Chapter 11
The Socialist Republic Resorts to Deportation

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MY FURTHER DISILLUSIONMENT IN RUSSIA

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CHAPTER XI
THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC RESORTS TO DEPORTATION

THE Tcheka had succeeded in terrorizing the whole people. The only exceptions were the politicals, whose courage and devotion to their ideals defied the Bolsheviki as it had the Romanovs. I knew many of those brave spirits, and I saw in them the only hope to sustain one amid the general wreckage. They were the living proof of the powerlessness of terror against an Ideal.

Typical of this class was a certain Anarchist who had long been sought for by the Tcheka as an important Makhnovetz. He was a member of the military staff of the revolutionary povstantsi of the Ukraina and the close friend and counselor of
Makhno. He had already known him intimately when they were together in *katorga* in the days of the Czar. He had shared all the hardships and danger of the *povstantsi* life and participated in their campaigns against the enemies of the Revolution. After the defeat of Wrangel and the last treachery of the Bolsheviki toward Makhno, when the latter's army had become scattered and many of its members killed, this man succeeded in escaping the Bolshevik net. He determined to come to Moscow, there to write a history of Makhnovstchina. It was a perilous journey, made under most difficult conditions, with death constantly treading his footsteps. Under an assumed name he secured a tiny room in the environs of the capital. He lived in most abject poverty, always in danger of his life, visiting his wife in the city only under cover of darkness. Once in every twenty four hours he would come to the appointed place for a little respite and his sole meal of the day, consisting of potatoes, herring, and tea. Every moment he risked being recognized, for he was well known in Moscow, and recognition meant summary execution. His wife also, if discovered, would have met the same fate-the devoted woman who, though with child at the time, had followed him to Moscow. After a desperate hunt for employment she found a position in a *créche*, but as pregnant women were not accepted in such institutions, she had to disguise her condition. All day long she had to be on her feet, attending to her duties, and living in constant fear for the safety of her husband.

When the baby was born the situation became more aggravated. The woman was harassed by her superiors because she had obtained the position without their knowledge of her condition. Petty officialdom and hard work exhausted her energies and the daily anxiety about the man she loved nearly drove her frantic. Yet never a sign of all that troubled her when the man would visit her.

Many evenings I spent with this couple. They were entirely cut off from the outside world and former friends, all alone save for the fear of discovery and death which was their constant companion. In the dreary, damp room, the baby asleep, we passed many hours talking in subdued voices about the Ukrainian peasantry and the Makhno movement. My friend was familiar with every phase of it from personal experience, which he was now incorporating into his book on Makhno. He was absorbed in that work, which was for the first time to give to the world the truth about Makhno and the *povstantsi*. Deeply concerned about his wife and
child, he was entirely oblivious to his own safety, though knowing that every day the Tcheka net was drawn closer about him. With great difficulty he was finally prevailed upon to leave his beloved Russia, as the only way of saving his family. What a commentary on the Socialist Republic, whose bravest and truest sons must keep in hiding or forsake their native soil!

Life in Russia had become to me a constant torture; the need of breaking my two years' silence was imperative. During all the summer I was in the throes of a bitter conflict between the necessity of leaving and my inability to tear myself away from what had been an ideal to me. It was like the tragic end of a great love to which one clings long after it is no more.

In the midst of my struggle there happened an event which further served to demonstrate the complete collapse of the Bolsheviki as revolutionists. It was the announcement of the return to Russia of the Czarist General Slastchev, one of the most reactionary and brutal militarists of the old régime. He had fought against the Revolution from its very beginning and had led some of the Wrangel forces in the Crimea. He was guilty of fiendish barbarities to war prisoners and infamous as a maker of pogroms. Now Slastchev recanted and was returning to "his Fatherland." This arch counter-revolutionist and Jew-baiter, together with several other Czarist generals and White guardists, was received by the Bolsheviki with military honors. No doubt it was just retribution that the antiSemite had to salute the Jew Trotsky, his military superior. But to the Revolution and the Russian people the triumphal return of the imperialists was an outrage.

The old general had changed his colors but not his nature. In his letter to the officers and men of the Wrangel Army he delivered himself of the following:

I, Slastchev Krimsky, command you to return to your Fatherland and into the fold of the Red Army. Our country needs our defense against her enemies. I command you to return.

As a reward for his newly fledged love of the Socialist Fatherland Slastchev "Krimsky" was commissioned to quell the Karelian peasants who demanded self-determination, and Slastchev had the opportunity of giving full play to the autocratic powers he was vested with.

Military receptions and honors for the man who had been foremost in the attempt to crush the Revolution, and imprisonment or death for the lovers of
liberty! At the same time the true sons of Russia, who had defended the Revolution against every attack and had aided the Bolsheviks to political power, were made homeless by deportation to foreign lands. A more tragic débâcle history has never before witnessed. The first to be deported by the "revolutionary-" Government were ten Anarchists, most of them known in the international revolutionary movement as tried idealists and martyrs for their cause. Among them was Volin, a highly cultured man, a gifted writer and lecturer, who had been editor of various Anarchist publications in Europe and America. In Russia, where he returned in 1917, he helped to organize the Ukrainian Confederation of Nabat and' was for a time lecturer for the Soviet Department of Education in Kharkov. Volin had been a member of an Anarchist partizan military unit that fought against Austro-German occupation, and for a considerable time he also conducted educational and cultural work in the Makhno Army. During the year 1921 he was imprisoned by the Bolsheviks and deported after the hunger strike of the Taganka Anarchists which lasted ten and a half days.

In the same group was G. Maximoff, an Anarchist of many years' standing. Before the Revolution he had been active among the students of the Petrograd University and also among the peasants. He participated in all the revolutionary struggles beginning with the February Revolution, was one of the editors of Golos Truda and member of the All-Russian Secretariat of Anarcho-syndicalists. He is an able and popular writer and lecturer.

Mark Mratchny, another of the deported, has been an Anarchist since 1907. At the time when Hetman Skoropadsky ruled Ukraina with the help of German bayonets, Mratchny was a member of the Revolutionary Bureau of the students of Kharkov. He held the position of instructor in the Soviet School Department of Kharkov, and later in Siberia. He edited the Nabat during the period of agreement between Makhno and the Bolsheviks, and was later arrested together with the other Anarchists who had come to Kharkov for the Anarchist Conference.

Among the deported was also Yartchuk, famous as one of the leaders of the Kronstadt sailors in the uprising of July, 1917, a man who enjoyed exceptional influence among the sailors and workers and whose idealism and devotion are matters of historic record. In the group there were also several students—mere youths who had participated in the Anarchist hungerstrike in the Taganka prison.
To remain longer in Bolshevik Russia had become unbearable. I was compelled to speak out, and decided to leave the country. Friends were making arrangements to open a *sub rosa* passage abroad, but just as all preparations were completed we were informed of new developments. Berlin Anarchists had made a demand upon the Soviet Government that passports be issued for Alexander Berkman, A. Shapiro, and myself, to enable us to attend the International Anarchist Congress which was to convene in Berlin in December, 1921. Whether due to that demand or for other reasons, the Soviet Government finally issued the required papers and on December 1, 1921, I left Russia in the company of Alexander Berkman and A. Shapiro. It was just one year and eleven months since I had set foot on what I believed to be the promised land. My heart was heavy with the tragedy of Russia. One thought stood out in bold relief: I must raise my voice against the crimes committed in the name of the Revolution. I would be heard regardless of friend or foe.

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