

A BRITISH SPY AMONG THE BOLSHEVIKI

TERRORISM, TORTURE, AND VIOLENT DEATH played a large part in the every-day life of the Russian communities that Sir Paul Dukes, a British spy, has lately returned from investigating. Nevertheless, so firmly is the iron hand of the Soviet Government fastened upon the lives of the Russian people, he says, that the stability of the present régime may be compared to the terror-enforced stability under the Czars. It is with this Government that Great Britain has lately decided to resume business relations, and it seems not improbable that Dukes's report had something to do with that decision. He brings back to the civilized world a sharp reminder, however, that even tho the world decides to do business with Russia under the tyranny of the Soviets as it formerly was glad to do when the country was under the tyranny of the Czars, the nature of the Bolshevik Government remains much the same.

"One of the most fascinating chapters in the history of the Russian Revolution," a writer in the New York *Tribune* calls the adventures of Dukes. The young Englishman, still

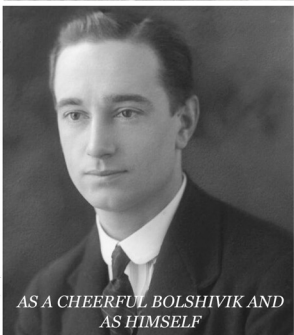
only in his thirties and but lately knighted in recognition of his services to the British Government, lived for eighteen months in Petrograd, Moscow, and other Russian centers, posed as an official of the Extraordinary Commission, worked in a munitions-factory, joined the "Red" Army, and ran an extensive intelligence service for his Government. The *Tribune* writer, Joseph Shaplen, who interviewed Dukes on his recent visit to New York, gives some of his general credentials as follows:

Dukes has been outlawed by the Bolshevik Government, and the agents of the notorious Extraordinary Commission, maddened by their inability to effect his capture, have finally issued a decree permitting any Russian citizen catching Dukes on Soviet territory to shoot him on the spot. He was accused by the Bolshevik authorities of being personally responsible for many disorders and uprisings in Soviet Russia and of being the head of the counter-revolutionary conspiracies which have given the Bolsheviki so much trouble within the last two years.

Dukes denies emphatically that he ever engaged in any conspiracies against the Bolshevik Government and says that his entire activity in Russia was confined to gathering information.

A member of a distinguished British family, Dukes was virtually brought up in Russia. He lived there for twelve years, studied at one of the Russian universities, and after a course in the Petrograd Conservatoire became assistant to the director of the celebrated Marinsky Theater. He speaks and writes Russian fluently.

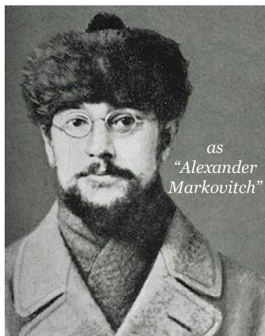
After the outbreak of the war in 1914, Dukes was appointed a member of the Anglo-Russian commission and served with great credit during the war. On the outbreak of the revolution in 1917, Dukes, who had close connections with revolutionary circles in the Russian capital, joined the rebellion and participated in the street-fighting which resulted in the overthrow of the Czar.



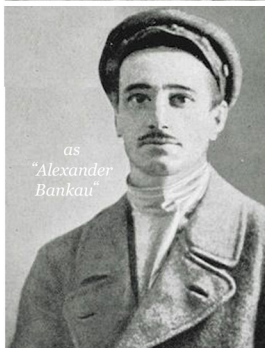
AS A CHEERFUL BOLSHIVIK AND
AS HIMSELF

Sir Paul Dukes of the British Secret Service, spent much time with the current rulers of Russia. The missing tooth could be replaced as needed.

Bitterly opposed to the Bolsheviks and regarding them as the real counter-revolutionists, Dukes volunteered to go into Soviet Russia in November, 1918, after he had already left the country, and take charge of the British Intelligence Service. This was soon after the murder of Captain Cromie, the naval attaché of the British Embassy in Petrograd, by the Bolsheviks. His offer was accepted by the authorities in London.



as
"Alexander
Markovitch"



as
"Alexander
Bankau"

Dukes entered Russia by way of the Finnish frontier in November, 1918. He found many Russians of all qualities, from high officials in the Government and officers in the army to boarding-house keepers and munitions-workers, who believed as he did about the Bolsheviks and were glad to help him. A friend and colleague of his was captured and shot. Dukes himself had enough hairbreadth escapes to fit out several movie dramas. These paragraphs, headed "An Expert at Fits," throw a sidelight on his cleverness at escaping detection:

"In an emergency I sometimes produced a 'fit.' I

practised 'fits' and became quite expert.

"On one occasion, overtaken by a search, I had such a 'fit' that the investigator from *Gorochovaya Dva* (Extraordinary Commission), who was conducting operations, would not have let his men touch me with a ten-foot pole. My host was arrested on the charge of having had an interview with an Englishman masquerading as a Russian three months before. I often wondered what the investigator would have said had he been told subsequently that while he was searching the study the 'Englishman' was in the next room burning a couple of passports with different names, but with the same photographs, and hiding the ashes up the chimney.

"A brazen show of self-confidence was the best security at such moments. The person just mentioned as arrested on my account got off a few days later by an extraordinary display of audacity, outwitting even *Gorochovaya Dva*. I confess I am not one of those who love to plunge into any hazardous enterprise just for the fun of it. In many a tight corner I was really shaking in my boots, altho I managed to keep those articles firmly on the ground and maintain an attitude of self-possession. A laugh at such moments serves well. A look of imbecility is at times an aid, too.

"I once entered a house the door of which was unguarded, intending to let myself in by a key to a flat on the first floor. In the hall I heard a curious commotion and jingling of keys just above. I knew the flat was empty and realized at once that a search was on. The guard had not yet been placed at the front entrance. I tiptoed out of that hall about as quickly as I ever tiptoed in my life. But the floor tiling was loose and rattled. A pair of heavy boots came charging down the stairs after me like a ton of bricks, and just as I emerged into the street a big, brutal-looking fellow held me up with a revolver.

"'Stop!' he shouted. 'Whom do you want?'

"I looked up innocently at the lintel.

"'Ah!' I said, 'all right. This, I see, is No. 19. I am looking for No. 17.'

"My long, straggling hair, shaggy beard, blue spectacles, and face contorted in a nervous grin must have given me the ap-

pearance of an utter imbecile. I limped off like a cripple. The man glared at me very hard, lowered his revolver, and let me go."

A great deal of his time was devoted by Dukes to the study of the machinery and operation of the Extraordinary Commission. He found conditions as to terrorism rather worse than they had been under the Czar. "Investigators" are everywhere, we are told:

The general public class these investigators quite simply as good or bad, the first being those who are human enough to take a bribe and let their victim go, and the second being those who show no mercy. When any one is arrested the first thing his friends do is to find out which investigator is entrusted with the case. If he is of the second class hope is given up at once. If the investigator in question is found to be "good" the victim is considered lucky, and means are taken to find out what the investigator's price is. The usual procedure of such an investigator is to put the victim through the usual interrogation, but to ask only such questions as the victim is certain to answer satisfactorily. The investigator then reports to the council that he had found no incriminating evidence, and it is up to the council to render the final verdict.

In case the authorities feel that the victim was really guilty of acts of "counter-revolution," methods of torture are applied to elicit the desired information. Dukes is quoted:

"When I was in the Communist party I made the acquaintance of a commissar who boasted of his connection with *Gorochovaya Dva*, where he was an investigator. Two of my assistants, having obtained a bottle of vodka one day, got him drunk and persuaded him to tell some of the methods of the *Gorochovaya Dva*. He said that in case the authorities felt that a victim was concealing something from them they would apply methods of torture. The torture consisted in the rapid and consistent firing of revolvers in the vicinity of the place of interrogation, the feeding of a prisoner for days on nothing but salt herrings, but refusing to give him water to drink, flogging, and the application of red-hot needles to the quick of the fingers.

"It got so on my nerves," said this Communist testily, "that I gave up that job and became a professional agitator."

"It was as a professional agitator that I knew this neophyte of Bolshevism.

"During strikes the Extraordinary Commission sends agents into the factories to detect the strike-leaders, and at election time a strict watch is kept upon the workers to mark such as do not vote for the Communist candidates."

Dukes was present as an invited guest at a special meeting of the Petrograd Soviet. The attitude taken toward the anti-Bolsheviki, the few who managed to get into the Assembly, is indicated, we are told, by this quotation from a speech made by Zinovieff, the president:

"Attempts have been made," he proceeded, "to stop work in the factories. Spies of the Entente and other 'White' Guard agents have penetrated to the workshops and misled a number of men, but we will root them out. We will suppress mercilessly every effort to discredit the Soviet power.

"To-day there have been two meetings in this hall, at both of which resolutions were passed to support the Soviet Government. I know," continued Zinovieff, addressing the non-party members, "that among you there are quite a number of blackguards, Mensheviki, and Socialist Revolutionists, but don't fear, we shall find you and shoot you. It is perhaps a good thing you have got into the Soviet, for we shall catch you easier. We are willing to work with you if you will stand by the Soviet Government, but say straight out, Are you for us or against us?"

The "Red" Army is now, says the ex-spy, in very much the same state of morale as when, at the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution, everybody decided to go home and leave the Germans in possession of the field. "They want to go home. That's all. They don't care what happens," Dukes is quoted. "They just want to go home and till the land." There's one great difference, however. At that earlier time, desertion was encouraged by the Bolsheviki. "This time there is iron discipline and merciless terror to hold them back." The story of the British spy's enlistment in the army, as told by himself, has a

touch of humor mixed in with the tragedy and misery that he found:

"At the beginning of May, 1919, I enlisted as a volunteer in a regiment of a friend of the manager of my works, who, altho strongly opposed to the Bolsheviki, gained their favor by blowing up the wrong bridges when Yudenitch advanced on Petrograd. My commander intended to blow up the retreat of the 'Reds,' but by an error blew up the retreat of their opponents. Thinking that he had done so purposely, the Communists extended to him an invitation to join the Communist party and gave him a command. As a private in this regiment, stationed close to the Polish lines, my commander delegated me to Moscow and Petrograd in various duties, such as purchase of books, motor tires, etc.

"When I traveled to Moscow as a 'Red' soldier, I traveled in state. Thus, in making frequent trips to Moscow and Petrograd—and my commander saw to it that they be as frequent as possible—I was able to obtain valuable information bearing on the army at the important official sources and to gather such information on conditions in general as I thought interesting and valuable.

"Once my commander sent me to Moscow to obtain a complete set of Bolshevik decrees for the year 1919 to be used for propaganda purposes in the army. The request was genuine enough, but I obtained two sets of the decrees, one for the army and another for the Foreign Office in London. When arriving in Moscow I always reported to the political division of the general staff, and was immediately assigned to good quarters. Usually, they would billet me in a room in the house or flat of some *bourgeois* family. The latter did not relish very much the presence of an unbidden stranger in their house, and I certainly did not like to impose on them, but I had to play the game.

"While in the 'Red' Army I made detailed observations of the organization. In 1918, the first so-called 'Red' Army was nothing more than a disorderly rebel, officered by such as incited the soldiers to the destruction of anything and everything that could be termed *bourgeois* and capitalistic. But as soon as the counter-revolution of Krassnoff, Denikin, and others commenced, Trotzky realized immediately that an efficient army with trained officers was necessary. At the present a very large number of former and influential officers of the Czar are serving the Bolsheviki, the majority of them doing so under compulsion.

"The first means taken to enforce compulsory service by Czarist officers was a declaration which every officer was compelled to sign, stating that he was aware that in case of his infidelity to the Soviet Government his wife, child, and other relatives would be deported to concentration camps. This threat was an exceedingly potent factor.

"Terror, however, was not the only means utilized. As the Soviet Government realized the necessity of experts it changed its attitude toward that class. Despite the inclination of the lower Soviet officials to treat the officers and experts in the usual style—that is, jail them, kill them, and starve them—Lenine and Trotzky endeavored to conciliate this class and address them in a tone of consideration. These are the conditions which prompt officers to serve in the army:

"1. Restoration of iron discipline and absolutist military authority.

"2. Disappointment at the effects of Allied intervention.

"3. Superior rations and pay.

"4. Respect shown for officers by Lenine and Trotzky.

"5. Protection of families and relatives from Bolshevik terror.

"The lower ranks of the officers are composed largely of 'Red' cadets. On the whole, these are strong supporters of the Bolshevik régime, but are mostly ignorant.

"The rank and file of the army is kept in line by terroristic measures and constant propaganda. The necessity of conducting constant propaganda in the army is the best indication of how strongly 'Red' the 'Red' Army really is. It is composed—80 per cent. of it—of peasants, whose attitude to-day is very similar to the attitude of the Russian Army on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution. They want to go home. That's all. They don't care what happens. They just want to go home and till the land. Only this time there is iron discipline and merciless terror to hold them back. Despite these, however, the number of deserters is growing enormously. Relatives of the deserters, however, whenever possible, are taken as hostages and held until the delinquents return. There are special Communist 'cells' in every military unit whose duty it is to spy on the rest of the

soldiers and report all conversations. These cells also act as agents of propaganda. Russia is deluged with propaganda, and it certainly does not speak very much for the Bolshevik régime if despite this huge propaganda the Bolshevik party has been unable to rally more than 500,000 members out of a population of 130,000,000 under Soviet control.”

THE LITERARY DIGEST

A p r i l 9 , 1 9 2 1 : p . 3 7