

The Accidental Terrorist. Okhrana Connections to the Extreme-Right and the Attempt to Assassinate Sergei Witte in 1907*

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On the cold evening of 29 January 1907 Sergei Witte, constitutional Russia's first Prime Minister, discovered a belated and wholly unexpected Christmas present lodged in one of his chimneys: an unexploded time-bomb.¹ Superficially, this case of attempted murder was a trivial enough affair. The bomb was so poorly constructed that it could hardly be considered dangerous: the detonator malfunctioned and the clock had stopped. Sergei Witte was, in any case, no longer a government minister, he had fallen out of favour with the tsar and had ceased to be an influential political figure. Moreover, the culprits eluded arrest and consequently the motives for the attack remained unclear at first.

Yet, all this changed as the Petersburg winter slowly gave way to summer. On 27 May 1907 'some children found the disfigured and unrecognisable corpse of a young man near the Irinovskii railway line, about seven kilometres outside St. Petersburg.'² Police found bomb-making materials around the body. Just over two weeks later the Socialist Revolutionary (SR) party organ *Znamia truda* published an article which was circulated throughout constitutional Russia's vibrant new free press revealing that the victim's name was Aleksandr Kazantsev and that the bomb found on his corpse had been intended for another attempt on Witte's life.³ The article went on to claim that Kazantsev had been an *agent provocateur* in the service of the Union of Russian People (URP), an extreme right-wing political group which had been formed in 1905 as a 'patriotic' reaction against Witte's promise of a constitution in the so-called October Manifesto. Subsequent exposés in the press filtering from SR sources revealed that Kazantsev had

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been responsible for terrorist attacks on several of Russia's leading liberal politicians, including the January attempt on Witte's life.⁴ The principal source of this information was Kazantsev's murderer, a left-winger, 23 year-old Vasilii Dmitriev Fedorov, who had escaped to France and sold his story to the scandal-hungry Parisian press. He claimed that the murder was an act of revenge for the fact that Kazantsev had duped him into carrying out assassinations based on the lie that there were at the behest of the SR party.⁵

The controversy escalated when rumours surfaced in the St. Petersburg press that Kazantsev's address book, which was found at the scene of the crime, included the phone numbers of the offices of the secret police (Security Section) in Moscow, the head of Moscow's secret police from 1906 to 1907 (E.K.Klimovich), the current Governor General of Moscow (Gershel'man) and the addresses of some Okhrana 'conspiratorial apartments' (*konspirativnye kvartiry*, i.e. safe houses).⁶ On the basis of this, Sergei Witte was not alone in concluding that: 'Kazantsev was one of the agents of the Okhrana who were termed ideological volunteers [*ideinymi dobrovol'tsami*], working for the secret police in assassinating persons who were considered left-wing and in general dangerous to the reactionary cause.'⁷ This article will explore the validity of Witte's contention. It will also examine the broader significance of the affair. I will begin by identifying three themes which underpin the various explanations of the causes and implications of the Okhrana's connection with reactionary terror.

i) A War against society? Right-wing terror was concentrated on the moderate liberal parties: police connections to this have been taken as manifest proof for the nascent liberal critique of the tsarist state as an anachronistic and unyielding monolith, focussing on the Okhrana as the central ‘pillar of Russian reaction.’⁸ The liberal critique often contained prophetic elements, voiced most clearly by A.A.Lopukhin, a former police chief (1902-1905) who became disillusioned with the tsarist regime and gravitated towards the liberal Constitutional Democratic (Kadet) party. ‘The whole political outlook of the ranks of the Corps of Gendarmes boils down to the following propositions’ he wrote, ‘there is the people and there is the state... As a result [of this bipolar view], the protection of the state... turns into a war against all of society... By widening the gulf between the state and the people, the police engender a revolution.’⁹

ii) State terror? The Witte affair also suggests a convergence of police methods and terrorism in Russia prior to the Red Terror of Lenin’s Cheka. One might say that the creed and methodology of the Okhrana, which they termed ‘conspiracy’ (*konspirativnost’* or *konspiratsiia*), was conceived by ex-revolutionaries recruited by the police (Sergei Zubatov, head of Moscow Okhrana in the 1890s, and Petr Rachkovskii, head of the Okhrana’s Paris-based Foreign Agency from 1884 to 1902, in particular). They brought with them many of the organisational practices the Nechaevist and People’s Will terrorist groups from the 1860s to the 1880s. The Witte affair is one of many which suggests that the association with organisational and psychological principles of terrorism had progressed to the ultimate stage of development whereby the counter-terrorist security police finally became itself an agency of terror.¹⁰ Analysis on these lines has often drawn attention to rumours of the Okhrana terrorising the government itself. In this sense the Witte assassination attempt may be seen as a bathetic precursor to the murder of the Prime Minister, P.A.Stolypin, by an Okhrana spy, Dmitrii Bogrov, in September 1911. History played out Marx’s satirical observation on great events in reverse: first time as farce, second time as tragedy. A.I.Guchkov, the leader of the moderate conservative Octobrist party, summed up the general impression of the Stolypin murder when he asked in the Duma: Was this an accident? ‘... or behind it was there something worse, a conscious connivance, a desire to get rid of a man whose presence had become intolerable?’¹¹ There is much in the case to support A.Ia.Avrekh’s summary that the

assassination: ‘appears to have been a singular accident, permitted by fools and bunglers.’¹² Yet, the incomplete interrogation followed by hasty execution of Bogrov suggests that the tsarist government was reluctant to delve too deeply into the mystery.¹³ A similar reluctance could be seen in the Witte affair. Both cases gave rise to accusations at the time and later that the secret police in Russia became (or as some would say had always been) a ‘state within a state’¹⁴ prior to the Bolshevik police tyranny.

iii) Patron-client networks

Finally, a theme of this article, which tends to undermine many aspects of the liberal critique: the Witte affair offers a glimpse into the murky underworld of tsarist bureaucratic politics. This glimpse reveals that, contrary to its monolithic image, the bureaucracy was a tangled web of ever-changing and interwoven factions, which have been termed ‘patron-client networks.’ These were based not just on institutional affiliation, but also on a wide variety of political beliefs, blood-ties, careerism and geography.¹⁵ Staff relations inside the Okhrana provide a classic example of these competing cabals. This indicates that the government did not present a united front in opposition to the advent of ‘constitutional’ politics. Far from waging war on society, factions in the bureaucracy waged war on one another, seeking to harness the power inherent in burgeoning sections of civil society for their own advantage. I will show that these bureaucratic cliques and their connections to civil society in Imperial Russia are the most important factor in the Witte affair, because they explain the root causes of the attempt on Witte’s life and the ensuing scandal.

The spread of patron-client groups inside the Russian bureaucracy is particularly important with regard to the connections between tsarist and Soviet government with regard to state terror, because the epidemic of networks reached fever pitch during the Great Terror (suggesting at least circumstantially a link.) The most significant denunciation of patron-client networks in Russian government was delivered, with characteristic hypocrisy (or *doublethink*), by the most persistent and successful practitioner of the patronage system, Joseph Stalin. In 1937 he warned party members of the insidious tendency that ‘most often, workers [party workers, i.e. government officials] are selected not by objective criteria, but by accidental, subjective, narrow and provincial

criteria. Most frequently so-called acquaintances are chosen, personal friends, fellow countrymen, people personally devoted to someone, masters of eulogising their patrons, regardless of their political and business suitability. Naturally, instead of a leading group of responsible workers, a family group of intimates, a company is formed, the members of which try to live in peace, not to offend each other, not to wash their dirty linen in public...'¹⁶

The Holy Brotherhood

The case of the Holy Brotherhood (*Sviashchennaia druzhina*, 1881-83) offers an interesting precedent on the theme of reactionary terror.¹⁷ This organisation, like the URP, saw itself as a patriotic reaction against left-wing threats to the tsarist regime. It also sought to fight fire with fire by attacking the revolutionary movement with conspiratorial terrorist methods.¹⁸ Its conspiratorial cells were directly modelled on the Nechaevist and People's Will *piaterki* ('groups of five.')19 The Holy Brotherhood also indulged in acts of provocation; that is, it recruited revolutionaries under false pretences in order to compromise them. Pavl Akselrod and M.P.Dragomanov were their most distinguished dupes.²⁰ Finally and most importantly, like the URP, later revelations about the membership of this organisation revealed that it included a large number of police officials. These included: Kozlov (the *oberpolitseimeister* of St Petersburg); Henri Bint (a French agent of the Third Section who went on to serve both the Okhrana and the Soviets); P.I.Rachkovskii (at that time a lowly clerk in the Department of Police, later to become the head of the Okhrana from 1905 to 1906); and secret agents such as Iu.M.Bogushevich, G.S.Veselitskii-Bozhidarovich and V.V.Marchenko/Savchenko.²¹ These links have led many to conclude that the Holy Brotherhood was an organ of police terror. This has a direct bearing on the events of 1907 because these facts were only first brought to light around 1911 in order to serve as a key piece of evidence in the Kadet accusations, in connection with the Witte affair, that the police had been orchestrating right-wing terror for decades.²²

Yet, this conclusion ignores two key factors which would have a bearing on the Witte affair. Firstly, the real locus of governmental support for the Brotherhood resided among influential figures at court, most notably Count I.I.Vorontsov-Dashkov,

R.A.Fadeev and Count P.P.Shuvalov. Vorontsov-Dashkov in particular had his own police organisations that would benefit from the dissolution of the Okhrana.²³ Secondly, all the secret police employees listed above had, before entering the Brotherhood, been either dismissed or demoted *as a result* of the creation of the Okhrana: because the Department of Police had sought to purge the political police of former employees from the discredited Third Section.²⁴ This group of ousted and junior police staff joined the Brotherhood with the hope of winning the patronage of this rival group at Court. The Brotherhood was therefore set up as a specific reaction *against* the new leaders of the political police.

It is no surprise to find therefore that the leading police staff saw the Holy Brotherhood as a rival, not an ally. Colonel Sudeikin, head of the Okhrana in St Petersburg noted, ‘we have to fight against it as much as against the terrorists. Even more for it is harder to reach. The revolutionaries are people, they have ideals, but this crowd... it is a mob! A mob under protection. They are annoying me no end.’²⁵ The majority of senior Okhrana staff thought likewise.²⁶ It was only when the tsar himself withdrew his support for the organisation at the end of 1882 that police director V.K.Plehve was able to dissolve the Holy Brotherhood.

What is more interesting about the Holy Brotherhood, with regard to Witte affair, is that Witte himself was a member, and thus himself a forefather of the reactionary terror which nearly cost him his life. Indeed, one of the Brotherhood’s chief opponents, Russia’s ‘press tsar,’ A.S.Suvorin, wrote: ‘The infamous Holy Brotherhood was Witte’s idea. He came from Kiev and explained it all to Vorontsov-Dashkov. An idea worthy of a Jesuit.’²⁷ Witte by his own confession did not mince his words, summarising his line of reasoning thus: ‘Every time the anarchists prepared or made an attempt on the life of the Sovereign, the society should respond by ruthlessly killing them.’²⁸

Witte amidst the secret police

Next we come to the contemporary liberal interpretation of the attempt on Witte’s life as evidence that the Okhrana was somehow a state within the state, a ‘separate realm’, akin to Ivan the Terrible’s *oprichnina*.²⁹ By inference the Okhrana’s alleged terrorist activities were seen to be rooted in its elevated status. The depiction of the Okhrana in Witte’s

memoirs compounds this view. The leading security police officer, he wrote, ‘had more influence over the Emperor than I did and was virtually head of the government for which I bore responsibility.’³⁰ Even as Prime Minister, Witte claimed that he was unable to penetrate the veil of secrecy surrounding the Okhrana and that he: ‘knew nothing about police operations except that there was something unclean about them.’³¹

Yet the closer we look at the tsarist bureaucracy the more this cliché of an impenetrable secret police appears to be misleading. We may take the manoeuvrings of Sergei Witte himself as a perfect example of the way in which the Okhrana was an integrated and subordinate branch of the bureaucratic government. He became a close ally of a fellow former-member of the Holy Brotherhood, P.I.Rachkovskii. The alliance was largely a marriage of convenience- Rachkovskii was, like Witte, an inveterate enemy of Viacheslav Plehve. Yet, in his relations with Rachkovskii, Witte was hardly innocent of association with the seamy side of the Okhrana. It was even rumoured that Witte found Rachkovskii useful in some of his more unscrupulous personal intrigues, such as arranging the theft of papers from the home of Elie de Cyon (Ilia Tsion).³² Further unsubstantiated accusations circulated that Rachkovskii occasionally resorted to terrorist methods. For example, when the Department of Police sent a senior gendarme, General Selivestrov, to Paris to investigate Rachkovskii for embezzlement of government funds in 1892, the general had the misfortune to be assassinated by one of Rachkovskii’s own spies.³³ Moreover, while probably not an anti-Semite himself, Rachkovskii was a pioneer in the crude politics of mass media anti-Semitism.³⁴ Later allegations that Rachkovskii was the author of the notorious anti-Semitic forgery ‘The Protocols of the Elders of Zion’ were probably false, but all the same were indicative of his sinister reputation.³⁵ Rachkovskii clearly represents a link between the Holy Brotherhood and the URP: Having been a member of the former and having claimed to be the founder of the latter.³⁶

Moreover, this does not prove long-standing right-wing connections to the Okhrana *as a whole*. Quite the contrary: Rachkovskii was very unpopular among the mainstream *okhranniki*. Rachkovskii’s career survived thanks to patronage in the Imperial Court. When he lost this support, in 1902, the Interior Minister, Plehve, lost no time in dismissing him.³⁷ Witte’s promotion of more unscrupulous agents inside the political police did not end here. He actively sought to re-establish influence over the

Okhrana by cultivating and promoting the career of I.F.Manasevich-Manuilov, a specialist in burglary and blackmail.³⁸ Witte employed Manuilov in a secret bid for the support of the disgraced police chief Sergei Zubatov in December 1905.³⁹ When he became effective Prime Minister at the end of 1905, Witte appointed the highly conservative P.N.Durnovo as Minister of the Interior- ahead of more liberal candidates. This was based on the calculation that Durnovo was so unpopular that he would be dependent on Witte's patronage.

Thus, the prevalence of patron-client networks in the Okhrana indicates that it was not a 'separate realm,' hermetically sealed off from the rest of the government. In fact, factional struggles for control of the Okhrana transcended departmental parameters. Witte was a key figure in this internal wrangling. If anything, prior to 1905 he was closer to the reactionary, rather than liberal, factions inside the political police.⁴⁰ The irony was that if Witte wanted to weave a thread of continuity to prove police complicity in the attempt on his life then he would have to find himself guilty also.

Komissarov's pogrom laboratory

Next we come to the question: If Witte was not a paragon of the liberal cause, why would the supposedly reactionary Okhrana want to murder, or at least aid and abet the murder, of the former-Prime Minister? Witte put forward the idea that it was his role as architect to the liberal October Manifesto that made him so loathed. Kadet investigators would have supported this because it fitted in with their thesis of the fundamental incompatibility of political police with the new constitutional order.

However, evidence points to an alternative explanation: Witte's connection to the political police, not his alienation from them, may have a bearing on the 'conspiracy' to aid the reactionary assassins. By early 1906 control of the political police had slipped out of Witte's hands because Durnovo grew increasingly independent of the Prime Minister,⁴¹ and Rachkovskii had long since found a more influential patron in the form of Petersburg Governor and later Court *Komendant*, D.F.Trepov. Yet all was not lost. An opportunity for Witte to remove his rivals in the Okhrana presented itself in January 1906. A former Director of the Department of Police, A.A.Lopukhin, supplied Witte with information indicating that a secret section inside the police headquarters, Fontanka 16,

headed by Rachkovskii and run by a certain Captain M.S.Komissarov, specialised in printing inflammatory anti-Semitic proclamations.⁴² This was a serious charge: A wave of bloody pogroms causing thousands of deaths occurred from late 1905 to mid-1906 as a reaction against the October Manifesto.⁴³ If there were evidence that the police were behind these atrocities then it would prove Lopukhin's contention that the police were orchestrating a general war against 'society' and specifically against the constitutional order.

Witte later wrote that he questioned Komissarov on the matter. One version of this conversation, which was widely publicised, alleged that Komissarov presumed the meeting was to arrange further work and proudly admitted to Witte, 'we arrange pogroms to order – for ten [pogroms] or ten thousand as you wish.'⁴⁴ Witte confirmed in his memoirs that the captain confessed to printing 'patriotic' proclamations entitled 'To the Soldiers',⁴⁵ but agreed to 'throw the press in the Neva' when Witte expressed his opposition to the scheme. However, Lopukhin later informed Witte that Komissarov had merely moved the press from the Fontanka basement to his own apartment.⁴⁶ Records show that the Minister of the Interior, Durnovo, protected Komissarov from dismissal.⁴⁷

It is important to note that this was not simply an attempt by civil society and the nascent Duma to regulate bureaucratic malpractice. This was an internal bureaucratic struggle that branched out into the public sphere. The key players in the liberal camp, Lopukhin and his brother-in-law Prince S.D.Urusov, were former government officials with supporters inside the bureaucracy who wished to remove their opponents, Durnovo and Rachkovskii, through creating a public scandal.⁴⁸ Witte pursued further investigations into the matter through his agent attached to the police, Manasevich-Manuilov. Like Urusov and Lopukhin, Manuilov harboured a grudge against Durnovo and Rachkovskii because they had blocked his career in the Okhrana. In addition to this, Manuilov also had reason to attack Komissarov: He had been a rival of Komissarov since 1904 when both had spied on the reactions of foreign embassies to the Russo-Japanese war. Komissarov's detailed reports had exposed Manuilov's ineptitude.⁴⁹ The question of gendarme complicity in pogroms became a forceful issue when one of Lopukhin's allies leaked information to the press in May 1906 implicating a gendarme captain in circulating anti-Semitic publications in Aleksandrovsk.⁵⁰ The issue was taken up again by

Urusov, who had become a liberal (Kadet) deputy in the Russian parliament, when-referring to the infamous Fontanka 16 police headquarters as a ‘pogrom laboratory’- he publicly reiterated from the Duma tribune Lopukhin’s accusations against the Okhrana.⁵¹ Consequently, the Duma established a special commission of mostly Jewish deputies to investigate the causes of the Belostok pogrom.⁵²

Komissarov’s version of events provides further evidence that the affair was part of an ongoing *internal* bureaucratic struggle. He claimed that Lopukhin’s allies within the Department of Police⁵³ (viz. the very same people who were later to expose his activities) had actually ordered his establishment of a secret pro-government printing press.⁵⁴ Thus, Komissarov suspected afterwards that the press had been a ruse from the start. This belief was based on the fact that he was invited to meet with Lopukhin and Prince Urusov only a day after he had ‘secretly’ printed the leaflets. At this meeting he alleged that, ‘Lopukhin cautiously initiated me into the struggle that was at that time going on between Count Witte and Durnovo’; and that Lopukhin said to him: ‘Do you see, we have here a card game, and in the game sometimes a little spade is useful.’⁵⁵ The captain was obliquely offered the opportunity to escape punishment for the pogrom-press if he placed the blame for the publications on P.I.Rachkovskii and through him on Durnovo. Komissarov, apparently offended at being referred to as a ‘little spade,’ refused to commit himself to Witte’s side in the feud. As a result he was summoned to Witte’s office two days later and was reprimanded about the ‘secret’ printing press and told to cease activities immediately.⁵⁶

The Komissarov affair is important in the specific context of the Witte case because the idea of police complicity in the atrocities of the extreme-right had been firmly planted in Witte’s mind a year before the attempt on his life.⁵⁷ Secondly, this establishes a motive for at least one member of the Okhrana nourishing an enmity towards Sergei Witte: Komissarov felt that Witte had cynically sullied his reputation in an attempt to oust Durnovo. Manasevich-Manuilov testified to Komissarov’s resentment of the affair. Manuilov claimed that Komissarov suspected him of betraying the information about the printing press and consequently, ‘from this moment onwards, the Security Section [in Petersburg], which was wholly under the power of Komissarov,

began against me a most vile campaign, employing various dirty tricks.’⁵⁸ This culminated in Manuilov’s arrest by St Petersburg Security Section in 1910.⁵⁹

Thus, Witte was probably correct in claiming that members of the political police with connections to the extreme-right considered him their enemy. However, the Komissarov affair seems to suggest that Witte made enemies in the Okhrana not because he was the author of the October Manifesto, but because he himself was embroiled in internal struggle for control of the secret police.

Terror rooted in Russian society

And this brings us again to the origins of police terror: Far from being rooted in a confrontation between state and society, the exact opposite appears to be the case. In other words, ‘police terror’ was the direct result of attempts by the political police to work *with*, not against, society. A profusion right-wing societies and unions emerged after the October Manifesto. In many ways these organisations appeared to be tailor-made for an alliance with the conservative wing of the government. The largest and most important of these groups was the Union of the Russian People under Dr.A.I.Dubrovin, N.E.Markov and V.M.Purishkevich. The URP was particularly attractive to the government because it offered the opportunity of mass-based organised support for tsarism, last glimpsed in the form of Zubatov’s police trade unions, which might redirect the pent-up energies of the discontented lower-classes into a counter-revolutionary movement. Any prospective alliance with the extreme-right was in part an attempt by the tsarist regime to connect itself to a broad section of society: to forge a union, as it were, with the Russian people (*narod*). So the government’s promotion of the extreme-right, particularly through considerable financial grants to as many as 30 of their newspapers, which continued in various forms up to 1917, was in one sense an interaction with civil society.⁶⁰

However, for many this alliance was something more sinister: a government attempt to control society, rather than work with it. The right-wing organisations were used as publishers, distributors, filters and fronts for anti-oppositionist pamphlets written by Okhrana employees, with print runs of up to 100,000.⁶¹ Gerasimov, the head of Petersburg Security Section, 1905-1909, claimed that these organisations, ‘only existed

thanks to the support of the government.⁶² Rumours circulated that the URP was an artificial creation of the Okhrana.⁶³ Indeed, the government did not stop at mere financial support: In December 1905 Major-General V.A.Dediulin, the St. Petersburg City Governor, issued hundreds of revolvers to members of right-wing parties, including the URP, that then organised themselves into volunteer policing units known as 'brotherhoods' (*druzhiny*). The Okhrana, with its conspiratorial methods and obscure funding, impenetrable to Duma budgetary committees, proved to be the ideal organisation to co-ordinate this morally dubious manipulation of the political climate. Consequently, ties with the extreme-right became so tight that, as Witte put it, 'the Okhrana and the Union of the Russian People were so closely linked that it was difficult to mark the boundary between the two bodies.'⁶⁴ Dr. Dubrovin was a regular guest at Rachkovskii's lavish soirees. Police spies rose to active and senior positions in the URP: for example S.Ia.Iakovlev made no secret of the fact that he continued to work for St. Petersburg Security Section while holding a fairly senior position in the URP.⁶⁵ K.K.Poltoratskii rose to head the Moscow branch of the URP while working as a spy for Moscow Security Section.⁶⁶

Does this mean that the extreme-right was merely a puppet of the Department of Police? The extreme-right categorically denied, and indeed resented, the accusation that their organisations were established or controlled by the government.⁶⁷ The head of the St. Petersburg Security Section noted that they had no idea that these groups existed at this time, so they could hardly be considered to have created the URP. Indeed, the Minister of the Interior, P.N.Durnovo, naïvely believed at the time that a free democratic system envisaged in the October Manifesto would remove the need for any political parties.⁶⁸ Moreover, by the end of 1906 the URP boasted to have one thousand branches (one of its leaders would later claim that there was over three times this number) and around 300,000 members.⁶⁹ Such a vast organisation could hardly be considered a marionette of the secret police, which, even if we apply a broad definition of its staff, had only a few thousand employees. Only a few Department of Police print runs exceeded 50,000. These pale in comparison to the overall publication activities of the main right-wing organisations: Purishkevich claimed that the URP published 13 million brochures from May to November 1906 alone.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, even those who accepted the unpleasant reality of genuine popular backing for the URP argued that the intentions of the police in supporting them were anti-Semitic and part of a determined campaign to sabotage the constitutional experiment. However, to view this as a sinister portent of police sponsored proto-fascism fails to take into account the specific historical context when these ties were made. In 1905 it had become clear that the police organs of state security were not sufficient to subdue mass urban demonstrations and uprisings. Police behaviour at the end of 1905 and early 1906 was determined by the fact that opposition to the tsarist regime was more violent *after* the signing of the October Manifesto. The Special Section (Okhrana HQ) believed that the first anniversary of Bloody Sunday would be the spark for yet another, more radical, mass uprising, and issued instructions to all branches of the Okhrana that they, 'invite peaceful inhabitants to work with the administration in maintaining order.'⁷¹

Yet, 'peaceful inhabitants' who could be relied upon to defend the regime were thin on the ground. Whereas the paramilitary *druzhiny* of the extreme-right had some success in matching revolutionary violence with their own brutal methods. It was clear even to most conservative officials that these groups, scraped together from the dregs of society, were little more than gangs of thugs. But beggars could not be choosers. The Assistant Minister of the Interior, Vladimir Gurko, acknowledged as much when he wrote that '[the regime] was in a precarious position... In normal times no government should use methods employed by revolutionists, for in its hands such methods become double-edged weapons. But during times of revolutionary unrest, when people are in the grip of mass-psychosis, the government must support such individual organisations that spring up to support it. In 1905 the Union of the Russian People was just such an organisation.'⁷²

Consequently, the political police only formed truly close connections with the extreme-right as a short-term measure after the signing of the October Manifesto. The purpose of this alliance was to restore order and to uphold the tsarist regime. As the tsarist regime had already made promises of establishing the constitutional order, the early alliance with the extreme-right may have also upheld the embryonic constitutional experiment. This was not part of a calculated anti-Semitic or anti-democratic campaign, but a desperate temporary alliance with the most useful organisations in society at the time.⁷³

It was far from clear how long good relations would last. Stolypin's closest collaborator in the Okhrana, Gerasimov, cautiously monitored the activities of the URP as if it were yet another revolutionary party.⁷⁴ It was for this reason that spies entered the URP and other right wing parties up to the February revolution.⁷⁵ From Okhrana reports in St. Petersburg we can see that as early as 1906 Gerasimov had lost faith in the reliability and moral qualities of the extreme-right organisations.⁷⁶ For example, when he met with representatives of the URP visiting St. Petersburg for an audience with the tsar he was horrified. Gerasimov later wrote that the monk Iliodor, 'struck me as a fanatic... and his comrades were even more vile... uncultured, illiterate people... [Iuskevich-Kraskovskii in particular, who was clearly] an extremely unintelligent man... with a weakness for money.'⁷⁷ When Dubrovin asked him to provide them with accommodation, the head of Petersburg Security Section wryly offered them some of his prison cells.

Most senior police chiefs recognised a basic incompatibility between the police and right-wing *druzhiny*.⁷⁸ The Okhrana's prime directive was 'the preservation of the state order and public tranquillity.'⁷⁹ The police-*druzhina* honeymoon soon ended when it became clear that riots and rowdy public demonstrations— exactly the same things which could ruin the career of a security chief— were part and parcel of the URP's political appeal. The *druzhiny* became an even greater source of irritation when they refused to return the revolvers that had been issued to them temporarily for volunteer security work on the first anniversary of Bloody Sunday.⁸⁰ Above all else, this divergence of interests was driven by one fundamental aspect of security policing: counter-terrorism. Gerasimov wrote, 'naturally, as head of a Security Section my specific concern was the struggle with terrorism, frustrating their schemes and predicting assassination attempts.'⁸¹ Thus, he could hardly have welcomed the news in August 1906 that the URP had compiled a list of forty three public figures whom they considered to be enemies of the people and who ought to be 'brought to justice,' i.e. assassinated.⁸² Top of this list was Sergei Witte. He was hated for his role— according to the crude paranoia of URP ideologues— at the forefront of a worldwide Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. Certainly the Okhrana appeared to take these death threats seriously: teams of bodyguards were sent to protect Witte and various liberal politicians such as P.N.Miliukov.⁸³ Evidence of URP terrorist connections

played a part in Stolypin's decision to shift government financial support to a new faction of the extreme-right, the Union of the Archangel Michael under Purishkevich. This loss of favour for the URP exacerbated the split in the organisation in May 1907. So, while the Interior Ministry at first helped to build the URP, it later helped to weaken it. The condemnation of reactionary terror was genuine but discrete, as indicated by Stolypin's circular to all sections of the Okhrana: 'One must recognise the service rendered by patriotic and monarchist societies throughout the empire. Nevertheless, in this sphere, government officials should be very discriminating when coming into contact with leaders of these organisations, should impress upon them that the government expects absolutely loyal support and rejects any pursuit that involve internecine conflict, terrorist undertakings or the like.'⁸⁴

In light of this, it is ironic that the main condemnations of government inconsistency in tackling terrorism came from the leaders of the Kadet party, when their own refusal to condemn left-wing terror hardly helped dismantle the culture of political violence.⁸⁵ True, anti-Semitic police officials greatly exacerbated the situation. But this was merely a symptom of a far deeper social malaise. The pogrom was a mass social phenomenon. The real causes of anti-Semitic violence were industrialisation, urbanisation, migration and concomitant social change.⁸⁶ The unpleasant truth was that the URP was in a very important sense a 'party of the people,' with more supporters than the moderate centre parties (three times bigger than, for example, the Kadet party, which had at most 100,000 members at this time).⁸⁷ The liberal movement was reluctant to face these issues perhaps because it challenged central articles of their faith concerning the civilising effects of economic modernisation and the moderating influence of political democracy. Violence escalated as a result of delegating power, in one sense, *to the 'people.'*

The Herzenstein murder

All the same, even though the police-Black Hundred honeymoon was over and the marriage turned sour, the Interior Ministry and the Okhrana in particular were to compromise themselves by failing to bring about a complete divorce from the extreme-right. On the 18 July 1906 M.Ia. Herzenstein, a Jewish, liberal, former-Duma deputy and

signatory of the Vyborg Manifesto, was assassinated near Terioki, in Finland, by E.S.Larichkin, an agent connected to various right-wing extremist groups including the URP. Kadet funded investigations into the murder over the next few years uncovered evidence that Dubrovin's aide, Iuskevich-Kraskovskii, had organised the attack. Their crucial witness was a gendarme on duty at Terioki railway station, Captain T.A.Zapol'skii.⁸⁸ He claimed that a group of armed *druzhinniki* (i.e. members of a right-wing *druzhina*) stayed overnight at his home in Terioki before the murder of Herzenstein. There was some confusion as to the names of these persons, but most accounts identified them as: E.S.Larichkin, A.V.Polovnev (the head of the Putilov *druzhina* in St. Petersburg), Sergei Aleksandrov, Ivan Rudzik, Stepan Ia.Iakovlev (the *bona fide* Okhrana agent) and none other than Aleksandr Kazantsev.⁸⁹ The gendarme claimed that when he challenged the *druzhinniki* to hand over their guns, Larichkin replied that his had been issued by Schlüsselberg police. Moreover, two of the men even produced 'agent identification cards signed by Colonel Gerasimov.'⁹⁰

However, these agent identity cards were most likely forgeries. The Department of Police were not in the habit of issuing such documentation⁹¹ and there is also evidence of forged police identification papers circulating at the time which exactly matched the description provided by Zapol'skii.⁹² All the same, despite Okhrana denials,⁹³ there is no doubt that there was some connection with the police. The *druzhinniki* also showed Zapol'skii a letter of recommendation from the Russian head of the Finnish gendarmerie, which he confirmed as genuine.⁹⁴ And there is also evidence that the police provided these individuals with some protection: Captain Zapol'skii met Polovnev by accident in St. Petersburg in February 1907 and placed him under arrest, but Polovnev was released on the orders of St. Petersburg Security Section.⁹⁵ This may have been connected to the fact that another far more senior *okhrannik* in Petersburg was involved with this group. One witness from the URP claimed that the assistant head of Petersburg Security Section, none other than Captain Komissarov, was a member of the Union and that he was known in URP circles under the nickname 'Gamzei Gamzeich.' This detail is important because one member of the Terioki *druzhina*, whose real identity was never uncovered, also travelled under this pseudonym.⁹⁶ Vladimir Burtsev also investigated the matter and claimed that Komissarov had aided the escape of the two principal culprits, Polovnev and

Larichkin, who were hidden in Pochaev Monastery.⁹⁷ Certainly most the culprits seemed to escape and disappear very easily, which meant that the very thorough trial in Finland (Kivennapa court) took over three years and ensured that the affair was never satisfactorily explained.⁹⁸ All the same, the diligent investigations of liberal lawyers⁹⁹ at the Finnish trial exposed the tangible connections between reactionary terrorists and the police. These connections were to have a bearing on the Witte affair.¹⁰⁰

Kazantsev's attempt to blow up the White House

These investigations also helped Witte piece together the events leading up to the attempt on his life. One URP defector revealed that members of the Union first began in St. Petersburg in November 1906 to make serious plans for his assassination. Komissarov was again said to have been among those present at the discussions.¹⁰¹ Dubrovin allegedly commissioned his assistant, Prussakov, to acquire architectural plans of Witte's Petersburg home: no.5 Kamenno-ostrovskii prospekt, known as the 'White House.' The responsibility for carrying out this assassination evidently passed to one member of the Terioki *druzhina*, Aleksandr Kazantsev: he returned from Petersburg to Moscow with a large amount of money in November 1906 and began recruiting accomplices.¹⁰²

The choice of Kazantsev to carry out the murder was probably based on three factors: firstly, as a participant in the Herzenstein murder, he was an experienced terrorist. Secondly, he was well connected with officials in Moscow: according to his mistress he worked for the Moscow Governor General, S.K.Gershel'man, as 'Chief Controller over the Investigative Police' (*Glavnyi kontroler nad sysknoi politsei*) subordinated to Gershel'man's assistant, Count A.A.Buxhoeveden.¹⁰³ The generous salary that he gave Kazantsev strongly indicates that Buxhoeveden was the ringleader in the plot.¹⁰⁴ The attack was probably organised in Moscow in order to distract attention away from the Petersburg members of the extreme-right who were already under investigation for connections to the Herzenstein murder. Finally, an accident perhaps had the decisive influence on the unfolding conspiracy: While in Petersburg in November 1906 Kazantsev happened to bump into an old friend, Semen Dem'ianovich Petrov.

Why was this significant? They had worked together for three years in the Tilmans factory in St Petersburg. Petrov had no idea about Kazantsev's sudden political

conversion to the extreme-right. Kazantsev had good reason not to enlighten him on this matter: Petrov was well connected to the revolutionary underground. He was a member of the Marxist Social Democratic party and had served as a deputy in the short-lived Petersburg Soviet of 1905. As such, he had reason to hate Witte: he had been arrested and exiled in December 1905 at the Prime Minister's behest. This chance meeting therefore provided Kazantsev with the opportunity for a far more subtle terrorist plot. Through Petrov Kazantsev could recruit left-wingers to carry out the right-wing scheme and thereby further camouflage the real organisers. All he needed to do was be a little economical with the truth. Thus, Kazantsev boasted to Petrov that he had joined the Maximalist wing of the SR party and that they were planning the murder of former-Prime Minister Sergei Witte. Petrov took the bait and offered his services. He also introduced Kazantsev to a left-winger in his early twenties willing to go to extreme lengths to impress the legendary Maximalists: V.D.Fedorov.¹⁰⁵ From his later behaviour it seems that Fedorov was gullible and a borderline psychopath: in other words, ideal for the task in hand. Ironically, these very same attributes were to prove Kazantsev's undoing.

Meanwhile, undaunted by anonymous death threats, Witte returned to Russia in autumn 1906. St. Petersburg Security Section assigned him round the clock security. This appears to have been ineffective as on the evening of 29 January 1907 a servant in the White House discovered a heavy rectangular package in the stove of Witte's daughter's old bedroom. Witte immediately contacted St. Petersburg Security Section. The section's resident explosives expert, a former artillery officer, M.S.Komissarov again, was the first to arrive at the scene of the crime. He took the parcel into the garden and identified it as a time-bomb, which had been set to explode at nine o'clock. Seeing as it was past ten o'clock in the evening it was clear that the timer had failed to detonate the bomb and it was simple enough to disarm the device. 'A swarm of other police and judicial personnel,'¹⁰⁶ soon arrived at Witte's house that same evening including the two most senior Okhrana officers, M.I.Trusevich and A.V.Gerasimov. To Witte's great annoyance this intrusive and inquisitive gathering of *okhranniki* did not appear to take the attack seriously. 'This was not a bomb,' Gerasimov derisively recollected, 'it was a child's toy.'¹⁰⁷ Nonplussed as to who would want to kill Witte, certain officials mockingly

suggested that the former-Prime Minister had placed the bomb there himself in a feeble attempt to enhance his popularity.¹⁰⁸

To add potential injury to insult, Witte discovered that the police had not properly searched the house. A second bomb lodged half-way down the kitchen chimney pipe was only discovered the next day when he had the tsar's palace chimney sweeps check again. Press reports six months later were to reveal that these parcels had been dropped down the chimneys at six a.m. on 29 January by Fedorov and a certain A.S.Stepanov. Petrov, the original left-wing dupe, had not been able to take part in the attack because he was arrested when the group reached St. Petersburg. Stepanov, an acquaintance of Fedorov, took Petrov's place at the last minute, believing that he was working for anarchists.¹⁰⁹ The time-bombs had been supplied by Kazantsev, who had also generously treated Fedorov and Stepanov to an all-night drinking session, ensuring that the two men were well and truly inebriated when they carried out the mission. Kazantsev then watched the house into the afternoon waiting for the bombs to explode. When it became clear that the timers had failed Kazantsev sent the two men back to the house the next day to throw heavy objects down the chimney in order to instantly trigger the devices! However, they were not able to complete the suicide mission because the house was already surrounded by police.

It soon became clear to Witte that this was no ordinary terrorist attack. The bombs contained a rare, very powerful explosive material not usually used by revolutionaries. A former-URP member, Valerian Kazarinov, later confessed to assembling the devices for Kazantsev.¹¹⁰ Numerous and somewhat contradictory accusations circulated that Kazarinov had obtained the explosives from agents of either Petersburg or Moscow Security Section.¹¹¹ In the week following the attempt on his life Witte received two threatening letters, both demanding 5000 rubles or the attack would be repeated. He passed both letters to the Okhrana in Petersburg. Both letters disappeared. There is little doubt that they were written by Kazantsev, who appeared to be concerned that he was not going to be paid for the botched terrorist attack and sought payment by other means. His venality was further corroborated by Dr. Dubrovin's, secretary A.I.Prussakov, who later testified that two young men, posing as revolutionaries, appeared in Dubrovin's office a few days after the attack, demanding 5000 rubles or they would tell Count Witte that the

URP had instigated the plot.¹¹² One of the men was almost certainly Kazantsev— judging by his increased wealth in early 1907. The fact that the two men claimed to be revolutionaries indicates that the other was probably Fedorov or Stepanov (Kazantsev had to maintain the charade but knew that Dubrovin would not want the truth to come out). Early in 1909 the official judicial investigator, P.Aleksandrov, supplied Witte with a photographic copy of a letter he had found in the staff files of the City Governor: it was one of the two missing notes. Aleksandrov claimed he had found it in the City Governor's files on members of staff at St. Petersburg Security Section under the letter 'K' and labelled 'Kazantsev.'¹¹³

Kazantsev's later movements provided further evidence of close connections to police staff. The sister of his mistress said Kazantsev often boasted that he worked for Moscow Security Section. Various witnesses noted that by spring 1907 he was a man to whom ordinary police 'tipped their hats.' Kazantsev rented a flat in February 1907 under an assumed name, 'Kazimir Oleiko'. The only form of identification later to be found on Kazantsev's corpse at the end of May was a passport bearing the same name. The real Kazimir Oleiko had lost this passport in April 1906 and was issued with a new one. The old one was found and filed away in the archives of Moscow Security Section in June 1906. The head of the section investigated the matter and concluded that the passport had been stolen by one of two volunteer clerks.¹¹⁴ They may well have been only convenient scapegoats on behalf of more senior police officials, because both had already been dismissed on a different matter. Kazantsev made a visit to Petersburg in March 1907. While there he passed on information to the Okhrana which resulted in the seizure of an underground revolutionary cell and a cache of bombs in the capital. Nevertheless, the Okhrana denied any direct dealings with Kazantsev in this matter. The tip-off had apparently passed through a complex route— from Kazantsev to Buxhoeveden, then to Klimovich and from him to Petersburg Security Section. This was a very typical example of how police conspiratorial measures were used to distance their connections with criminals through a disorientating maze of delegation, middlemen, buffers and secrecy. Obfuscation prevailed.

Kazantsev used his newfound wealth to start up his own business in April 1907 as a blacksmith with the 'anarchist' Stepanov as his apprentice. He gave free lodgings and

new coats to Fedorov and Stepanov.¹¹⁵ But his generosity came at a price: plans were being made for another attempt on the life of Sergei Witte. First of all he told Fedorov that he could redeem himself in the eyes of the Maximalists if he were to carry out the execution of a banker who had embezzled SR party funds of 80,000 rubles. The target was in reality G.B.Iollos, a former Kadet deputy, signatory of the Vyborg Manifesto and a leading Moscow journalist exposing the URP's connections with the Herzenstein murder. Armed with a browning supplied by Kazantsev, Fedorov followed Iollos on the evening of 14 March 1907 and shot him four times in the head. The head of the volunteer *okhrana* in Moscow provided a hideout for Kazantsev and Fedorov after the murder.¹¹⁶ Fedorov only discovered whom it was he had actually killed when he read the news in the Moscow press.¹¹⁷

Yet still he didn't guess that he was not working for the SRs and agreed to go ahead with the second attempt on Witte's life. Kazantsev had devised a new plan: Fedorov and one other person were to throw bombs into Witte's motor car when he made his way to the State Council on 26 May 1907. Fedorov's partner in crime was to be the Social Democrat, Petrov.

Kazantsev had written to Petrov, who had been exiled to Archangel after his arrest, and invited him to Moscow in early May. His escape was easy enough (he was suffering from syphilis and being held with minimum supervision in a hospital). Kazantsev provided Petrov with a place to stay in Moscow and a blank passport. However, Petrov was a rather more experienced conspirator than Fedorov and he soon grew suspicious of Kazantsev, particularly after he found collection of URP leaflets lying in an open desk drawer in Kazantsev's apartment. Upon arriving in St. Petersburg on 25 May 1907 Petrov presented all he knew to some leftist Duma deputies of his acquaintance.¹¹⁸ They confirmed that Kazantsev was not an SR Maximalist, but that Petrov should play along with Kazantsev in order to capture his store of explosives. As a further precaution, these socialist Duma deputies made sure members of the State Council were warned about the imminent attack. Consequently, the State Council meeting of 26 May was cancelled.¹¹⁹ But they had not completely defused the situation because Petrov had also informed the accomplished murderer Fedorov about his suspicions. Kazantsev and Fedorov met in a forest on the outskirts of Petersburg on 27

May, in order to assemble the bombs for the second attack on Witte at the rescheduled meeting of the State Council on 30 May.¹²⁰ While Kazantsev knelt on the ground preparing the bomb, Fedorov pounced and stabbed his unsuspecting victim in the neck. Thinking Kazantsev dead, he then began to search his body. However, the ‘corpse’ began to stir and, as one newspaper paraphrased his own confession, ‘Fedorov completely lost control and began to stab him in the face- forgetting to take the knife from its sheath... he stabbed Kazantsev so forcefully in the neck that the head nearly separated from the body.’¹²¹

The victim of this gruesome murder was found a few hours later. The only means of identification on the corpse was the stolen passport and a notebook. Kazantsev’s anonymity in death gave Fedorov ample time to flee the country. But Fedorov had acquired a taste for violence and the concomitant publicity. Thus, Kazantsev’s identity was soon uncovered because Fedorov sold his story to the ‘Sherlock Holmes of the revolutionary movement’, Vladimir Burtsev, in June 1907.¹²² In August 1907 the Okhrana reported that Fedorov was involved in an attempt on the life of the Finnish Governor-General, Zein. In October 1910 Fedorov met Burtsev in Paris to demand money owed for his revelations. Okhrana spies reported that at the final meeting Fedorov was drunk, lost his temper and tried to strangle Burtsev.¹²³ Fedorov was sent to a French prison in 1912 for assault on another person.¹²⁴ The outrageous actions of Fedorov served the opposition well: the Okhrana had yet another scandal on its hands. In May 1909 a Duma interpellation alleged police and URP connections to the Herzenstein, Iollos and Witte attacks.¹²⁵

Further on and higher up: Conspiracy, conflict and confusion

In much the same manner as the Komissarov affair, liberal factions used revelations of police terror as a means of bringing all opposition groups together united against an apparently omnipotent secret police. Yet these revelations were dependent on leaks from inside the Department of Police.¹²⁶ Thus, once again it was internecine war among government officials, not a state-society confrontation, which truly fuelled the scandal. Okhrana reports noted that the principal source alleging long-standing police directed terror was Witte himself.¹²⁷ Ex-Okhrana agent Manuilov carried out investigations on

Witte's behalf, infecting the former-Prime Minister with his own delusions of police persecution.¹²⁸ Most leading *okhranniki* were all too eager to delve into the sordid affair if it meant they could uncover compromising evidence against their opponents *inside the police*.¹²⁹ Petersburg Okhrana interrogated Petrov after his arrest in Tashkent on 23 August 1907 and were disappointed to note he could shed no new light on the affair, giving an, 'evasive and muddled testimony.'¹³⁰ The French government, not internal conspiracy, blocked Stolypin's attempts to have Fedorov extradited from Paris.¹³¹ Gerasimov was the first to suggest to Witte that the attack had come from the extreme-right. He did so, partly in order to discredit the pre-eminent *druzhinnik*, Iuskevich-Kraskovskii, who had been forwarded as a potential replacement for Gerasimov as head of Petersburg Security Section.¹³² Gerasimov was also motivated by a desire to blacken the reputations of his rivals inside the Okhrana.¹³³ He claimed: 'there was no doubt in my mind, that the dynamite was received from Moscow Security Section and that the whole attempt [on Witte's life] was organised with the knowledge of the head of the Section, Colonel Klimovich. I wrote all this in a report to the Department of Police – where it was buried.'¹³⁴

Gerasimov had good reason to make these accusations: Kazantsev's notebook contained references to a certain "Bel'skii", who was referred to several times as *Ostorozhnyi* ('Cautious'). This tallied with Fedorov and Petrov's statement that their next target was to be a certain Dr. Bel'skii.¹³⁵ The use of the codename *Ostorozhnyi* compromised Moscow Security Section because it was a secret codename used for him by Okhrana surveillance agents in Moscow.¹³⁶ Moreover, the Moscow City Governor Reinbot later claimed Klimovich confessed to him that he had personally provided Kazantsev with the stolen passports.¹³⁷ Klimovich put Kazantsev on the secret agent blacklist in February 1909 (thus implying that Kazantsev *had* been at one time a secret agent).¹³⁸ Klimovich's report made no mention of the fact that Kazantsev, having been dead for two years, was not likely to be offering his services in the near future!

Curiously, Gerasimov's memoirs contain not one word about his own assistant at Petersburg Security Section, Captain Komissarov. This was perhaps due to the awkward fact that Komissarov had married Gerasimov's ex-wife.¹³⁹ The threads of evidence are thin and insubstantial, but they keep leading us back to Komissarov. He was a close

friend of the chief suspect, Klimovich. They were part of a tight circle of gendarmes who had attended Polotsk cadet school together and co-operated on numerous occasions.¹⁴⁰ As Rachkovskii's protégé Komissarov had been the Okhrana's chief intermediary with the URP,¹⁴¹ he bore a grudge against Witte, and numerous witnesses connected him to the Herzenstein and Witte attacks. Komissarov's later career also serves as a damning character witness. He was reputed to have organised pogroms in 1909 and 1911.¹⁴² He was later implicated in an early attempt to rid the court of another 'meddlesome priest', Grigorii Rasputin, in 1916. According to gossip he tried to poison Rasputin with a compound obtained from his wife's apothecary, but only succeeded in killing his cat, earning him the ironic nickname 'Maliuta Skuratov'.¹⁴³ Komissarov embodied all that was bad about the Okhrana – for his anti-Semitism, unscrupulous court intrigues, sinister connections with terrorism and gangster-style policing methods.¹⁴⁴ He even represents one of the few tangible connections between the Okhrana and the Soviet secret police, as it was rumoured that he went on to work for the Cheka¹⁴⁵ and the OGPU.¹⁴⁶

But, even after the compilation of strong evidence against Okhrana staff and members of the URP, no arrests took place in connection with the Witte attack. When Witte asked why not, the St Petersburg district prosecutor, Kamyshanskii, replied: 'If we only arrested these persons, and carried out investigations into them we don't know what we might find, it would probably lead us further on and higher up.'¹⁴⁷

Witte interpreted Kamyshanskii's lament as the dark suggestion of a widespread police conspiracy to murder him. After three years of investigations Witte delivered a careful 37 page-long anatomy of his case to his successor, Stolypin, in an effort to provoke a senatorial enquiry into the affair.¹⁴⁸ In this letter he picked up on one seemingly trivial detail which he believed to be central to the second murderous conspiracy of May 1907: Why did Kazantsev invite Petrov from exile back to Moscow? 'Why did Kazantsev need Semen Petrov? Why not take Aleksei Stepanov with him to St Petersburg?' In answer to his own question he wrote: '[Because] the conspiracy was directed not against Count Witte personally but against the left-wing political parties in general...Stepanov had no sort of revolutionary views, he was in it for the money... Semen Petrov on the other hand was a member of the Soviet of Workers Deputies and, as such, was arrested on my orders. The murder, therefore, would be a party political matter... Public opinion

has grown all too accustomed to the murder of not just gendarmes and policemen, but also senior government officials.’ Whereas the murder of the symbolic founder of the constitutional experiment, he claimed, would cause a ‘sensation’, particularly among the liberal parties who had refused to condemn revolutionary terror in the past. It would ‘arouse the indignation of society against the left-wing political parties. This would perhaps lead to calls for the government to take more energetic measures in the struggle with them... on the eve of the dissolution of the second Duma and the publication of the June third laws.’¹⁴⁹

So who would benefit most from this conspiracy? Witte pointed to the fact that there would be inevitable suspicion of right-wing involvement, and discrediting the ‘cult of murder’ would affect the right-wing *druzhiny* also. Yet he avoided following his line of argument to its logical conclusion. If the attack was part of a deliberate and subtle conspiracy, who would have benefited most from a reaction against the left at the time of the dissolution of the Second Duma? And who would benefit from a general government and social reaction against left *and* right-wing political terror? None other than the man who had used police provocation to bring about of the June third coup just one month after the last plot to murder Witte, the leading counter-terrorist security police official, Minister of the Interior and Chairman of the Council of Ministers: P.A.Stolypin. Stolypin grasped these implications, even if Witte did not. In response he accosted Witte after a meeting of the State Council: ‘From your letter Count I can only draw one conclusion: either you consider me an idiot or you think that I too was involved in the attempt on your life.’¹⁵⁰ Rather than soothing Stolypin’s anger, Witte impishly demurred from offering any suggestion as to which conclusion the Minister of the Interior should choose.

Witte’s conspiracy theory could be sustained only by rejecting all elements of inconsistency, coincidence, and accident in the case. As such, it was symptomatic of the ‘interpretative paranoia’¹⁵¹ that had infected, to varying degrees, each and every ideological cell of the body politic in imperial Russia. Anti-Semites, court intriguers, dogmatic revolutionary theorists, feuding bureaucratic cliques and liberal muckrakers shared a similar blinkered inclination to interpret all events as confirming preconceived beliefs. This was the bedrock of what Miliukov referred to as the ‘maximalist’ tendency in Russian politics.¹⁵² Interpretative paranoia was all the more prevalent in the secret

police owing to the overload of information and conspiratorial *Weltanschauung*.¹⁵³ Thus, the police were often the firmest believers in the myth of the Okhrana's terrorist conspiracies.¹⁵⁴ Gerasimov was perhaps imperial Russia's most successful counter-terrorist officer; yet his prolonged submersion in the terrorist milieu also led to rumours, based on the flimsiest of evidence, that he resorted to terrorism to remove his political opponents.¹⁵⁵ Far from covering this up, a cabal of his personal enemies in the Okhrana (Kurlov, Klimovich and possibly Komissarov) exaggerated the rumours so as to secure his removal.¹⁵⁶ Kurlov may well have made an oblique reference to Gerasimov's guilt in his memoirs when he wrote 'I can confirm that I never indulged in provocation, but [certain unnamed persons] made attempts at the beginning of my service as a senior director of investigations [i.e. in 1909] resulted in the retirement of the guilty parties.'¹⁵⁷ Gerasimov, the senior-most Okhrana operative, was forced into retirement at exactly this time. Some police officials had even suspected Witte of plotting to use the Okhrana as an assassination bureau.¹⁵⁸

The Okhrana succumbed to interpretative paranoia for the same reason that it was suspected of orchestrating reactionary terror: Political life was a seamless and tangled web. Naturally, the political police were also tangled in the web. Of course the Okhrana had connections to right-wing terror; but it also had connections to the trade union movement, the Duma, the free press, revolutionary terror, freemasonry etc. etc.¹⁵⁹ If every rival conspiracy theory was to be taken into account then we could draw the conclusion that almost every political faction was responsible in some way for the attempt on Witte's life. While in a literal sense this was nonsense, from a moral point of view perhaps this was not so far from the truth. All political groups were to varying degrees complicit in acts of terror.

The real meaning Kamyshanskii's phrase 'further on and higher up', therefore, was far more prosaic, and yet also indicative of a far deeper malaise. Klimovich's connection to Kazantsev's terrorist plot was an unfortunate coincidence due the fact that Kazantsev worked for Count Buxhoeveden and the Moscow volunteer *okhrana*.¹⁶⁰ Buxhoeveden in turn belonged to a *piaterka* of volunteer security police under Ministry of Imperial Courts *kontroller*, D.F.Gofshetter.¹⁶¹ Klimovich claimed that he was advised not to 'push away' the right-wing *druzhiny* because they were 'under the protection' of

the Moscow Governors Reinbot and Gershel'man.¹⁶² The same applied in Petersburg¹⁶³ and in sections of the Orthodox Church.¹⁶⁴ Worst of all, the tsar's sympathy towards the URP, his hostility to Witte and lack of enthusiasm for investigations into the assassination attempt were all common knowledge.¹⁶⁵ Komissarov's disreputable career flourished because his behaviour changed with the prevailing political climate. At that time, he noted, 'Russia was an absolute monarchy. What the tsar willed not, was not: what he wished, subordinates outdid themselves to fulfil.'¹⁶⁶ If Komissarov took part in terrorist attacks from 1906 to 1907, then he probably took his cues, but not any direct orders, from the imperial court. The guilty parties in the Witte affair disappeared amidst the guilty crowd. Even now, they are concealed by the plethora, not the paucity, of incriminating evidence.

¹ I have used three versions of Witte's account: S.Iu.Witte, *Memoirs*, trans. Sidney Harcave (New York, 1990) [hereafter: Witte, *Memoirs*]. idem, *Vospominaniia* (3 vols. Moscow, 1960) vol.III, chpt.67, pp.414-440. [Hereafter: *Vospominaniia*]; Witte's official letter to Stolypin, dated 3 May 1910: Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Moscow [GARF] f.102, op.295 (1910g.) d.125 'Zaiavlenie Grafa Vitte s materialom po povodu podgotovlenie pokusheniia na nego.' ll.3-21. Where not otherwise mentioned the narrative of the assassination attempts comes from these sources. Also useful were Pavl Aleksandrov's official judicial reports: Ibid., ll.23-26, 1 Feb.1910; & ibid., ll.27-53 ob., 25 May 1910.

² *Le Matin*, 'Terroristes et Cents-Noires,' 29 April 1909.

³ *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907. Kazantsev's patronymic was given alternately as Ivanovich or Eremeev.

⁴ The story was first picked up by the liberal press in *Rech'*, 20 & 28 June 1907.

⁵ *Le Matin*, 'Terroristes et Cents-Noires,' 29 April 1909.

⁶ GARF, f.102, op.238, d.511, ll.122-23 Moscow Security Section [Moscow OO] to Department of Police Special Section [Hereafter DPOO], 8 July 1907. P.E.Shchegolev (ed.), *Padenie tsarskogo rezhima* [hereafter PTsR] (7 vols., Leningrad, 1924-27), vol.VI, *Dopros A.A.Reinbota*, p.122; A.V.Gerasimov, *Na lezviu s terroristami* (Paris, 1985), p.153.

⁷ Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.432. Witte uses the term 'Okhrannoe otdelenie' to refer to the organs of the secret political security police in general.

⁸ Vladimir Burtsev in *Budushchee*, no.4, 12 Nov. 1911.

⁹ A.A.Lopukhin, *Iz itogov sluzhebnoy opyta: Nastoiashchee i budushchee russkoi politicii* (Moscow, 1907), pp.32-33. His argument was adopted most notably by Richard Pipes in *Russia Under the Old regime* (London, 1974), p.316. See also: V.M.Gessen, *Isklyuchitel'noe polozenie* (St Petersburg, 1908), p.171.

¹⁰ See N.A.Geredskul, *Terror i Okhrana* (St Petersburg, 1912), passim.

¹¹ A.I.Guchkov, in the Duma 11 Nov.1911: *Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Stenograficheskie otchety* [Hereafter: GDSO] (St.Petersburg, 1911), 3rd Duma, 5th Session, vol.I, col.2065.

¹² Quoted in Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.160.

¹³ GARF f.271, op.1, d.24, ll. 8-9, *Vsepoddanneishii doklad Senatora Trusevicha*: Published in full in S.A.Stepanov, *Zagadki ubiistva Stolypina* (Moscow 1993). See also: B.Yu.Maiskii, 'Stolypinshchina i konets Stolypina,' *Voprosy istorii*, no.2 (1966), pp.129-35.

¹⁴ V.V.Shul'gin, *Gody- dni- 1920* (reprint: Novosti, Moscow, 1990), p.129.

¹⁵ Daniel Orlovsky, 'Political Clientelism in Russia: The Historical Perspective,' in T.H.Rigby and Bohdan Harasymiw (eds.), *Leadership Selection and Patron-Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavlia* (London, 1983), part 2 chapter 5. See also Steffen Schmidt, James C.Scott, Carl Lande & Laura Guasti (eds.), *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley, 1978).

- ¹⁶ I.V.Stalin to the plenum of the central committee, Feb./March 1937 qutd. in C.H.Fairbanks Jr., 'Clientelism and Higher Politics in Georgia, 1949-53,' in R.G.Suny (ed.), *Transcaucasia. Nationalism and Social Change* (Ann Arbor, 1983), p.342. See I.V.Stalin, *Sochineniia*, ed. R.H.McNeal (Stanford, 1967), pp.230-31.
- ¹⁷ See: *Golos minuvshago*, no.1/3 Jan/March 1918 pp.139-83 & *ibid.*, Jan-June 1916 articles by V.N.Smel'skii (diary of a member). P.A.Sadikov, 'Obshchestvo "Sviashchennoi družhiny," ("Otchetnaia zapiska" 1881-1882 gg.),' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.XXI (1927), pp.200-17.
- ¹⁸ On size and composition see: Sadikov, 'Obshchestvo' pp.200-03 & 206.
- ¹⁹ K.A.Borodzin, 'Sviashchennaia družhina i narodnaia volia,' *Byloe*, no.10 (1907), pp.123-67.
- ²⁰ P.P.Shuvalov published *Vol'noe slovo*-(posing as a *zemstvo* publication) edited by Mal'shinskii. *Pravda* posed as a fiery People's Will journal (edited by a protégé of Sudeikin, Klimov).
- ²¹ B.Anan'ich and R.Sh.Ganelin, *Sergei Iulevich Vitte i ego vremia* (St Petersburg, 1999), pp.27-31. Various other publications on the Brotherhood came from M.K.Lemke (Petrograd 1920-21), S.P.Mel'gunov (1918).
- ²² A.V.Rumanov, 'Sviashchennaia družhina,' *Russkoe slovo*, 20 June 1913; & *idem.*, "'Liga spaseniia Rossii" i P.I.Rachkovskii,' *Russkoe slovo*, 21 July 1913.
- ²³ On finance from the Court Ministry see: Sadikov, 'Obshchestvo,' pp.200-03 & 206.
- ²⁴ P.Statkovskii, 'Departament politzii v 1892-1908 gg. (Iz vospominanii chinovnika),' *Byloe* nos.5-6, (Nov./Dec. 1917), p.17.
- ²⁵ Qutd. in S.Lukashevich, 'The Holy Brotherhood, 1881-83,' *American Slavic and East European Review* 18 (Dec.1959), p.505. See Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.150.
- ²⁶ E.g. A.S.Skandrakov (head of Moscow Okhrana), the Ministers of the Interior, Ignat'ev and Count Tolstoi, and the Director of DP, V.K.Plehve. See *Russkaia molva*, 5 May 1913, 'Iz del davno minuvshikh dnei.'- written by L.P.Men'shchikov under the pseudonym Hez.
- ²⁷ A.S.Suvorin, *Dnevnik* (Moscow, 1992), diary entry 28 Feb.1893, p.27.
- ²⁸ Witte, *Memoirs*, ch.8, p.68. Witte's role made public in the fat journals in 1913 (Russkaia mysl', *Sovremennik*, *Vestnik Evropy* etc.) O.O.Gruzenberg, *Vchera: Vospominaniia* (Paris, 1938), p.130.
- ²⁹ See: Iain Lauchlan, 'Separate Realm? The Okhrana Myth and Imperial Russian Otherness,' in *Russian Imperial Identity*, eds. Chris Chulos, et al. (Helsinki, 2001).
- ³⁰ Witte, *Memoirs*, p.518.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p.506.
- ³² "Kar'era P.I.Rachkovskogo: dokumenty," *Byloe*, no.2/30 (Feb.1918), p.80. This is based on a dossier compiled by MVD Plehve dated 13 July 1903 and adapted by P.N.Durnovo in a note to the tsar.
- ³³ Lopukhin statement to the Provisional Government: Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Nicolaevskii collection, Box 205, folder 'chrevychainaia', p.7. L.P.Menshchikov, *Okhrana i revoliutsiia*, (Moscow, 1932) vol.3, p.75. V.S.Brachev, 'Master poiticheskogo syska Petr Ivanovich Rachkovskii,' *Ezhegodnik* (Sankt Peterburgskoe nauchno obshchestvo istorikov, RGIA, 1996), p.298. See also former police official, Bakai's assertion that Rachkovskii used Azef to accomplish terrorist attacks: 'Iz zapisok M.E.Bakaia. Azef, Stolypin i provokatsiia,' p.205.
- ³⁴ Rachkovskii's closest collaborators were Jewish: most notable his secretary Gol'shman and his leading spies, Landezen-Harting and Evno Azef. See: P.E.Shchegolev, *Okhranniki, agenty, palachi* (Reprint: Moscow, 1992), p.200. V.K.Agafanov, *Zagranichnaia okhranka* (Petrograd, 1918), pp.61-62.
- ³⁵ See: Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (London, 1970), p.85. The main evidence came from Henri Bint, who later entered the service of the Soviets, therefore hardly a reliable witness: GARF, f.509, 'Bint Genri (1853-1929), Nabliudatel'nyi agent, op.1, dd.1-30. For the most thorough analysis of the origins of the Protocols, see: C.Ruud & S.Stepanov, *Fontanka 16* (London, 1999), chpt.10.
- ³⁶ Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.149.
- ³⁷ E.H.Judge, *Plehve: Repression and Reform in Imperial Russia, 1902-1904* (New York, 1983), p.136.
- ³⁸ On Witte's close relations with Manuilov dating back to meeting in Paris around 1903 see Witte, *Memoirs*, p.362 & p.557. Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.186-87 & 207-08: Manuilov wrote right-wing articles in the Parisian press. Oddly enough, it was rumoured that Witte had lost his job as Minister of Finance due to the theft of compromising documents by Manuilov on behalf of Plehve. Witte was supposedly related to Manuilov by marriage: Anan'ich & Ganelin, *Vitte*, p.299.

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- ³⁹ For Manuilov's letter 31 Oct. 1905 to Zubatov attempting to recruit his services for Witte see: B.Kozmin (ed.), *Zubatov i ego korrespondenty*, pp.106-07; P.Statkovskii, 'Departament politzii,' p.21.
- ⁴⁰ A.A.Lopukhin, *Otryvki iz vospominanii po povodu "Vospominaniia" S.Iu. Witte* (Moscow, 1923), pp.81-89: Lopukhin, previously a client of the late V.K.Plehve, was sharply critical of many of Witte's views and policies.
- ⁴¹ V.I.Gurko, *Features and Figures of the Past of the Past* (trans. Laura Matveev, London, 1939), p.455; Mark Aldanov, 'P.N.Durnovo- Prophet of War and Revolution,' *Russian Review*, vol.2 (1942), p.42.
- ⁴² Hoover, Nikolaevskii Collection, Box 205, folder 'Letter to Stolypin,' 14 June 1906, pp.1-5. Witte, *Memoirs*, pp.515-17.
- ⁴³ S.A.Stepanov, *Chernaia sotnia v Rossii (1905-1914 gg.)*, pp.56-57. An estimated 690 anti-Semitic riots (pogroms) leading to 3,000 deaths in the first two weeks after the October manifesto alone. The most violent outbreaks, involving thousands of deaths, occurred in Odessa in October 1905, Gomel in Jan.1906, Aleksandrovskaia in Feb.1906, Belostok in June 1906 and Elizavetgrad in Feb.1907.
- ⁴⁴ Quoted in review of, A.Tsitron, '72 dnia pervogo russkago parlamenta,' in *Byloe*, no.11 (St. Petersburg, Nov. 1906), p.319.
- ⁴⁵ Witte, *Memoirs*, p.517. On the wording of these proclamations see: Shlomo Lambroza, 'The Pogroms of 1903-1906,' in John Klier & S.Lambroza (eds.), *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History* (London, 1992), p.205.
- ⁴⁶ S.E.Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia* (Berlin, 1938), pp.100-03; Lopukhin, *Otryvki* p.89; Statkovskii, 'Departament politzii,' pp.21-22
- ⁴⁷ Hoover, Nikolaevskii, Box 205, folder 'Letter to Stolypin,' 14 June 1906. This letter is principally aimed at removing the influence of Rachkovskii. On Durnovo's defence of Komissarov see: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv, St.Petersburg (RGIA), f.1622, op.1, d.311, letters 2 - 22 March. Komissarov owed his appointment to the DP to Plehve, *The New York Times* [hereafter NYT], 2 Nov. 1924, no.2, section VIII, p.6, cols.3-5.
- ⁴⁸ D.C.Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.137-39. On Lopukhin see: E.P.Mednikov to Zubatov 26 Aug.1906 in Koz'min, *Zubatov*, p.123; & C.A.Ruud, 'Police Insubordination and the Rule of Law,' *Russian History*, vol.20 (1993), pp.153-54. On Urusov see: S.D.Urusov, *Memoirs of a Russian Governor* (London, 1908).
- ⁴⁹ M.G.Fleer, 'Revoliutsiia 1905-1906 gg. v doneseniakh inostrannykh diplomatov,' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.3 [16] (1926), pp.220-24. This documentary evidence shows that Komissarov obtained the ciphers of twelve governments and produced 68 detailed reports (*doklady*) from January to June 1906 alone. PTsR, vol.III, *Dopros Komissarova*, p.141. See: Christopher Andrew and Keith Neilson, 'Tsarist Codebreakers and British Codes,' *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.1 (1986), pp.6-12. On Manuilov's rather less successful efforts in the Hague see: Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.180, 186-88 & 196. His intelligence was mostly tit-bits culled from the French police, other 'secret documents' included press cuttings from Japanese newspapers and photographs of pages from a Chinese dictionary!
- ⁵⁰ N.A.Makarov was the leak. He had been the head of the Special Section (the Okhrana HQ), The gendarme was a Captain Budogovskii. *Rech'*, 3 May 1906: N.A.Makarov was dismissed by Durnovo for airing these grievances in Jan. 1906.
- ⁵¹ Duma speech, 8 May 1906, quoted in Tsitron review in *Byloe*, no.11, pp.317-18. See also: 'Pervaia gosudarstvennaia дума,' *Byloe* no.2 (Feb.1907) pp.17-19; & GDSO, First Duma, vol.2, zas[edanie] {sitting} 23, 8 June 1906.col[umn] 1129. Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp.100-01.
- ⁵² GDSO, First Duma, vol.2, zas.20, 2 June 1906, cols.952-60. The Kadet deputy Rodichev made similar accusations that the pogroms had been 'organised by the Department of Police.'
- ⁵³ NYT, 2 Nov. 1924, VIII, p.6, cols.vii-viii. He named the allies as: M.I.Gurovich, E.P.Mednikov and N.A.Makarov.
- ⁵⁴ Komissarov didn't even name Rachkovskii as one of the culprits: PTsR, vol.III, *Dopros Komissarova*, pp.158-60. On Rachkovskii's enemies holding him to blame see: Koz'min, *Zubatov*, p.118; & *Rech'* 3 May 1906. O.O.Gruzenberg in *Rech'* 13 Oct. 1906 (no.189) claimed Vuich, the Director DP, had approved Komissarov's pogrom proclamations.
- ⁵⁵ NYT, 2 Nov. 1924, VIII, 6, viii.
- ⁵⁶ Hoover, Nikolaevskii Collection, Box 205, folder 'Letter to Stolypin,'

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- ⁵⁷ Witte also used this tactic prior to the Komissarov affair. For example, he encouraged rumours in the foreign press in 1905 that Gorky was an anti-Semite: O.Figes, *A People's Tragedy* (London, 1996), p.202.
- ⁵⁸ Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.198.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.202-06 & 209. In fact Komissarov had left StPetersburg Security Section [hereafter: StPbOO] at this time and the arrest appeared to be justified: Kurlov search of Manuilov's house revealed that he was negotiating the sale of numerous compromising Okhrana documents to Burtsev in Paris and to A.V.Rumanov of *Russkoe slovo*.
- ⁶⁰ Kryzhanovskii, *Vospominaniia*, pp.100-03; V.N.Kokovtsov, *Iz moego proshlogo: Vospominaniia*, vol.II (Paris, 1933), pp.9-10. Chernovskii, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, pp.75.
- ⁶¹ Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, p.145.
- ⁶² Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.48 & 156.
- ⁶³ See: 'Iz Dnevnika A.V.Romanova za 1916-1918gg.' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.26, pp.198-99: on the apocryphal account of Rachkovskii establishing the URP.
- ⁶⁴ Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.432.
- ⁶⁵ GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1915g., d.244, t.1, l.20. According to this he served from 1899 to 1906. See also Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.150; & PTsR, vol.III, *Dopros Komissarova*, p.143. After flight of Polovnev Iakovlev became head of the Society of Active Struggle with Revolution. See: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, ll.65-66, 14 May 1912 (On Iakovlev still working for StPbOO in 1912).
- ⁶⁶ B.Nikol'skii, 'Dnevnik, 1905-07' *Krasnyi arkhiv*, vol.36 (1934), p.86.
- ⁶⁷ See, for example: PTsR, vol.VI, *Dopros N.E.Markova*, p.179. On roots of URP, see: *Katorga i ssylka*, no.5 (34) 1927, pp.83-86.
- ⁶⁸ Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.53. See also Hans Rogger, 'Was there a Russian Fascism? The Union of the Russian People,' *Journal of Modern History* [JMH], vol.36 (Dec. 1964), p.401.
- ⁶⁹ PTsR, vol.VI, *Dopros N.E.Markova*, pp.176-77.
- ⁷⁰ Rawson *Russian Rightists*, p.60.
- ⁷¹ GARF, f.102, op.260, d.13, l.441, DPOO circular, 24 Dec.1905.
- ⁷² Gurko, *Features and Figures*, p.437.
- ⁷³ E.g. on I.Ia.Gurliand see: Abraham Ascher, 'Prime Minister Stolypin and his Jewish Advisor,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.30 (1995), pp.515-32.
- ⁷⁴ GARF, f.102, DPOO 1906g., d.828, ch.1, 'Nariad po sekretnoi perepiske,' l.22; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1914g., d.244 ch. 'Soiuz russkago naroda i drugie patrioticheskie partii.'
- ⁷⁵ Iu.K.Kir'ianov, 'Mestnye organizatsii pravyykh partii v Rossii nakanune fevralia 1917,' *Otchestvennye arkhivy*, no.6 (1995), pp.52-59; & 'Perepiska pravyykh i drugie materialy ob ikh deiatel'nosti v 1914-1917,' *Voprosy istorii*, no.1 (1996), pp.113-15.
- ⁷⁶ See for example, GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905g., d.999, ch.39, ll.31-34.
- ⁷⁷ Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.151, 154 & 155.
- ⁷⁸ See: Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Box 158, folder 11, Top Secret circular, 24 Feb.1912; & Stepanov, *Zagadki*, p.260- for Trusevich's severe criticism of volunteer security detachments.
- ⁷⁹ On counter-terror priority see: Hoover, Okhrana archive, DPOO to Foreign Agency, dispatch no.1294, xivd, folder 1a. See also Hoover, Nicolaevsky collection, Box 205, folder 'Lopukhin,' Protokol no.37, pp.59-66.
- ⁸⁰ GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905g., d.999, ch.39, ll.5-6, & 71-2; GARF f.102, op.236, d.8, ch.66, t.2, ll.132-33; Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, pp.130 & 147.
- ⁸¹ Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.83.
- ⁸² GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, l.3, Chernigov Gendarme chief to DPOO, 19 Oct.1906.
- ⁸³ P.N.Miliukov, *Vospominaniia, 1859-1917*, vol.II (New York, 1955), p.433. Witte, *Memoirs*, vol.III, chpt.2, p.636.
- ⁸⁴ Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, p.144. *Krasnyi Arkhiv*, vol.32 (1929), p.180. MVD called for surveillance of and restrictions on rightist activities: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905 g., d.999, ch.39, t.1, ll.63, 401 & t.2, l.173. Gerasimov claimed Stolypin forbade any co-operation with the URP and directed condemnation of terror at the right as much as at the left (*Na lezvii*, pp.148, 151 & 159).
- ⁸⁵ For example, Petrunkevich's famous advice to Miliukov not to agree to Stolypin's request that he write an article in *Rech'* condemning left-wing terror as it was 'better to sacrifice the party than disgrace it.' P.N.Miliukov, *Vospominaniia* (Berlin, 1938), vol.I, pp.430-31. See also: I.V.Gessen, 'V dvukh vekakh:

zhiznennyi otchet' *Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii*, vol.22 (1937), p.144; Melissa Kirschke Stockdale, 'Politics, Morality and Violence: Kadet Liberals and the Question of Terror,' *Russian History*, vol.22 (Winter 1996), p.455-80; & chapter 7 of Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1993).

⁸⁶ See: E.H.Judge, 'Urban Growth and Anti-Semitism in Russian Moldavia,' in Judge & J.Y.Simms Jr. (eds.) *Modernisation and Revolution: Dilemmas of Progress in Late Imperial Russia* (New York, 1992), pp.43-57.

⁸⁷ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, pp.193-96.

⁸⁸ GARF, f.124, op.65, d.26, l.57, *Kopiia pokazaniia T.A.Zapol'skogo v Kiveneppskom sude 8 avgusta*.

⁸⁹ *Pravo*, 20 Sept. 1909, no.38, V.Vodovozov article, col.2013. GDSO, 3rd Duma, 2nd session, zas.111, 12 May 1909, cols.1125-37. Duma interpellation on police connections to the Herzenstein murder. For police report on this see: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.137-39: 17 May 1909.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, l.142, DPOO *spravka*. A.S.Izgoev, 'Pravye terroristy,' *Russkaia mysl'*, vol.X, part 2, 1909, pp.172-81: names the entire *druzhina* as members of the Okhrana.

⁹¹ See for example: E.E.Smith interview with Nikolai Veselago, 30 Jan. 1962. Hoover, E.E.Smith Collection, Box 1, p.3.

⁹² GARF, f.102, op.260, d.17, l.342, DPOO circular 10 Dec.1907.

⁹³ GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, l.139, St Petersburg OO to DPOO, January 1912.

⁹⁴ *Pravo*, 26 Aug. 1907, no.34, 'Finliandskii sud.' Col.2270-72: On agent ID cards and confirmation by the head of the Finnish gendarme directorate, Col.Legat.

⁹⁵ *Pravo* 20 Sept. 1909, no.38, 'Finliandskii sud,' col.2011.

⁹⁶ *Pravo*, 1 July 1907, no.26, col.s 1857-63. URP defector, Zorin, stated only two people to his knowledge used this pseudonym- Lev Topolev and Komissarov. Zapol'skii claimed that he did not recognise Topolev.

⁹⁷ PTsR, vol.I, *Pokazanie V.L.Burtseva*, p.320. Pochaev was Iliodor's monastery.

⁹⁸ *Pravo*, 1 July 1907, no.26, col.s 1854-67. S.Aleksandrov and Topolev were tried in 1907. Topolev was cleared but spent some time in prison all the same after being arrested for drunk and disorderly following post-trial celebrations! Polovnev arrested June 1908 and tried sentenced to six years in Oct. 1909. June 1909- Kraskovskii arrested in Tver in June 1909 and extradited to Finland. (*Pravo*, no.36, 6 Sept.1909, cols.1907-08). Larichkin was extradited to Finland 12th August 1909. In 1911 he stood trial in Russia for the Mukhin murder. Polovnev and Kraskovskii were pardoned by the tsar on 30 Dec. 1909. GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.862, l.14. Polovnev to Provisional government Investigatory Committee.

⁹⁹ Lensman was the state's prosecutor. Baron Langenshel'd represented Herzenstein's widow. Weber and Gruzenberg pursued most of the investigations on their behalf. Prince Volkonskii was defence.

¹⁰⁰ The 28 June 1907 *Rech'* version of Witte assassination attempt only implicated the URP. It was in Herzenstein-murder trial in summer 1907 that police contacts with the URP began to be uncovered. See *Rech'* Aug. to Oct. 1909. Gruzenberg, *Vchera*, pp.135-41. *Pravo*, no.36, 6 Sept. 1909, cols.1906-07.) & no.38, 20 Sept. 1909, col. 2014.

¹⁰¹ GARF, f.102 op.295 1910g. d.125, ll.27-30: Ex-URP member Aleksandr Tkhor testified to P.Aleksandrov to conversation overheard at the end of 1906 between three other members, Vlasov, Fedotov and Komissarov, in which they discussed murdering Witte. Komissarov denied this.

¹⁰² GARF, f.102 op.295, d.125, ll.8 ob- 10. Most of the information on Kazantsevs movements came from his mistress (Evdokiia Illirionova), her sister, and Fedorov's mother (Natalia Fedorova).

¹⁰³ Information collected by Weber and P.Aleksandrov: *Ibid.*, ll.40-42.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, ll.10-13.

¹⁰⁵ GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.125-29.

¹⁰⁶ Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.417-18; & pp.414-25 for Witte's entire account.

¹⁰⁷ Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.152-53.

¹⁰⁸ Witte letter to Stolypin, GARF, f.102, op.295, d.125, ll.7 & 21. A caricature of Witte placing the bomb in the chimney himself appeared in a Helsinki newspaper (reported by Prussakov in *Russkoe znamia* in March 1907). Kelepovski repeated this accusation in the Duma on 10 Nov. 1908, claiming it was a form of 'self-advertisement.'

¹⁰⁹ For Stepanov's testimony given in 1917, see: GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.862, l.87 'Protokol doprosa A.S.Stepanova.' See also: A.Chernovskii (ed.), *Soiuz russkogo naroda* (Moscow, 1929), pp.58-62; & pp.54-55 for Polovnev's version of events.

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- ¹¹⁰ Kazarinov confessed to making the bombs in *Birzheviia vedomosti*, 16 May 1912. His initials have been given as V.N. and V.V. See Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.414-25.
- ¹¹¹ GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.142-43. DPOO report on the Duma accusations of May 1909. The chief supplier of arms to the URP in the capital was Iakovlev
- ¹¹² GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.862, *Dopros A.I.Prussakov*, 9 June 1917, l.63. The amount is sometimes given as 6000. Prussakov also claimed that he saw them leave with pockets bulging with money. See *Pravo*, 20 Sept. 1909, col.2014.
- ¹¹³ Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.436-37. GARF, f.102, op.295, d.125,l.47ob., Aleksandrov report May 1910.
- ¹¹⁴ GARF, f.102, op.DPOO1908 g., d.511, l.131, 3 Oct.1907. Culprits named as Volkovich and Kholin. The passport was originally filed away by Capt. Kolokolov and his assistant K.V.Varanov. They were questioned on the matter but not charged or punished.
- ¹¹⁵ GARF, f.102 op.295, d.125 ll.5-13.
- ¹¹⁶ His name was I.V.Toropov. Ibid., ll.41-47: P.Aleksandrov report.
- ¹¹⁷ *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905g., d.999, ch.39, ll.128 & 160; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908 g., d.511, ll.114-15 & 129-30.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibid., l.76. St.Pb. OO investigators named them as Zhigilev, Aleksinskii and Romanov.
- ¹¹⁹ *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907; GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, l.76.
- ¹²⁰ It is possible that Petrov and the two of the Duma deputies were also present at the time of the murder.
- ¹²¹ *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907; GARF, op.cit., l.130.
- ¹²² Ibid., ll.20-21. Petrov contributed to the original SR publication on the affair in *Znamia truda* 19 June 1907 under the pseudonym 'Ivanov' and published a letter in *Rus'* 14 July 1907. Fedorov gave an interview to the famous terrorist Gershuni. StPbOO intercepted a piece of correspondence from Fedorov in 1909 to a Duma representative Polozhaev offering to sell him photographs of Kazantsev 'dead and alive.'
- ¹²³ Ibid., ll.160-61, 12 June 1911.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., Paris Agentura reports 12 June 1911 and 8 June 1912.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., ll.140-41; GDSO, 3rd Duma, 2nd session, zas.111, 12 May 1909, cols.1125-37.
- ¹²⁶ Police suspected Miliukov of moving closer to Burtsev 1911-13 and compiling: 'documentary evidence that the police, using their unlimited power, arranged terrorist acts.' f.102, op. DPOO 1913 g., d.260, ll.14-17 1912 Miliukov co-operated with SDs and SRs on this. See also : L.L'vov, "Sem' let nazad," *Russkaia mysl'*, Feb. 1914, pp.48-51 & 60-61; & Burtsev's *Budushchee*, 25 May 1912.
- ¹²⁷ GARF, f.102, op. DPOO1908 g., d.511, l.163. DP report May 1912 linked Witte to A.V.Rumanov and A.L.Stembo aiming to publish a daily paper on Okhrana malpractice under the sponsorship of Sytin. Rumanov also used Witte as the main source on articles exposing police links to the Holy Brotherhood. See: *Russkoe slovo*, 1 March 1915.
- ¹²⁸ PTsR, vol.VI, *Dopros Reinbota*, p.126. PTsR, vol.II, *Dopros Manuilova*, p.44. For example of Witte's paranoia see: Witte, *Memoirs*, p.635.
- ¹²⁹ For Moscow investigations see: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1905g., d.999, ch.39, ll.129-65; for St Petersburg enquiries see: *Vestnik narodnoi svobody* 30 Aug. 1907, col.1570. And on police interrogating local chimney sweeps: GARF, f.102 op.295, d.125, l.47.
- ¹³⁰ GARF, f.102, DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.74-75: St. Petersburg OO *spravka*, 6 Feb.1908.
- ¹³¹ Hoover, Okhrana archive, Box 34, folder 5a, p.4, memo no.124130. GARF, op.cit., ll.83 & 88. He was located living in Paris under the pseudonym: 'Monsieur Alko' !
- ¹³² Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.420; Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.150-51.
- ¹³³ Ibid., pp.154 & 196: On Iollos and Karaev murders and Gerasimov's suggestion that Moscow OO officials had allowed terrorist attacks (on one occasion with dummy bombs) to occur in the past.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid., p.153.
- ¹³⁵ *Znamia truda*, 19 June 1907.
- ¹³⁶ GARF, f.102, DPOO 1908 g., d.511, ll.122-23.
- ¹³⁷ PTsR, vol.VI, *Dopros Reinbota*, p.122.
- ¹³⁸ GARF, f.102, op.260, d.23, DPOO circular, 20 Feb. 1909, l.72b. Hoover, Okhrana archive, Box 158, folder 10, 26 Nov.1910.
- ¹³⁹ PTsR, vol.III, *Dopros M.S.Komissarova*, p.150.

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- ¹⁴⁰ A.P.Martynov, *Moia sluzhba v otel'nom korpuse zhandarmov* (Stanford, 1972), pp.118 & 262-63; Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, p.225- on I.P.Vasil'ev's claim that they formed a 'parallel' Department of Police in conjunction with Kurlov. See also: Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, p.21.
- ¹⁴¹ See Chernovskii, *Soiuz russkogo naroda*, pp.75 & Kryzhanovskii, p.100-01.
- ¹⁴² Hoover, Nikolaevskii collection, Box 203, Folder 'Komissarov,' *Obshchee delo*, 28 July 1921.
- ¹⁴³ Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, p.312. However, this may have been yet another example of the secret police succumbing to 'interpretative paranoia.' Komissarov said he invented the story himself to hide the fact that he backed out because rumours of the imminent assassination had spread too far: NYT, 19 Oct. 1924. 'Vospominaniia S.P.Beletskogo,' *Arkhiv russkoi revoliutsii*, vol.XII pp.64-65. As a candidate for 'Dictator of Petrograd' in early 1917 he was one of the many shadowy figures rumoured to have ordered the placing machine guns on the Petrograd rooftops in February 1917. For Komissarov's denials see PTsR vol.III, p.166.
- ¹⁴⁴ Hoover, Wrangel Military Archive, file 136, *Azbuka* report from Rostov, 14 May 1919: on reports of Komissarov operating a protection racket for Rostov's casinos.
- ¹⁴⁵ See: *Russkoe delo*, 9 Nov. 1921; *Novoe russkoe slovo*, 16th Nov.1933; *Novoe vremia* 4 & 26 Nov.1924; Hoover, Nikolaevskii, Box 204, Folder 'Kitchener;' & Box 203, folder 'Komissarov.' On his work in Kislovodsk during Civil War with Chechen explosives experts cutting off the White retreat.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Za svobodu*, 12 Dec. 1922. See also Globachev letter to NYT, 14 Dec. 1924, II, p.5, col.3. He allegedly betrayed retreating White armies to the Stambulinsky government of Bulgaria in 1922 (having settled there in 1921 after being exiled from Yugoslavia and Hungary and conned money from various European industrialists based on bogus claims to being Wrangel's chief of intelligence). He even died in unusual circumstances: hit by a tram in Chicago on 20 Oct. 1933: *Novoe russkoe slovo*, 16 Nov. 1933.
- ¹⁴⁷ Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.430.
- ¹⁴⁸ For a full version of the letter dated 3 May 1910, see: GARF, f.102, op.295, d.125, ll.3-21.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ll.19-20.
- ¹⁵⁰ Witte, *Vospominaniia*, p.438. Stolypin sent a written reply on 12th Dec. 1910.
- ¹⁵¹ A phrase coined by Umberto Eco in connection with his satire of conspiracy theorists: *Foucault's Pendulum*.
- ¹⁵² P.N.Miliukov, *Rossia na perelome* (Paris, 1927), pp.35-36.
- ¹⁵³ On police watching police: GARF, f.111, op.5, d.363, ll.109 & 113, St PbOO to DPOO, 12 & 30 October 1912. Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, folder 'Chrezvychainaya,' *Dopros Beletskogo*, pp.27-28. Gerasimov's contacts in the Petersburg Okhrana, Peshkov and Dobroskok, were placed under surveillance. PTsR, vol.I, *Dopros E.K.Klimovicha*, pp.108-09; Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.175-76.
- ¹⁵⁴ Hoover, Okhrana Collection, Boxes 42, 92-99, 210-21 & 143 (folder 1c p.453, March 1911).
- ¹⁵⁵ E.g. He was suspected of involvement in the Witte attack purely because he lost one of the threatening letters: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.35 & 55 (DPOO reports 16 Jan.1909 & Feb.1909). On later suspicions in the murder of Col.Karpov see: GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1914g., d.360, *O general-leitenante Gerasimove*; & Shchegolev, *Okhranniki*, pp.223-24.
- ¹⁵⁶ Gerasimov, *Na lezvii*, pp.170-76.
- ¹⁵⁷ Kurlov, *Gibel'*, p.112.
- ¹⁵⁸ Lopukhin claimed that Witte had once obliquely suggested that the political police, through deliberate security mishaps, could be useful as an organisation for the assassination of political opponents, and perhaps for replacing the tsar himself: Lopukhin, *Otryvki*, p.73.
- ¹⁵⁹ For example, Kazantsev's next target, Bel'skii, was later to be recruited as a spy for Moscow OO after his arrest on 9 Jan. 1909. See: Hoover, Nicolaevsky Collection, box 1, file 'Arkhiv Sledstvennoi komissii,' *Pokazanie Doktora Bel'skago*. One of the Duma deputies who foiled the second attack on Witte was Andrei Romanov, later to be one of the Okhrana's leading agents (codename 'Pelageia') close to Lenin: PTsR, vol.V, pp.61 & 237; Martynov, *Moia sluzhba*, pp.49-50.
- ¹⁶⁰ GARF, f.102, op.DPOO 1908g., d.511, ll.122-23, MOO to DPOO, 8 July 1907.
- ¹⁶¹ GARF f.102 op.295 d.125 l.52, P.Aleksandrov report.
- ¹⁶² PTsR, vol.I, *Dopros Klimovicha*, p.106.
- ¹⁶³ E.g. St Petersburg City Governors- Dediulin and Launtiz. See: GARF, f.1467, op.1, d.853, ll.29-30. Gerasimov (*Na lezvii*, p.151) noted: 'Launtiz's actions had powerful supporters in the upper echelons of the imperial court.' GARF 102 op.295, d.125, l.8 ob.

¹⁶⁴ E.g. Abbot Arsenii of Iaroslavl', Bishop Germogen of Saratov, the monk Agafador of Kursk and Chernigov, the monk Iliodor of the Pochaev monastery in Volynia and father Ioann of Kronstadt.

¹⁶⁵ See: Witte, *Vospominaniia*, pp.415-16 & 423. Gurko, *Features*, pp.457-58. Nikol'skii, 'Dnevnik,' p.88. PTsR, vol.VI, *Dopros A.A.Reinbota*, p.126. On the tsar's relief at Witte's death see: Nicholas to Alexandra, 28 Feb.1915 in *The Complete Wartime Correspondence of Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra*, ed. J.T. Fuhrman (Westport, Connecticut, 1999), p.83.

¹⁶⁶ NYT, 2nd Nov. 1924, no.2, sectn.8, p.6, col.1.