia believing that a revolution was inevitable, they had succeeded in convincing themselves that it would not happen until after the end of the war.<sup>7</sup> Samuel Hoare commented that the Allies had been "mistaken in sending such a mission at all; the members of the mission were equally mistaken in almost all their conclusions about the Russian front and the state of Russia".<sup>8</sup> It would appear that they were not so much mistaken as believing what they wanted to believe. Moreover, despite knowing what it is now clear that he knew, Milner was prepared deliberately to deceive not only himself but the British public also.

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A full account of the Milner Mission is given by Lloyd George in Volume III of his War Memoirs. Useful information about the Mission is also to be found in Raymond Pearson: The Russian Moderates and the Crisis of Tsarism 1914-1917; in Richard Pipes: Struve: Liberal on the Right, 1905-1944; and in Keith Neilson: Strategy and Supply: the Anglo-Russian Alliance 1914-1917. There is surprisingly little material about the mission in the Milner papers at the Bodleian Library.

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<sup>6</sup> Neilson: Strategy and Supply. The quotation from Milner is in Cab.21/24.

<sup>7</sup> Lloyd George: War Memoirs vol.III p.1588.

<sup>8</sup> Pearson: The Russian Moderates pp.134-135.

## APPENDIX VI

## THE BRITISH ECONOMIC MISSION TO RUSSIA

A few days before the Allied landings at Archangel Price learned to his surprise that an Economic Mission from Britain had arrived in Moscow, and he went to see them at their hotel.

"They told me that they had powers to discuss the possibility of an economic treaty with Soviet Russia. It was evident that the voice of reason had for a brief spell at least prevailed in London. I suppose Scott, with Tchicherin's answer [to Scott's telegram of 19 June], with the backing of my despatches and of Ransome's in his paper had been able to influence the Prime Minister to take this step."<sup>1</sup>

Price got the details wrong. The Mission arrived in Moscow just before the Archangel landings, not the Murmansk landings (as he recorded it), and things were not what they seemed. However since he continued to imagine for the rest of his life that he had had something to do with the arrival of this Mission it seems only proper to put the record straight.

Shortly after the October Revolution General Poole had proposed that each of the Allies should allocate funds and despatch a financial representative to Russia to buy up stores which would otherwise fall into German hands. Coincidentally plans were already being made through a number of more or less shady intermediaries for the British to buy up all the five major banks in Russia and to set up a Cossack bank in South Russia which could issue bank notes and thus provide the Don Cossacks and the Volunteer Army with funds.<sup>2</sup> There has been a good deal of speculation as to what the Mission was really supposed to achieve, but the fact remains

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<sup>1</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions p.128.

<sup>2</sup> Kettle: The Allies and the Russian Collapse. Chapter 5.



that the idea of sending a Commercial Mission to Russia was already being considered in May 1918 by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Russian Affairs in Whitehall on which the Board of Trade, the Department of Overseas Trade, the Ministry of Information, the War Office and the Treasury were all represented.<sup>3</sup> One authority (Ullman) thought that it had its origins in the brief period during the spring of 1918 when it seemed at least possible that Lockhart's views might be taken seriously and that there might be some kind of rapprochement with the Bolsheviks.<sup>4</sup> Another (Michael Kettle) thought that the mission was going to try to tidy up the confusion which had resulted from the banking scheme.<sup>5</sup> On June 10 the Inter-Departmental Committee was informed that the Foreign Office had not only approved the idea of sending a Commercial Mission but that it had, in fact, already left; it would be followed shortly by two more members, one of whom would "investigate the prospects of banking in Russia" and the other "the banking scheme negotiated by Colonel Keyes".<sup>6,7</sup> The most convincing explanation of the mission is the one given by Lockhart in his Memoirs (p.306): that one department in Whitehall did not know what the other was doing. Lockhart first heard of the proposal to send a Mission from the British Consul General, Wardop, and in a telegram to the Foreign Office on 26 May he showed that he was very much put out that such a change of policy as this appeared to indicate should have taken place without his having been informed, let alone consulted.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> FO 371.3313.

<sup>4</sup> Ullman: Anglo-Soviet Relations, Vol.I p.223.

<sup>5</sup> Kettle: The Allies and the Russian Collapse. Chapter 5.

<sup>6</sup> FO 371.3299.

<sup>7</sup> Colonel Keyes, formerly of the Indian Army Intelligence service, was the political officer on General Poole's staff and played an active role in organising the bankers' conspiracy.

<sup>8</sup> FO 371.3313.

On 13 June, the British Consul at Archangel, Douglas Young, was informed that Lindley had been appointed to "take general charge of British interests in Russia". He was also told that Lindley would be accompanied by a four-man Commercial Mission who would shortly be joined by two experts in banking (in fact these two appear never to have succeeded in catching up with the other members of the Mission). Young was told that the Mission had been appointed

"to advise His Majesty's Government as to the best means of restoring and developing British trade relations with Russia and of countering enemy schemes of commercial penetration, and to assist His Majesty's Representative in giving effect to any policy adopted by His Majesty's Government for the above purpose."

The Mission would report, through Lindley, to

"a standing interdepartmental conference in London constituted to co-ordinate the actions of the various departments in relation to Russian economic matters."<sup>9</sup>

As Lockhart later pointed out (26 June)

"The arrival of a commercial mission at a moment when everyone is expecting a close race between Allied and German intervention may lead to serious consequences for the Allies... I fear they have only come in time to start home again."<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless on 3 July the Foreign Office forwarded a long cable to the Mission instructing it to report as soon as practicable their opinion as to

"the possibility and desirability of re-opening trade with Russia and the conditions under which it can be conducted."

They were to report on what classes of goods should be sent and in what quantities, how they could be landed, transported and sold, what

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<sup>9</sup> FO 371.3299.

<sup>10</sup> FO 371.3300.



guarantees they could get that such goods would not fall into enemy hands, what goods the Russians could make available for export to the UK, and how such exports could be organised.<sup>11</sup>

The Mission, (which was indiscriminately described as Commercial and Economic) having landed at Murmansk, went on to Vologda, arriving there on 7 July (immediately after the murder of the German Ambassador in Moscow).<sup>12</sup> On 17 July they left for Moscow and arrived there on 22 July. Their arrival "staggered" Lockhart who knew, insofar as he knew anything of the British Government's plans, that intervention was imminent, and who soon found out that the head of the Mission, Sir William Clerk, knew nothing about those plans. It fell to his lot, at a time when his personal relations with the Bolsheviks were severely strained, to take unwelcome visitors on a tour of Soviet offices for discussions on trade and commerce. "Could I be surprised when, later, the Bolsheviks accused me of Machiavelian duplicity?"<sup>13</sup>

The Mission stayed only two days in Moscow and Price saw them on both days.<sup>14</sup> But when he went round to their hotel on the second morning he was told that they had received orders to postpone negotiations sine die and to return to the Murman coast at once. The Allied Embassies, who knew what was afoot, had already fled from Vologda, where they had been sheltering since March, to Archangel, where they were held up for two days negotiating with the Soviet authorities for vessels to take them away. The delay was fortunate for the members of the British Mission.

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<sup>11</sup> FO 371.3313.

<sup>12</sup> Ullman: Anglo-Soviet Relations, Vol.I p.223.

<sup>13</sup> Lockhart: Memoirs p.306.

<sup>14</sup> Price: My Three Revolutions p.128.

In the early hours of 28 July, just as the vessels which had been secured were about to weigh anchor

"another train pulled up to the station and the members of the British Economic Mission sprinted down the dock and climbed on board."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ullman: Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol.I p.234.



## APPENDIX VII

## SOME CENSORED CABLES

A remarkable survivor in the Home Office archives at the Public Records Office, of which no mention has been found in any other account of British censorship, was part of an index of press telegrams received in the Cable Room of the Official Press Bureau between January 1917 and April 1919.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that this was the index kept for only one of the desks in the Cable Room because the subjects covered by the telegrams listed do not provide anything like complete coverage of all the news that must have been coming into the Room during that period. On the flyleaf of the index one R.C. de la Candamine - clearly the person who decided to deposit and not to destroy the book - wrote (on an unspecified date):

"This Vol. is kept because it gives clues to, among other things, the "D" notices to the Press which are kept."

Each telegram entered was briefly summarised and dated, but no source given. Against each telegram a symbol was written, indicating whether the telegram was passed for publication, referred for a decision, or stopped (presumably because of an instruction to do so). A key to the symbols was put on the flyleaf. Each telegram was also, according to Candamine's note, supposed to have been prefixed "B, "C" or "D", referring to "official notices" issued by the Press Bureau. Sadly this was not done. Perhaps Candamine did not have the time to check through the index before selecting it for retention, and as a result posterity is not as enlightened as Candamine appears to have intended. Nonetheless the index undoubtedly succeeds in giving "clues".

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<sup>1</sup> HO 139.52.

The first evidence of the operation of official censorship policy on the Russian Revolution, as interpreted by the people working on this particular desk, is to be found in April 1917, when it is apparent that all cables referring to calls for universal peace were stopped. A cable referring to "internal dissensions and dishonourable peace" was, however, passed, and so was another epitomised as "massacre stories denied". This suggests a willingness to discredit the Provisional Government (even in a story denied) but an unwillingness to allow the British public to think that peace was even contemplated. In the same month "Labour [presumably Socialist] party favours war" was, not surprisingly, passed; but a cable referring to the repudiation of Miliukov was stopped. By May references to the rift between Miliukov and the Petrograd Soviet were being passed, and so were "Agitators from Germany to Russia" and "Northern towns on verge of starvation". In June nearly everything got through except references to disorders in the Russian Fleet and the fact that the Mullahs in Central Asia were preaching agrarian revolution. Little news of any kind was received in July, either about the July offensive or the July Days, possibly because of the latter.

Only a few cables were received in August: one dealt with the possible evacuation of Petrograd and another with the possible evacuation of Riga. Two halves of a cable received on 28 July were treated differently. One half noted that Lenin's "agents" had been arrested: that half was passed. The other half was summarised "Parvus Rakovsky in touch with British F.O." That was stopped. At the end of the month "Rumours counter-revolution to restore Grand Duke Paul, Kornilov and Cossacks involved" was stopped. On the other hand "soldiers lynching and looting" on 10 September was passed. On the same day a reference to Grand Duke Nicholas as "leader of counterplot" was passed. A message about the



double-tracking of the trans-Siberian railway on 23 October, which was stopped, suggests some fast thinking if not forward planning by the War Office. The first indication that there had been a change of Government in Russia appeared on 25 November: "Lenin reforming independent states"; this was passed. So was "publication of secret documents" on the same day. What little came through in December was all stopped. Cables about "Japs leaving Moscow - Siberian frontier blocked to prevent attachés leaving", "Lenin's appeal to Mussalmen", "Trotsky's appeal to Allies working classes" and "Capitalists to pay for war" never got into print. A note in the index dated 18 December suggests a general rather than a specific instruction: "Bolshevik Propaganda - transits stopped inwards referred". This may have had something to do with the War Cabinet decision of 29 November (see p.239) to allow the Press Bureau, which theoretically did not concern itself with foreign policy matters, to stop all incoming cables and pass them at its own discretion.

Another interesting survivor among the Press Bureau files<sup>2</sup> contains a number of the actual cables that were stopped or cut. Thus on 5 December 1917 a Russian Government communiqué on the progress of the armistice negotiations was cut. The original text is in the file - stopped - of the Bolsheviks' appeal "to all the labouring class Moslems of Russia and the Orient". So are the proclamation of 6 February 1918 to German workers on the imminence of world revolution, and a communiqué on the agreement of terms at Brest Litovsk on 15 February.

In the same file there is an exchange of notes which hints at the possibility that Reuters was getting preferential treatment among the press

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<sup>2</sup> HO 139.35.

agencies. On 15 December 1917 Reuters correspondent in Petrograd Guy Beringer sent a cable quoting Trotsky's call to the working classes of all the Allies to throw their weight in the scale on behalf of peace negotiations; and demanding that territories which suffered especially from the war should be indemnified from "international fund levied capitalist classes all belligerents for on capitalist classes falls whole responsibility war". This was referred by the censor onto whose desk it came to the Home Office Liaison Officer at the Press Bureau, S.W. Harris, with a note:

"The point is that if the Sec. of State agrees that this should not be published may we understand that the same thing sent by special correspondents should also be stopped."

Harris replied:

"S. of S. is inclined to pass this unless Sir Frank Swettenham thinks otherwise."

It would seem from Candamine's index (see above p.(iii)para.1) that Sir Frank Swettenham did think otherwise. But it is interesting to note that in the censor's mind there was some kind of a distinction to be made between cables coming from Reuters and cables from the special correspondents in Russia of the daily press. It is also a fact that Reuters was subsidised by the Government<sup>3</sup> and the Managing Director of Reuters, Sir Roderick Jones, became soon after this exchange of notes the Deputy Director of the Ministry of Information in charge of Allied and Foreign Propaganda.

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<sup>3</sup> INF 4 1/b XC/A/O/33320.



## APPENDIX VIII

BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS, POSTERS AND PAMPHLETS  
IN ENGLISH IN THE PRICE PAPERS

A collection of 30 leaflets, posters and pamphlets in the English language has been assembled in the Price papers. A few of them were present in their original form and were found among his papers after Price's death. The rest are photocopies and have been assembled from a variety of sources, the most notable being those donated by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow. Others were found in the Brotherton Collection at Leeds University, and in the Libraries of the Institute of Social History at Amsterdam, the London School of Economics, the British Library and the Public Records Office. In the list which follows those which can be attributed to Price with absolute or reasonable certainty are marked \*. Those marked + were republished by the Comintern. Those marked \* were republished by Promachus Bern-Belp.

## LEAFLETS

Issued over the Names of Lenin and Tchicherin

Do you Realise What You Are Doing?  
Al-lies +  
Allied Invasion of Russia to Suppress Workers' Revolution  
and Re-establish Tsarism (Tchicherin only)  
Are You a Trade Unionist?  
The Shame of Being a Scab  
Revolution in Germany

Issued by the English-Speaking Group of Communists

On Whose Side are You?  
Parliament or Soviet \*  
Socialist Russia Capitalist England \*  
Capitalist USA and Socialist Russia  
For What Are You Fighting?  
Why Don't You Return Home?  
Seething Unrest Among British Troops in Great Britain

PAMPHLETS

Issued by the Department of Foreign Literature, Narkomindel

The Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. \*

Issued by Sovprop

The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia \* + \* (also in French)  
The Old Order in Europe and the New Order in Russia \*  
Say! What Are You? +

Issued by the English-Speaking Group of Communists

Tchicherin's Note to President Wilson of 24 October 1918 \*  
Civil War and Red Terror \*  
Capitalist England - Socialist Russia \*

MISCELLANEOUS

(The following items in the collection cannot always be attributed to any regular or particular propaganda organisation or author.)

LEAFLETS

Why Have You Come to Murmansk \* (Attributed to Price by Seleznev but also attributed to Lenin and Tchicherin)  
British And American Working Men! (Attributed to 'Workers, Peasants and Soldiers of Soviet Russia')  
What Have They Sent You to the Ukraine For? (The same title appears as a poster in five languages)  
Quit Fighting, British Soldiers and Join Your Russian Comrades  
(Private Lapham's appeal to his fellow-soldiers, dated 'Kotlas, 14 October 1918)

PAMPHLETS

Red and White Terror in Russia \* (Originally appeared in Norwegian, reprinted by the Socialist Publication Society, Brooklyn)  
Das Räte-System in Russia \* (also in Polish)  
The Origin and Growth of the Russian Soviets \* (People's Russian Information Bureau)  
Die Wahrheit über Sowjet-Russland \* (A German adaptation of Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia)  
Britain's Blunders  
You Volunteers!



## APPENDIX IX

THE CALL

Immediately after this title, on the first issue of The Call, followed the words: "of the workers and peasants of Russia to their English-speaking fellow workers." Above the title was the familiar: "Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains." As noted elsewhere (Chapter 10 p.349) the policy statement of the journal on the inside page ended with the words: "The Editorial Staff hopes to keep its readers informed of the progress of the class struggle at home and abroad." Who the editorial staff were, or at least who some of them were, can only be inferred from the names of people elected to the Executive Committee of the English-Speaking Group of Communists in November 1918. These were Joe Fineberg, Peter Petrov, S.J. Rutgers, Raisa Likhacheva and Solomon Mikhelson; later I.M. Iokhel, Moisev (M. Finkel), Boris Reinstein and Dobin were elected or co-opted. Price presumably did not stand for election and certainly was not a member of the Executive Committee, as he was on the point of departure for Germany when the election took place.

Considering the international isolation of Soviet Russia in September 1918 and the chaotic state of its internal communications due to the civil war and intervention, the amount of information about what was going on in the world which The Call managed to convey was quite remarkable.

Some if not most of this must have come from the parcels of newspapers from all over the world which were collected by the Russian Embassy in Berlin and despatched to Moscow. Of necessity this news was old news by the time it reached Moscow, rarely less than a week and sometimes two weeks old. But it could always be used to exemplify the task to which

the staff of The Call had addressed themselves in their policy statement, of convincing its readers that "the interests of the workers of all lands are the same," and that the peace of the world could only be secured by "the solidarity of international labour." The success of their endeavours depended partly on the news itself and partly on who was writing it. Some news items lent themselves to exhortatory conclusions more readily than others. Very few articles were more than a column long, consisting of 300-350 words. Reading the first seventeen numbers consecutively, that is from 14 September 1918 to 8 January 1919, two impressions emerge: first that the journal came increasingly under American influence during that period, and second that it became increasingly polemical. It may be instructive, in an attempt to underwrite those impressions to make a comparison of the contents of three issues during that period: the first (14 September), the last (8 January 1919) and the one in the middle (9 November), which happened to be the issue commemorating the first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The first issue of The Call concerned itself in general more with matters likely to interest British than American readers. The first item was headed "Truth About German Prisoners in the Russian Army", and consisted of Trotsky's statement disposing of the rumour that armed German and Austrian prisoners were threatening the Siberian railway. It incidentally disposed of the American pretext for sending troops to Siberia: that they were going there to protect the Czechs from those same legendary armed prisoners. The next item, "For Whom is the English Tommy Fighting?" reported recent allegations in the British press that hugely excessive war profits had been made out of cellulose as the result of systematic bribery of certain ministers, generals, Members of Parliament and journalists (all un-named). Was this, the piece concluded, "what



the British soldier is shedding his blood for in cold distant lands?" This was followed by just over a column about strikes in the munitions industry in Britain caused by an attempt to compensate for the shortage of skilled labour by tying key workers to certain jobs. The second page began with an article (quite probably written by Price) comparing the motives which prompted the first British expedition to Archangel - a trade mission in the seventeenth century - with that of the current military intervention. The rest of the page was taken up with a long account of British hostility to the Russian Revolution beginning in March 1917 and culminating in the so-called Lockhart plot. The third page contained accounts of the growth of revolutionary feeling in the German army and of counter-revolutionary activities by the "Anglo-French-Czecho-Slovak oligarchy" in Siberia. Next came a short report of the denunciation by the Congress Party of proposed British reforms in India as being designed "to allay the growing unrest without at the same time giving any real guarantee of Home Rule". Underneath this was an account of successful operations by Ukrainian partisans against the German occupying forces, concluding "...the same thing is likely to happen to other 'Prussians' who invade the cold and hungry forests of north Russia." The fourth page contains a long quotation from the leading article in the Manchester Guardian which argued that the Russian opponents of the Bolsheviks were not necessarily Anglophil, and that many counter-revolutionaries would be ready to come to an understanding with Germany in order to overthrow the Bolsheviks. The Call added: "That is the job which you, dear reader, are now called upon to risk your life and limb for." Then comes a short piece for the Americans: describing how nepotism in the sub-contracting of services in the American ship-building industry had resulted in escalating costs and unfinished work: "five per cent plus five per cent plus five per cent plus five per cent: that's what you are conscripted

for." After this, another short account: the success of the Amalgamated Trade Unions of Moscow in establishing an eight-hour day and a minimum wage linked to food prices. This, added The Call, was the "'anarchy'... about which the English capitalist press talks... It is not difficult to see why the English profiteers and American Bosses object to this 'anarchy'." The last item in the first issue of The Call gives an account of attempts by the Tsarist Foreign Office in 1915 to buy Japanese support at the expense of Holland by agreeing to look the other way if Japan compensated herself with the Dutch colonies in the Far East. The article concludes "British and American soldiers who are fighting in the faraway regions of north Russia have been told nothing of this. But one more than suspects that if they knew the truth, they would see that they are fighting in Russia to give amongst other things the colonies of the small Dutch nation to the greedy Imperialists of Japan."

Wherever possible in the first issue, readers of The Call were invited to draw their own conclusions from the items of news offered to them; but the appeal to them actually to do anything as a result was more implied than overt. By contrast, the ninth issue was far more direct. The three-column front page article, headed "Twelve months of Working Class Rule" immediately shows American influence both in the spelling and in the choice of illustrations. Capitalist stereotypes were the Morgans and the Rockefellers, labour is "labor"; the 7 November is "our 4 July". The article calls on the reader to "quit" scabbing and concludes by telling him how to do it. "... Here are a few suggestions. Talk the matter over quietly with some comrades whom you know to have true workingmen's hearts in them. With them you can form soldiers' committees, keeping the matter secret until you can gather enough strength, when you can break from discipline, arrest the officers who are driving



you to this criminal invasion, and shoot them if they resist. You can do this without fear of helping the Kaiser. The world war is drawing to a quick end and the great world Revolution begins. Or, come over to us. We will welcome you. You will find comrades among us who speak English."

The first article on the leader page of the ninth issue points out that revolutions are made by soldiers. "It is time British and Americans did this. They at least need not fear that the Russians and Germans will not follow." There follow a number of short news items, three from Britain and two about Russia. The whole of the third page and the first column of the fourth is filled with extracts from Tchicherin's Note to Wilson of 24 October 1918, under the title "Explain, Mister Wilson." The last four items in this issue are, again, very short. An extract from the German Socialist paper Vorwaerts describes the League of Nations as "a society for the mutual insurance of the propertied classes from the danger of social revolution." This is followed by an extract from a document found when the Red Army recaptured Samara, "signed by the counter-revolutionary governments of landlords and bankers which the English and American governments are supporting there", which document had naively deplored the fact that "the principle of a volunteer army in Siberia and Samara to fight the Bolsheviks has met with no response from the peasantry". Next comes an account of the large numbers of recruits who had flocked to join the Red Army, "prepared to make all sacrifices to defend the Revolution... What have the British and American soldiers to sacrifice themselves for? Nothing. They left the slavery of the factory to go into the hell of the trenches and they will go back to the slavery of the factory." The ninth issue of The Call concludes with another extract from Vorwaerts which attributes Bulgaria's refusal

to remain in the war to revolutionary unrest rather than to military defeat.

The sixteenth issue of The Call (1 January 1919) was the first to inscribe itself "The organ of the English-Speaking Group of Communists in Russia" rather than that of the workers and peasants of Russia. The seventeenth, similarly inscribed, is the last to be studied in connection with the present thesis. The front page carries a banner headline "German Revolution taking Bolshevik Turn" and consists of eleven very short news items illustrating this assertion, drawn from agency messages or newspaper reports from Berlin, Nauen, Minsk, Dvinsk, Verro, Narva and Liban. The second page contains an unusually long (1,000 words) and thoughtful article comparing the progress, stage by stage, of the Russian and German revolutions. The article concludes "The similarity in the course of the Russian and German Revolutions is no mere coincidence. It is due to the operation of social laws: laws which are also operating in Western Europe and America" and which will "as sure as flowers blossom in the spring" result in revolutions in these countries also. The page is completed by news items from France suggesting that under Clemenceau French militarism would not relax its grip on policy and would look for fresh fields to conquer. The third page begins with an article describing how the Allies had begun to fight amongst themselves over a number of issues: the meaning of the notion of the freedom of the seas, the objectives of the League of Nations, the question of whether or not to exact indemnities from Germany, the definition of frontiers and the acquisition of territories. The article concludes "If the workers of the Allied countries do not speedily take control they will find themselves flying at each other's throats again to fight out their masters' quarrels." Next comes a news item from the Ukraine: the black troops of the Allied occupation



forces were being withdrawn, ostensibly because of the cold but (the article implies) perhaps also because they were not "such devoted supporters of European civilisation and progress" as "Polish legionaries and the hordes of Tsarist desperadoes at Odessa." This is followed by the greater part of a column on the attitude of the English press to the intervention, comparing the lines taken by the Daily Chronicle, the Daily Express and the Daily News. The first had noted that the British elections had shown that there was considerable sympathy in Britain for the Bolshevik government; the second had questioned whether there was now any point in fighting Russia since Germany now acted as a buffer; and third had asked whether economic aid would not be a more effective answer to Bolshevism than machine guns. The page ends with a short summary of the joint election manifesto of the Independent Labour Party and the British Socialist Party, which had exposed "the intention of Allied Capitalism to crush the Russian and German Revolutions". Half of the last page of the seventeenth issue was taken up with a report of Lenin's address on the international situation to a meeting "last week" of the Conference of All-Russia Councils of Public Economy. The quotations chosen were in keeping with the whole tone of this issue. Lenin had pointed out that the peace terms now being proposed for Germany by the Allies had overstepped all limits and had resulted in a backlash among the formerly chauvinistic labour movements in France and England. Taken in conjunction with "the reported fraternisation of the Anglo-American soldiers with our own Soviet troops Russia may consider herself as standing upon solid ground." But the effect of Lenin's cool and lucid appraisal of the economic tasks and priorities facing the Russian people was almost blotted out by the last item in the seventeenth issue of The Call. This was an account of the complex situation in the Ukraine, where the downfall of Skoropadsky had not resulted in a straightforward victory for the Soviet

principle because of the recrudescence of Petliura's brand of nationalism, which had not hesitated to appeal to the Allies for troops to help keep order in the Ukraine. "The mist is dispersing and the old familiar sight unfolds itself before us. On one side the interventionists and on the other the masses of people marching under the communist banner towards a new world."

In its way this last sentence epitomises the whole history of the first seventeen issues of The Call. The first few were mainly factual and unemphatic. Readers were invited to think for themselves and if they acted upon their conclusions, so much the better. By late October 1918, when the war was clearly coming to an end, the editorial policy-makers of The Call obviously perceived the need for an all-out propaganda offensive of which direct incitement of the Allied troops to mutiny was an essential ingredient. But by mid-January 1919 the mist was dispersing, and it became clear that if the battle for world revolution was not lost, neither had it yet been won.

It is not known when The Call ceased publication. The Killam Library at Dalhousie University have the latest edition which it has been possible to trace: 16 April 1919. A footnote to Vol.30 of the English translation of the Collected Works of Lenin (p.567) speaks of it as having been "published in 1918-19", and Lenin, in his account of Bolshevik propaganda given to the First All Russia Congress of Working Cossacks on 1 March 1920 (Vol.30 p.385) spoke of it in the past tense.



## APPENDIX X

## VESTNIK

On 25 November 1917 an Instruction to Censors (No.393) signed by Sir Frank Swettenham, contained the words: "You had better look carefully at all Vestnik messages from Petrograd as it is possible that they will be influenced by the Leninites."<sup>1</sup>

The literal translation of the Russian word "vestnik" is "announcer" or "herald". Although it has proved impossible to establish the exact significance of the word when attached to messages from Russia in 1917-1918, it has become clear that it did not mean that the message in question had come from, or even via, an official Soviet Press Agency. The Press Bureau, however, had clearly already jumped to that conclusion when, on 14 December 1917 one of the Home Office Liaison Officers posted there, Sir Edward Troup, wrote:

"Vestnik was the Russian Reuter but the Leninist Government have taken possession and they are sending out propagandist telegrams exactly the same in substance as their wireless messages."<sup>2</sup>

In fact the "Russian Reuter" at that time was still the Petrograd Telegraph Agency, PTA, which was not replaced until September 1918 by the Russian Telegraph Agency, ROSTA (which in turn was succeeded by TASS). But on the previous day, 13 December, one of the Directors of the Press Bureau, Sir Frank Swettenham, had received a warning about the increased use being made of radio by the Bolsheviks from one of the Bureau's

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<sup>1</sup> HO 139.35.

<sup>2</sup> HO 139.27.

military Liaison Officer, Brigadier General Cockerill. Swettenham immediately wrote to another of his Home Office Liaison Officers saying that in view of what he had been told by the military

"we propose to treat the Russian wirelss<sup>3</sup> on the same lines as the German wireless and not to publish it unless it contains information likely to be useful to the Allied cause... Wireless messages are Government property and if we pass, they are published with official authority"<sup>3</sup>

He added that the French were apparently already suppressing all "official" Russian messages and that Balfour was asking the Home Secretary to consider giving instructions to "censor the Russian official messages" in the same way. When Troup passed this suggestion on to the Home Secretary, his covering letter shows that the Press Bureau were not only worried but completely at a loss as to what significance they should attribute by the attachment of the word "vestnik" - sometimes apparently quite indiscriminately - to both wireless and cable messages.<sup>4</sup> Swettenham then wrote another memorandum, not apparently addressed to anyone in particular but possibly for the information of his fellow-Director, Sir Edward Cook. In it he outlines the problem of differentiating in the treatment of Russian wireless messages and telegrams, adding

"it is really childish to stop one and pass the other when they really come from the same source and are in practically identical terms".<sup>5</sup>

The Press Bureau's problem may in part have been due to the fact that in Britain all wireless systems had, indeed, been taken over by the Government at the outbreak of war, and also because one of the chief press agencies, Reuter's, enjoyed preferential treatment by the Government. In Russia, in late 1917 and for much of 1918, there was no such clear-cut

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<sup>3</sup> HO 139.35

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



situation. A brief analysis of the despatches which Price sent in this period shows that the conclusion that Vestnik = wireless = "official" was based on a fallacy. Most but not all of the messages sent by Price, at least from 25 May onwards, ended with the words "Vestnik, Moscow" and the date. Sometimes the message in question is known to have been sent by wireless but some of them, those sent before July, could still have been sent by cable. There is no way of knowing, although after July it is known that he was only able to communicate with his paper by courtesy of the Russian wireless. Nine of the despatches he sent during this period were not labelled "Vestnik" and two of them (25 May and 20 June) were printed uncut, but this does not prove anything with regard to the means by which they were transmitted or the extent to which they could be regarded as "officially" inspired.

Some light has been thrown on the subject by Andrew Rothstein, whose father Theodore was the first Soviet envoy to Teheran after the Bolshevik Revolution, and who as a very young man was in a position to see so-called Vestnik messages for himself. On 13 May 1985 he wrote in a private letter:

"I remember my father receiving copies of Vestnik messages (signed as such) usually from Stockholm, where the Left Social Democrats had a press centre. The messages were on all sorts of subjects - internal (the struggle with the Whites, new progressive institutions set up in the Soviet Republic, public meetings or Soviet sessions etc.) and external (Peace proposals of the Soviet Government, reports of negotiations etc.) This was in the first half of 1918... My impression is that they came from the Propaganda Bureau of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets... and were copies of radio messages with which the Soviet Government strove to break through the wall of silence or lies set up against Soviet Russia by the Entente Powers."

The extent to which the Russian government made use of wireless was naturally influenced by the availability of alternative facilities.

The Official History of the Blockade (see Chapter 7, p.214), informative about most other cable systems, does not state at what point the Great Northern Cable, through which telegrams to and from Russia had previously passed, ceased to function. In May 1918 Lockhart complained to London of delays in the transmission of telegrams between Moscow and London, adding that Tchicherin had told him that he, too, was experiencing delays and that he had suggested that the British might have set up a cable censorship at Alexandrovsk.<sup>6</sup> Tchicherin was right. A Minute from the War Office on Lockhart's cable confirmed that the British Admiral at Alexandrovsk was indeed establishing an intelligence service there, and had begun by imposing a censorship which was holding up all telegrams in both directions. On 16 July Swettenham referred to the breakdown "for some weeks" in the cable service between Russia and Britain which had resulted in all press messages of which the Soviet Government approved (or so Swettenham inferred) being sent by wireless.<sup>7</sup> It would appear therefore that the cable ceased to function some time early in June.

An example of the confusion which followed was the fate of a message from Price to the Manchester Guardian sent on 8 July, about the 5th Congress and the attempted Left S.R. coup. This arrived at the Press Bureau in two sections, each being part of a composite intercept forwarded from the Admiralty on 9 July. It was addressed to the Manchester Guardian but the wireless operator clearly mistook it for a quotation from the paper and presented it as such. Sir Edward Cook immediately concluded that

"it looks as if the Russian Government were putting out as a quotation... what Philips Price has sent or is intending to send."

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<sup>6</sup> FO 371.3330.

<sup>7</sup> HO 139.35.



Stephen Gaselee added: "I think that this is most rightly stopped"<sup>8</sup>

It would appear that nobody had actually read the Manchester Guardian and discovered that the message had never been printed in the first place.

At the heart of the problem, for the British, were the devious methods which the Foreign Office was employing in the matter of censorship of messages dealing with foreign affairs. The Bureau continued to have to go through the motions of asking for permission to stop them. In a hand written Minute on a memorandum from Cook concerning the transmission by wireless of two messages from Price and another from Fineberg, Gaselee noted:

"Although we must pass ordinary cabled press messages if they only contain Foreign Affairs we are not at all bound so to treat the Russian Wireless because it professes to contain a press message."<sup>9</sup>

Yet less than a week later Swettenham was again asking for formal approval from the Home Office to stop press messages from Russia sent by wireless.<sup>10</sup> He pointed out that only messages of which the Soviet Government approved were transmitted in this way, notably those addressed to the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News. He gave as reasons for stopping such messages:

- "(i) Because they are not calculated to help our cause.
- (ii) Because they come by Wireless which is a Government system and if issued goes on with a certain authority.
- (iii) Because if passed to the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News it would be giving those papers a manifest advantage over the messages of other correspondents not favoured by the Soviet Government."

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

All the same, he wanted to know "whether the Secretary of State approves our action?" Sir Edward Troup, presumably acting on behalf of the Home Office, handed back the chalice.

"Generally I think this is right but perhaps some articles of this kind might be 'cut' and not suppressed. It is a matter for the directors of the Press Bureau."

On balance such fragments of evidence as exist appear to support Andrew Rothstein's "impression" that Vestnik was primarily but not exclusively an organisation responsible for sending wireless messages overseas and that some, but not all of these were directly initiated by Sovprop. Those that were not so initiated had almost certainly secured some form of official approval and because this was obviously the case they were stopped in Britain on the grounds described by Swettenham. Litvinov, again according to Rothstein, received copies of Vestnik messages uncensored because of his quasi-diplomatic status, and probably passed some of them on. This would account for the fact that very occasionally news direct from Russia appeared in the Left press between the Allied landings in August 1918 and the deportation of Litvinov in September. The message from Fineberg which appeared in the same Admiralty intercept as Price's message about the attempted left S.R. coup was printed in the August The Call and another message from Fineberg, presumably via the same route, appeared in the following month.



## APPENDIX XI

## SCOTT AND PRICE

It is not known when Price first met Scott, but it would not be surprising if they had met while Price was still a boy. His great grand-father had been one of those who put up the money with which to start the Manchester Guardian in 1821. His grandfather and great uncle on the Philips side had both been Members of Parliament for Lancashire seats. His mother's spinster sister Anna Maria lived in the family home on the edge of Manchester after her father's death in 1890. Anna Maria Philips became outstanding in her own right in Manchester in the field of voluntary social service. (The Dean of Manchester, speaking at a Memorial Service after her death in 1946, described her as "our very own Eminent Victorian".) She knew Scott, and from this it follows that it would have been very easy for a young man with radical views, strong local connections and political ambitions to meet Scott.

The first time that anything by Price was printed in the Manchester Guardian was November 1912, when he wrote some "letters" from Anatolia and Turkey. In 1913, when he was planning his travels in Asia Minor and the Middle East, Scott commissioned some more. Rates of payment were agreed and Scott gave Price letters of introduction.<sup>1</sup> In November 1914 it was arranged that Price should go to Russia for a few months and send back letters for both private and public consumption. This time Scott gave Price something more like real credentials.

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<sup>1</sup> John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Scott papers, P 53/23a.

"Mr. M. Philips Price, personne très honorable qui porte cette lettre, est le correspondant particulier en Russia du Manchester Guardian.

Je serais bien reconnaissant a tous qui lui rendraient service.

C.P. Scott  
Redacteur en Chef du  
Manchester Guardian."

Scott's attitude to his correspondents was pragmatic. He did not believe "in keeping a good man tied down to a particular place",<sup>2</sup> and when occasion arose might send a second man to a place where he already had a correspondent, in order to "liberate him... for visits to other places." This is undoubtedly the reason for his decision to send first Farbman and then Soskice out to Russia in the spring and summer of 1917. With hindsight, Price quite mistakenly attributed this decision to a combination of lack of confidence in him on Scott's part, and pressure from Whitehall. But although he was hurt by Soskice's arrival, it undoubtedly did "liberate" him, and had it not been for Soskice Price would probably not have been able to undertake the journey into the Volga provinces which resulted in his unique account of that area between the revolutions.

Despite his designation as "correspondent particulier" Price's status on the Manchester Guardian appears never to have been very clear. He was formally appointed special correspondent in November 1917, but an undated internal memorandum to Scott from a member of the accounts department of the paper, stated that Price "was never on our staff and the amounts we sent him altogether were far exceeded by his contributions. We have never had a 'settling up' with him."<sup>3</sup> During this time in Russia, Price sent, in fact, 141 "contributions", of which 102 were attributed to him by name, 19 as "our correspondent, 6 as "our correspondent

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 335/134.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. a/P53/23a.



M. Philips Price", 5 as "our special correspondent M. Philips Price", 4 as "our Petrograd correspondent", 1 as "our special correspondent", and 4 as "a correspondent".

Personal relations between Scott and Price were cordial throughout the whole period of Price's association with the Manchester Guardian before and during the war and only turned sour later on. Price venerated Scott. In April 1917 he wrote to him from Moscow to offer belated congratulations on what he thought had been Scott's 60th birthday (in fact Scott was then 70).

"May you live long, Mr. Scott, to guide the great journal which is the centre of light and intellect for this little island. For my part it will be the proudest memory of my life to feel that I have helped it in its work."<sup>4</sup>

Scott's letter asking Price to cease the correspondence could hardly have been couched in gentler terms. The most damaging thing he appears ever to have conceded about Price was that he was liable to enthusiasm (see above p.417). It is, therefore, the more startling to find that in February 1924 he wrote, apparently out of the blue, to the General Manager of Labour Monthly, Arthur Reade, protesting that to describe Price in an advertisement for the magazine as "Manchester Guardian Correspondent, Russia, 1914-18" was "extremely misleading."<sup>5</sup> Scott went on:

"Mr. Philips Price was in those years a traveller in Persia and the Middle East and in Russia and sent us letters and occasional telegrams, but he was never a regularly appointed correspondent, and after he joined the Bolsheviks he ceased to be connected with the paper."

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 334/163.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. A/P53 25-38 (This reference covers the entire correspondence between Reade, Scott and Price.)

Replying on 2 March Reade explained that he had taken the statement from The Labour Who's Who without reference to Price himself. The advertisement had related to a forthcoming memoir of Lenin to be written by Price, and the reference to him as Manchester Guardian correspondent was intended as "an example of his experience and qualifications rather than as a political testimonial." Reade added in a postscript:

"I suppose you have no objection to my sending a copy of this correspondence to Mr. Price, since it is only fair that he should be informed of a misunderstanding of what is, I think, very generally believed to have been his position [with] the Guardian."

Scott thereupon wrote to the Editor of The Labour Who's Who making a similar disclaimer, but added:

"there would be no objection to his being described as 'an occasional contributor' to the Manchester Guardian."

He asked for a correction in this sense to be made to the next edition of The Labour Who's Who. Scott also agreed to Price seeing the correspondence, and having seen it Price wrote to Reade:

"Apparently Mr. Scott regards a newspaper correspondent only one who has a fixed salary on the staff of the paper. Under this interpretation I was certainly not their correspondent in Russia. But in that case it is remarkable that he printed over my communications 'from our special correspondent in Russia', 'from our own correspondent', and other descriptions which are also applied to salaried correspondents. If he only regarded me as an occasional correspondent he ought to have printed over my communications 'From a correspondent' or 'from an occasional correspondent.' The fact is they were very glad to have me for their regular correspondent for a time because they knew that I was the only person who could get them certain information and I remember receiving urgent wires from Mr. Scott sending me money for telegrams and expenses. Then after it was all over, like in the case of many of their correspondents whom I know, they chucked me over on the plea that I was supposed to have been 'bought over by the Bolsheviks.'

Yours fraternally,

M. PHILIPS PRICE

p.S. I have no objection to you sending this to Mr. Scott."



Reade sent Price's letter to Scott with the comment:

"I think that since the Manchester Guardian published Mr. Price's despatches under the heading 'from Our correspondent' and not as 'from A correspondent' [Reade's emphases] we are justified in describing him as your former correspondent, and that you must have overlooked the above circumstances in stating that he was simply an occasional contributor."

Scott did not immediately reply, although there is a draft indicating that he meant to do so, but that there were "some points of detail which I wanted to ascertain." These may, indeed, have been the points upon which he was seeking clarification with his accounts department. Reade wrote again on 31 March 1924 pressing for a clear statement of Price's position viz-a-viz the paper, and proposing that

"if you do not care to favour us with your reply personally perhaps you would prefer to communicate with Mr. Price himself, and I am informing him of this suggestion."

Scott's final answer, written on 20 April, was short:

"My only feeling about Mr. Philips Price is that he should not use the name of the paper in such a way as to connect us with his own change of views. It is not a very important matter and must be left to his own sense of fitness."

Reade had the last word. On 25 May he wrote:

"I am sure that Mr. Price would be as reluctant as you are for his present political position to be confused with that of the Manchester Guardian but that does not invalidate the fact that for some years he was your correspondent on the terms disclosed by the accompanying copy of the credentials with which you supplied him and which seem to contradict your original letter to us, since I can think of no possible translation of 'correspondent particulier' other than 'own correspondent'."

The most likely explanation of Scott's apparent change of heart towards Price emerges from his letter of 20 April. It was the fact that Price had used, or allowed to be used, his connection with the Manchester

Guardian as, what in effect it was, a recommendation on the fly-leaf of The Truth About the Allied Intervention in Russia.

There is no evidence that Price and Scott ever mended fences, but Price never ceased to be proud of his previous connection with the paper. His children were taken at an early age to see it being printed. His sadness when Scott died was memorable. Price wrote a letter of condolence to Ted Scott after his father's death and merely remarked that he had not seen much of the old man in recent years. Ted Scott's reply must have done much to obliterate any bitterness that Price might still have felt.

"I well remember the help you gave my father in those early years of the revolution and he was always grateful to you. It needs two, at least, to tell the truth in a newspaper."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Price papers.



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