

Provocateurs I Have Known ¹

By
Cecelia Bobrovskaya
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¹ Digitized and prepared by Maoism Library.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In this pamphlet I give a brief description of several *agent provocateurs* who penetrated into the ranks of the Bolsheviks in the days of Tsarism, and with whom I came into personal contact. I do not attempt to go into the question of why or how these men sank to the position of spies and agents of Tsarism. I merely want to depict in brief outline the appearance and methods of work employed by the spies and agents with whom I came into contact during the many years I spent in underground party work during the days of Tsarism.

A perusal of these sketches will show that it was difficult to detect the agent provocateurs; the "art" of the spy was to camouflage himself as an ardent and active revolutionary. The more successfully he did that the more successfully was he able to carry on his treacherous work. These sketches also show how vigilant it was necessary to be to guard the party and party workers against these pests.

AGENT PROVOCATEUR No. 1. KAPLINSKY.

The extensive development of the mass working class movement in Russia in the beginning of the "nineties," considerably alarmed the Tsarist government, and it began to seek for ways of diverting the attention of the working masses, who were being roused for the political struggle. The favorite method of setting one nationality against another by means of pogroms had also been found to be insufficient, and so Zubatov, chief of the secret police of Moscow began to organize fake trade unions under police supervision, in the hope of keeping the masses of workers away from politics by leading them to expect slight improvements in wages and conditions through the medium of these police protected unions,

And so, in 1900-1902, Zubatov set up legal trade unions in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkov, Odessa and other places, all of which were subsidized from the special funds of the Department of Police. At meetings of workers organized by these Zubatov unions, priests delivered sermons and bourgeois professors of economics delivered lectures designed to persuade the workers that the capitalist system was rational and everlasting.

Besides trying to fool the workers with, this "police Socialism," as it was called by revolutionaries, Zubatov tried to wheedle himself into the confidence of political prisoners who fell into his hands; for, needless to say, while this pretense of "organizing" the workers to "protect their economic interests" was being kept up, the fight against the revolutionary movement continued to be waged as ruthlessly as ever. Zubatov himself visited these prisoners in their cells, displayed "fatherly concern" for their welfare and even brought them Marxian literature to read. Both during his visits

to the cells, and during interrogations, which he arranged, not in the prison office, but in his own study at home, where he regaled the prisoner with tea and biscuits, cigars and so on, he provoked the arrested revolutionaries into discussions on questions of the Russian Revolution, and tried to convince them of the expediency of organizing the workers in the way he was doing.

The less experienced were caught in his net; not only falling victims themselves but also dragging in their comrades. When he got them into his clutches Zubatov recruited them as agents of the Tsarist secret police.² One of these agents, as it transpired many years later, was Kaplinsky, who, in the order of sequence in which I met him I will call agent-provocateur No. 1.

It was in the Spring of 1902. After a somewhat trying year of solitary confinement and hunger strike, in the Karkov prison, I was sent to a secluded little town in my own country where I had to await my sentence, i.e., exile to Siberia. I felt I ought to take advantage of this interval of liberty, between prison and exile, for it would be difficult to escape from Siberia later on. The party work could not wait, the temper of the masses was rising, and there were few enough workers in the party as it was. I decided to escape immediately to travel abroad to the party center, the *Iskra* editorial board, of which Lenin was the chief. Abroad it would be possible to get a little respite, to read the party literature, to get a passport, instructions and a letter of introduction to some Russian proletarian center for work there.

However, I had no direct contact with the *Iskra* comrades which would enable me to cross the border illegally, and so I turned to the *Bund*³ for assistance. They sent me to their permanent representative, who was especially engaged in providing plant for secret printing works, and transferring literature and people across the frontiers: to Kaplinsky in Dvinsk...

I found, myself in a poorly furnished, two-roomed worker's flat, where I was met by a little, emaciated, carelessly attired woman – the wife of Kaplinsky. Kaplinsky himself was not at home, she said, he had gone off on conspiratorial work for the party and would not return for three or four days.

Kaplinskaya kept me in her rooms while I waited for her husband, as I had no passport and could not, therefore, stay in a hotel. I lived there for two days, played with Kaplinsky's children while Kaplinskaya did her sewing; she was a dress-maker. We became very friendly, and already by the third day I knew the sad story, the life drama of this little woman.

² See *Bolsheviks on Trial* in this series – ed

³ Jewish Social-Democratic Workers' League of Poland and Lithuania

She and Kaplinsky had both been arrested during the raid on all the Bundist organizations. She was a weak, uneducated woman, and the police during the interrogations frightened her considerably, threatening her with the gallows, and then during one of the interrogations, she blurted something out, from sheer fright, about one of the comrades.

When the news got round to the neighboring cells, she began to be shunned by the prisoners, but her husband, Kaplinsky, being a very influential member of the Bund, managed to persuade the comrades that she should be forgiven for her ignorance; after this she was forgiven by the comrades, and most of all her husband forgave her.

Soon after this they were released, first she, and a short time afterwards Kaplinsky.

In spite of the fact that this story made a most unpleasant impression upon me, somehow, not the slightest doubt, even for a moment, entered my head; the flat was so very poor, the furniture, their whole way of living; it never entered my head that an agent of the police, generously paid from the Tsarist treasury, was living here.

Soon Kaplinsky himself arrived. He was a tall man, with an open, attractive face, in the shabby clothes of a workman. Smiling cheerfully, he met with a firm, comradely handshake, and informed me that there would be some delay in crossing the frontier since, owing to the police' raid on the party conference in Belostok, connections with Europe were temporarily interrupted, but in a few days they would be restored.

I lived with these hospitable people for a few days more, both of them being extremely punctilious and taking no money from me. Kaplinsky, while working at his bench in one corner (he was a carpenter), questioned me about party work in Kharkov, about my prison experiences and my plans for the future.

While I did not for a moment doubt Kaplinsky, nevertheless, from the habit of caution that one acquires in the revolutionary movement, I told him about the Kharkov party organizations without mentioning names, and about my future plans I merely stated that I was going abroad and that time would show what I would do.

On the appointed day Kaplinsky sent me to a border town to comrades who were directly in touch with smugglers with whom the illegal crossing of the frontier was arranged. The latter brought me safely to the Prussian frontier, after which I left for Switzerland and thus, without further adventures, reached the *Iskra* editorial office. Thus, nothing that Kaplinsky did on that occasion could give ground for suspicion against him.

In 1917 when the Tsarist autocracy was overthrown and the documents of the Tsarist police fell into the hands of the revolutionaries, it was discovered that Kaplinsky was a police agent.

For fifteen years Kaplinsky, the man with a frank, open face and a welcoming smile on his lips, worked as a police agent, ruined hundreds of revolutionary fighters, broke up dozens of proletarian organizations, which had been built up, as is well known, with such tremendous difficulty, at the cost of considerable sacrifice.

Apparently Kaplinsky did not think it worthwhile to let me down on the occasion I had to deal with him. On the contrary, he calculated that in assisting me to get across the frontier he would be able to retain the confidence of the revolutionaries on the one hand and at the same time inform the police that so and so had gone abroad on such and such secret business for the party.

After the revolution in 1917 Kaplinsky managed to escape into hiding, and he was discovered only in 1922 living under an assumed name in Samara. He then paid the penalty for his treachery.

No. 2: ZHITOMIRSKY.

It was the summer of 1904. I was living temporarily in Berlin and waiting for my turn to be sent for work in Russia.

I met Bolshevik comrades who were engaged in transporting our literature across the frontier, and also in sending people across. It was a dangerous period; the great events of 1905 were approaching. Our "transporters" were up to their ears in work, the atmosphere was tense. A number of comrades had been trapped in crossing the frontier, and there was much reason for uneasiness. But there was one of the group of comrades engaged in this tedious work who was imperturbably calm – Zhitomirsky.

He was a medical student at the Berlin University, and was an adherent to the *Iskra* group. In 1904, when the group split up into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Zhitomirsky went with the Bolsheviks. By all appearances he was one of us, a sincere, one hundred percent, Bolshevik; yet on meeting him one was irritated by his dandified appearance, his enormously high collars, his colored ties – by his dapper appearance in general. However, when we began to make fun of his perfumed figure, Zhitomirsky invariably replied that he dressed so carefully for conspirative reasons, that he was not spending party money on his posh clothes, that his parents were rich merchants and sent him as much money as he asked for.

We believed Zhitomirsky. The fact that comrades sent across to Russia through Berlin were tracked by the police in some town or other was no reason why suspicion

should be directed against him; for the whole of the Tsarist Russia at that time was teeming with spies, and these comrades may have been discovered in the places where they worked. There was no reason, therefore, for suspecting that Zhitomirsky was informing the Department of Police of the departure of comrades for this town or the other

Not so long ago, while working on the archives of the Department of Police I came across an extremely interesting document a letter from Zhitomirsky to the Director of the Department of Police informing him that a Bolshevik was going to Russia, carrying a letter of instructions in code from the center abroad to all Russian Bolshevik organizations, the contents of which were so and so; and here followed the text of the letter, which, he informed the police, would be carried by the bearer in the heel of his boot.

From the document in this file, I learned also that the police authorities regarded Zhitomirsky as a valuable assistant, that they paid him extremely large sums of money, that the police were working to get him a passport to enable him to come to St. Petersburg to report in person, etc.

When the Moscow uprising in December, 1905, was suppressed, when temporarily triumphant reaction again raised its head, when Lenin was compelled to emigrate for the second time and the Bolshevik center was once more transferred abroad, Zhitomirsky again joined the Bolsheviks and offered his services for the purpose of restoring the old connections with Europe and organizing the transport of illegal Bolshevik literature into Russia. His offer was accepted.

As a result of Zhitomirsky's treacherous work the Bolshevik organizations were discovered and raided by the police one after another. He tried his utmost to get into the technical commission of the Central Committee and at last succeeded in becoming one of its members, which gave him wide opportunities for extensive provocation.

One episode in the provocational exploits of Zhitomirsky is characteristic of all the others.

It was in 1909 – during the period of darkest reaction in Russia.

A prominent Bolshevik was under arrest. Because he had escaped from exile several times, and in order to ensure his safe arrival at the place of exile, to which he was then assigned, he was put into chains, both hands and feet. The long journey under these awful conditions had a terrible effect upon the comrade, and on arrival he was seized with fits of coughing. His temperature ran high, and his legs became covered with big sores from the chafing of the fetters. Nevertheless, in spite of his physical condition, this comrade was so strong in spirit that he again decided to escape

immediately. After a tremendous effort he managed to escape and reach Paris. The Bolshevik center was then in Paris.

By this time Zhitomirsky had succeeded in finishing his medical training, had become a doctor and was practicing in his own consulting room in his flat in Paris. He proposed that the sick man should live with him, since he would be in a position to give him both medical and comradely assistance; thus, the sick comrade fell under the guardianship of the police agent. The sick man's condition was critical, the flesh wounds on his legs during the journey to Paris had become considerably worse; physically he was a broken man. And Zhitomirsky chose this moment, wishing to serve his masters – the Tsarist police to use the following means of dispatching an active Bolshevik to the other world. In his capacity as doctor, he began to assure the patient that the wounds on his legs were syphilitic, that there was no hope for him, that he was doomed.

On hearing the doctor's report, this comrade thought that he had become infected with this awful disease while in prison, and considering himself too weak to fight against this sickness, decided to die and took poison. The dose, however, was too small, and when he recovered somewhat and was examined by another doctor, it became quite clear, of course, that there was no sign of syphilis, and the wounds rapidly healed.

Zhitomirsky defended himself by pleading that he was an inexperienced doctor and that he had not been sufficiently tactful in the manner in which he had revealed to the sick man the character of his ailment. Everything seemed quite simple and plausible.

Zhitomirsky's police activities stretched over a period of eight years, and not till 1911 was he first caught in the act of provocation: it was proved that when he left for Russia, The Tsarist police agents in Paris sent a report to the Department of Police in St. Petersburg as they usually did when their agents left.

No. 3: OLGA NIKOLAEVNA PUTYATA.

It was in the beginning of 1907. The tortuous process of crawling back underground through which the Bolshevik organization were passing, had in some places come to an end. With inconceivable difficulties, the illegal party apparatus, shaken during the all too short days of freedom in 1905, was fitted together again. It was not firm, however, for there were so few secret meeting places available; the intellectuals no longer placed their apartments at their disposal. The lawyers and doctors had ceased to sympathize with us. We Bolsheviks were not fashionable, for we

had "failed." Decadent poets were now in vogue, who wrote lines such as: "I come to thee from the land of the prematurely born"...

There were still a few isolated connections among the intellectuals, however, and one of these was Olga Nikolaevna Putyata, an ephemeral creature, the wife of a semi-decadent writer. Olga Nikolaevna helped us considerably in the way of concealing the illegal side of our work, providing us with addresses for our secret correspondence, and so on. For instance, a quantity of Bolshevik literature arrived in Moscow from Finland, where it had to be issued illegally. This literature had to be collected in exchange for the luggage receipt, taken off to the central rooms, sorted out there, distributed according to locals and sent from there round the factories. I went to Olga Nikolaevna, there was nothing else to do, for we had no one else. She received me in her husband's luxurious study, the walls of which were lined with book-cases filled with books. This study involuntarily imbued one with respect. Olga Nikolaevna was very charming, thanked me for the trust put in her, and willingly took upon herself the task of going to the station to collect the material. In order to dispel suspicions on the part of the railway police, she said: "I'll take mamma with me; she is very old and extremely respectable"; whereupon she introduced me to an elderly lady – her mother, who at that moment entered the room.

Thus, everything was beautifully arranged. I handed over the luggage receipt, gave the address of our central rooms to which the basket had to be taken, and without feeling the slightest suspicion, but simply through force of habit, being always on the alert, replied, when Olga Nikolaevna asked whether we should need her help to sort the literature, that we would not distribute it that day, but the next, although in my heart I knew that to leave such an enormous amount of illegal literature in one place for a whole night would be dangerous.

A couple of hours later the basket was safely brought by Olga Nikolaevna to the place indicated by me, and before evening came and I and a group of comrades had succeeded in sorting it out and sending it to the locals.

In the night the police came to our central rooms, but no literature was found, and they went away empty handed.

It is characteristic that none of us thought of suspecting Olga Nikolaevna; we all were convinced that she had simply been followed by spies while bringing the basket to us, hence the raid on our rooms.

I even went to warn Olga Nikolaevna of the danger which threatened her of being searched and perhaps arrested, since the police had been to the central rooms that night. She assured me that there was nothing to be alarmed at; that the police looked upon her as a woman of society and would hardly suspect her of revolutionary work,

the more so since all the decadent writers who surrounded her were engaged in revising their works, no longer believed in the revolution and had no desire to help it, and this circumstance could not but be observed by the police; but, on the other hand, were anything to happen to her and were she arrested, she was quite prepared to bear her part of the sacrifice for the cause of revolution, etc. My vigilance was lulled by declarations of this kind; I trusted this police agent, believed in her and many others over a period of several years, until rumors began to be heard regarding her, and she immediately vanished. The documents of the Moscow police fully confirm all the rumors that went the rounds then about the police activities of Putyata-Storozheva. She had been working as a police agent for several years.

No. 4: ROMANOV.

It was towards the end of 1907. I was working in the Bolshevik Moscow District organization, which covered all the factories and workshops in the area of what was then the Moscow Gubernia, or Province. The Kolomno works was the biggest center of our work, yet whenever we arranged for a meeting in Moscow with the representatives of Kolomno, they always sent not a worker in the Kolomno works, but a book-binder named Romanov. His party nickname was "George."

George was a little chap, insignificant enough to look at. somewhat brisk and resourceful when it was a question of carrying out party measures, but never stating his opinion, when questions of party policy were under discussion.

Nobody ever suspected George of any underhand dealings, but it seemed a great pity that a huge works like the Kolomno Works with masses of skilled metal workers, real, sturdy proletarians so to speak, should send as its representative to the meetings of the Bolshevik Party Committee in Moscow a simple little "artisan" – the book-binder George. Once a meeting of the members of the Moscow District Organization which was held in the woods was raided by the police. Only a few of the comrades were caught, for the rest managed to hide. Hence, no suspicion was aroused by the fact that George, the representative of the Kolomno Works, was also among the lucky ones to escape.

Four years passed.

After being imprisoned and exiled, I returned to Moscow, and in the winter of 1911 I met George in the corridor of the People's University (late Shanyavsky). Outwardly George still looked, insignificant, but he was not quite so ferret-like. His gestures were not so jerky. He spoke with more confidence and hinted that he knew all the latest Party news, since he had close connections with Europe; that he had only

recently returned from abroad, where he had been studying in the party school in Capri.

I was at first surprised at the thought that Moscow had been unable to send a better, more capable proletarian to the party school, to the first Communist University, organized at that time by Maxim Gorky in Capri; but then I thought to myself: four years have passed, the man has developed, has become a true Bolshevik – a professional revolutionary and this thought put my mind at rest.

Commenting on our meeting in the corridor of the university, George declared quite frankly that he understood quite well why I should join evening classes; it was, of course, not in order to hear all the rubbish taught by liberal professors, but in order to use the place for the purpose of meeting the comrades.

As for himself, he told me that he had purposely enrolled for a series of lectures on co-operation, that he had an entrance ticket to the building of the University, that he had no intention of attending the lectures, but that he could meet many comrades here. In reply to my question about the party literature published abroad and the possibility of getting it regularly through him, George readily agreed to help me and, taking me to a secluded part of the corridor, told me in a whisper, that he was empowered to serve the entire Moscow district with party literature, and to pass on to them the directions of the Central Committee.

From that day I met George frequently; he regularly supplied me with party material, not only gave me information about the work in Moscow, but detailed information about the Bolshevik Conference which was in session in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, which he attended as a person entrusted by the Central Committee, etc., and so forth.

My rooms were carefully watched by spies, whenever I left my home I was followed, but I never connected this in any way with my meetings with George, since I had only recently returned from exile, and it was quite natural, therefore, that I should be kept under the surveillance of the police. I decided that I must be very careful about meeting comrades, not to visit them in their homes, and so I kept my appointments at the University.

One day a comrade, an old Moscow metal-worker, whom I had known through Party work long before the 1905 revolution, came to my flat in a state of agitation and told me that he was intent on committing suicide, since in the party circles someone had spread rumors to the effect that he was a police spy. I offered to help him and volunteered to take the initiative in investigating the matter but we both knew that since the recent raid on the Moscow Bolshevik Committee no real party organization existed at the moment. We could not wait for the party organization to be restored;

every day was precious when it was a question of the political honor of a comrade; I therefore decided to speak to George, and asked him to form a Commission to investigate the matter and to call me as a witness.

I made an appointment with George and told him that, of course, in general, I could really only answer for myself, but that all I knew of the life of the suspected comrade was certainly in his favor; that I knew him as a good, faithful, honest party member.

George also had known this comrade for a long time, and appeared to be very indignant about the rumor having been spread. He took it upon himself to call a commission as soon as possible to look into the matter, and advised me to wait calmly until I was called as witness.

Some time passed, and finally I was called to the home of two good Bolshevik party people, who managed to bring their father in to help our illegal party work. The two comrades, brother and sister, were in exile at the time. I came into the room. At the table was seated an old man the head of the house, two comrades who until then had been unknown to me – members of the commission, George, who acted as chairman, and the suspected comrade, pale as death, whom George was interrogating.

After the interrogation the comrade was told to leave the room; he went staggering from our presence, and then I was interrogated as witness.

I told them all I knew of the affair. There was a short exchange of opinion, and they all unanimously came to the conclusion that the comrade accused was not guilty, that the rumors were false, and spread with provocative intent.

George drew up a verdict exonerating the comrade and condemning those who had spread the provocational rumors.

When the Imperialist war broke out in 1914, I happened to meet George at an illegal meeting, where the Moscow Bolsheviks first formulated their attitude to war, and Romanov, with the rest of us, expressed the hope that the Tsar's army would be defeated. The revolution would soon begin, he said, and we must all prepare for this.

After the October Revolution, an examination of the files of the Department of Police revealed that Romanov had worked for the police under the pseudonym of "Pelagea," and that for no less than ten years he had been one of their most valuable agents, and that he too was paid highly by the Tsarist treasury.

And so, it turned out that it was George who spread the rumors about this worker. It is quite obvious that the spreading of slanderous rumors about a good, faithful revolutionary Bolshevik worker was essential to George in order to divert

attention from his own provocative activities; for in those days almost every day Bolshevik organizations were being built and raided. Everybody felt the hovering hand of the provocateur. Many things pointed to George who, trusted by the Central Committee, knew about everything. And so, he had chosen as victim an old, faithful comrade, well-known in Moscow circles, who would also be well – informed about Party work, and had spread all these provocative rumors about him.

We now know also from the report sent in by "Pelagea" that immediately after the meeting held in the summer of 1914, mentioned above, George went to the Moscow police and handed in a complete list and description of all the comrades who were present at that meeting, and the police, of course, made no delay in removing those of us whom they could lay hands on.

"Pelagea" was unfortunate enough to live until the February Revolution, and was then arrested before he could get away. After the October Revolution he was sentenced to death by the Proletarian Court.

Nos. 5 and 6: MALINOVSKY and POSKREBUKHIN.

It was towards the end of the year 1911. I was still attending the Shanyavsky University, always accompanied by spies. They simply swarmed round me. I got no peace because of the spies, and could get no work done. Then my brother arrived from abroad, from Lenin. My brother was a Bolshevik, entrusted with the task of organizing a delegation from Moscow for the general Russian Party Conference which was to take place in Prague. I wanted to help my brother with this commission, and with the greatest difficulty arranged a meeting for him in the Bacteriological Institute with a metal worker, Malinovsky.

It had not been possible to arrange any real Party meeting to elect Malinovsky to the Prague Conference, because at that time the whole of the Moscow Party organization had been broken up by the gendarmes; consequently, a small group of Bolsheviks decided that Malinovsky, without being elected, should go and represent the Moscow Bolsheviks at the Prague Conference. Who was Malinovsky?

He was a very intelligent, very experienced metal worker, with a good command of language, able to debate; a man of strong temperament, perhaps a little too self-confident, but nevertheless a man who could not fail to attract attention; a commanding personality in all respects, Malinovsky was not a Moscow worker of long standing; he had arrived in Mos-cow not so very long ago; he had previously been President of the Metal Workers' Union in St. Petersburg, and he was a Pole by birth – had been arrested through his party work, exiled, and so on.

I personally was not closely in touch with Malinovsky at that time, but I heard a lot about him from comrades to the effect that he was a prominent worker in all respects, a popular orator, and I was not surprised that soon afterwards, when the candidature of Malinovsky was put forward in a workers' constituency in the Province for the Fourth State Duma, he was elected.

After the October Revolution documents were found which proved that Malinovsky entered the service of the Tsarist police in 1910; that, as a matter of fact, they had helped him to get elected to the Duma. He betrayed numerous Bolsheviks; he betrayed both Stalin and Sverdlov, who had escaped from Siberian exile, and received at first 500 rubles monthly and then 700 rubles for his "work," besides additional rewards "per capita." The Police Department was so interested that its agent should be elected by the Moscow workers, that it kept out of his personal file the inconvenient circumstance that in his youth Malinovsky had a most prosaic criminal record of the meanest kind of petty theft.

These unpleasant details became known only after the October Revolution.

However, at the time about which I am writing, Malinovsky, having been supplied with addresses and secret meeting places on the frontier by my brother, left for Prague, and two days later my brother was arrested in Moscow in the street. The gendarmes came to my home, made a careful search and, finding nothing, nevertheless left a man on duty, who remained in the house for twelve days in order to trap anyone who came to visit me.

I went to the police station to demand that this state of "martial law" be removed from my home and, in excited tones, said to the police officer: "Do you take us for fools, do you think that if it had been necessary, we wouldn't have found time to warn people that there is a man on duty in our house?" The officer "gently" asked me to calm myself, saying: "Why, you and I should understand each other perfectly well; I am an experienced police officer, and you are an experienced revolutionary and should understand that our man on duty is of use, for people may come to your house whom you are able to forewarn; for instance, someone might be arriving from abroad, or somebody who has escaped from Siberian exile. We are not touching you, not arresting you; it is not so long since you returned from exile, but we shall watch your extensive connections."

I could only thank the police officer for his frankness, and bearing in mind the words of wisdom of the police, I tried, as far as possible, to write and give the warning that comrades arriving in Moscow should, at any rate, not come direct to my flat.

When I was allowed my first visit to my brother, he managed to whisper to me: "Someone is spying in Moscow; I was sure of it after my first interrogation by the police. They know absolutely everything."

However, there was no one farther from our thoughts in this connection than Malinovsky; anybody but he, our rising star, whose speeches from the Duma tribune later attracted general attention.

In the last two years before the Imperialist war, the revolutionary tide had again turned; at this time the legal Bolshevik press had grown considerably in spite of police restrictions, and the publishers of all these newspapers and periodicals, which were prohibited daily by the Tsarist censor, and which cropped up again under different names every day, were formally members of the Bolshevik fraction of the State Duma. Just about this time, early in the Spring of 1914, Malinovsky, who had arrived in Moscow, asked me to call upon him, and informed me that with the agreement of the Bolshevik center, we were to publish a magazine: *Rabochyi-Put* (The Path of Labor). He said, that if I had no objection, he, Malinovsky, the formal publisher of this magazine would entrust me with the business side of the magazine, since he would have to be in St. Petersburg, and the magazine was to be issued in Moscow.

I naturally welcomed Malinovsky's suggestion. We agreed to meet in a restaurant the next day, so that we could discuss the affair in detail, and then go to a solicitor and draw up the necessary papers.

When I arrived at the restaurant the next day, Malinovsky was already there, seated at a table set for two, and I immediately noticed his frank pleasure at the fact that the eyes of all the diners were directed towards him, for the portraits of the members of the State Duma frequently appeared in the press, and the petty-bourgeoisie were curious to see the Duma deputy.

Malinovsky was simply basking in the attention paid to him. He spoke to me much more loudly than I should have liked, laughed loud a great deal, and in general behaved most unrestrainedly. This was very unpleasant.

When, after dinner, we took a cab and were driving to the solicitor, Malinovsky took a manifesto from his side pocket, which had only just appeared in St. Petersburg, and showed it to me, saying loudly that in Moscow everything was still concealed, but that in St. Petersburg they were carrying on Bolshevik work almost openly. When I asked him not to speak so loudly, since only his person was immune from arrest, as a deputy, and I was very much liable to arrest, he began to tease me, laughing the while, and to accuse me of cowardice, of being in the habit of hiding underground. All this was most unpleasant to me, but I did not in the least suspect him of treachery. He was just personally unpleasant, I thought, and somewhat conceited.

When we had finished our business with the solicitor, Malinovsky left for St. Petersburg, and I began to prepare for the publication of the magazine, which soon began to appear.

Both the editorial board of the magazine and the principal members of the staff had already been appointed by the Moscow Party organization, and among these was a certain Poskrebukhin, a clerk by profession. At that time, he was known as a member of the illegal Bolshevik fraction of the legal Union of Commercial Employees. I had met him pretty often during the past two years, and as he worked in one of the sick benefit club offices in a very thickly populated working-class district, it had always been possible through him to get into touch with the workers of several factories, which was especially valuable at that time, when the Bolsheviks were being arrested one after the other, and for some time it had been difficult for this reason to keep in touch with the workshops.

Through Poskrebukhin I managed to get two prominent Bolshevik professional revolutionaries, who had escaped from Siberia, into touch with some factory workers; these two revolutionaries had arrived in 1913-1914 to help the work in the Moscow Party organization. True, they stayed in Moscow for a very short time, for they were soon arrested; however, since arrests were an everyday occurrence, there was no question of our suspecting Poskrebukhin, the more so since these comrades were old Bolsheviks, who had frequently been arrested before, so that any police spy could simply recognize them in the street.

On another occasion I introduced Poskrebukhin to a third Bolshevik who had escaped from exile, and when, after a meeting with Poskrebukhin, this comrade left on private business for a few days in St. Petersburg, and was there arrested on the street, again nobody suspected Poskrebukhin, because this comrade had worked in St. Petersburg before; the police knew him there, and again could quite easily have recognised him in the streets. This comrade came to a tragic end – he fell ill and died in prison.

These isolated facts did not rouse any suspicion against Poskrebukhin, who continued to flourish; there is no other word to use in connection with Poskrebukhin this radiant, red-cheeked, tall, deep chested, broad-shouldered young man. He was always cheerful and full of life – full of concentrated vital energy.

Sometime afterwards, when we began to work together, and to meet every day in the editorial office – he to bring out the magazine, and I as publishing agent and editor of the workers' page – I often used to look at Poskrebukhin and wonder how he managed to be so elegantly attired and to lunch on such expensive food, all on his salary of 60 rubles a month. Once I even asked him where he got all his money for the

caviar, ham and fruit with which he regaled himself at lunch, and he calmly replied that since I was an intellectual, like all those who come from the intelligentsia, I could not understand the art of living well on little money.

The Russian intellectuals could never make the most of their money, he said to me teasingly, he — a mujik, son of a peasant — a yokel, knew how to make the most of his money, and, therefore, it was always the same, that although we received the same salary, I never had any money and he always had plenty.

For the few months during which our magazine came out (it was closed down by the police on the eve of the declaration of war), Poskrebukhin was most active in distributing confiscated numbers and almost every number of the magazine was confiscated, it was always the same; the other comrades were always caught by the police when attempting to dispatch confiscated numbers to the factories, and Poskrebukhin was the only one who always managed to get past the police, and so on. We always praised him for his dexterity and held him up as an example for other less skillful comrades. Poskrebukhin's success somehow seemed to harmonize with all his outward appearance of a successful man to such an extent that we trusted him absolutely.

Once Malinovsky arrived from St. Petersburg and called at the editorial office. He praised us highly for managing the work of the magazine so well, and asked me to call a meeting of Bolshevik members of the Tailors' Union and other unions at the Tailors' Union rooms, to hear his report.

I pointed out to him that according to police regulations: only members of the given union were allowed to meet at the premises of that union; and that since the police turned up every evening at the rooms of the Tailors' Union, where we had a fairly strong Bolshevik fraction, we could expect that the meeting would be broken up, those present would be, listed, and since some of them would not be members of the union, there would be sufficient excuse for closing down the union the legal covering for our Bolshevik Party organization in Moscow which we were using so extensively for the purpose of carrying on our illegal work.

Malinovsky made an awful fuss, got very angry, used strong language about the Moscow Party organization and about me personally; but I quite categorically refused to call the meeting in the Tailors' Union rooms, and proposed, that it be called illegally in somebody's flat. Poskrebukhin supported me entirely, and Malinovsky went away in a huff. The next day I came to the office and was told by Poskrebukhin that Malinovsky had nevertheless been able to arrange a meeting the night before in the Tailors' Union rooms, that somebody from the Union had helped him, that the meeting had been closed down by the police and about twenty of our most active Bolsheviks from the

Metal Workers' Union, Plumbers Union, and so on, had been arrested. Malinovsky, as a deputy of the Duma, was immune, and therefore let off. Poskrebukhin himself, when he heard quite late in the evening that there was to be a meeting after all, intended going, but at the entrance to the union rooms he saw that there was some trouble and he decided not to enter the house, and so escaped.

Soon our magazine was raided by the police. When the police officers rushed into the printing works where the magazine was printed, Poskrebukhin and I were in the works office. Paying no attention to us, they ordered the printer to remove the issue of the magazine which was being printed from the machines at once. When the owner and the police officers went into the machine department, Poskrebukhin and I hurried out. I intended going straight to the editorial office to destroy certain material in my desk which should not be allowed to fall into the hands of the police when they came to the office to make a search. Poskrebukhin hurried along after me, and on the way tried to persuade me to go home, because he was going to the editorial office all the same, and could destroy the material. Although I did not suspect him of any underhand dealings, nevertheless I refused to go home, because it was most likely that the police were already in the editorial office, and would most probably detain anybody who turned up; thus, Poskrebukhin would run the risk of being arrested because of me, and I did not want this to happen. I decided to take the risk myself. Poskrebukhin then began to express great concern for my safety and to assure me that if there was any risk to be run he would be able to get out of the trouble somehow, for he had never been to prison, and even if they arrested him, they would not detain him long, because it would be his first offence, whereas, if they arrested me, who had been detained by the police so many times, arrested times without number, and sent to exile, they would be sure to detain me for a long time, that this would be extremely inexpedient for our work, and, moreover, there was the small child at home, whereas Poskrebukhin was absolutely free from any ties.

All this he said with his usual vehemence, and I allowed myself to be persuaded and went home, leaving Poskrebukhin to go to the editorial office. Even then I felt no suspicions about him; on the contrary, I was extremely grateful to him, as a good comrade, and when on the following day he called on me with the news that all the material, manuscripts, and so on, had been safely destroyed, that there had been no police raid on the office, I was frankly overjoyed, and we drank tea together like old friends, and talked over our plans for a new magazine with a new name. Rumors of the spying activities of Poskrebukhin began to be heard in party circles only in 1915 and 1916; they were extremely indefinite rumors but nevertheless, people began to avoid him. Only in 1917, after we had obtained access to the archives of the Tsarist Police Department, were the facts about his police activities definitely established. I do not

know exactly how long Poskrebukhin carried on his crimes. Both he, and Romanov, as well as Malinovsky, were shot after the October Revolution.

