

## Andrew Kalpaschnikoff

*A Prisoner of Trotsky's, by Andrew Kalpaschnikoff. With a Foreword by David R. Francis, American Ambassador to Russia. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company.*

COLONEL KALPASCHNIKOFF, you charge my friend Raymond Robins with being peculiarly responsible for your getting thrown into jail in Petrograd under the Bolsheviks.

You also interest me by your ingratitude to the Allies, to say nothing of your ingratitude to the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks—in 1918—let you out of jail. Then you went to Siberia and joined Kolchak against them. Their mistake apparently was in letting you out. And in Siberia under Kolchak the Allies were your comrades-in-arms. Yet look! At the end of your book you seem to hate the Allies almost worse than you hate the Bolsheviks.

I can say truly, my dear Colonel, that I commend your book heartily to all Allied and Associated rulers. They can learn a lot from you about the Russians that our diplomats in Russia got their policies from—and their stories. You are of those Russians—distinctly.

Your family—Mr. Francis tells us in his foreword—is “old.” Your great-uncle, General Slepzov, was “the conqueror of the Caucasus.” You yourself, from the age of twenty-three forward, were a member of your Zemstvo. For nine successive years you were “Honorary Judge.” During the Great War you rose to the command of a Siberian “flying column.” Before the Great War you were an attaché in the Russian Embassy at Washington and at one time Secretary in Petrograd of the Tsar’s Cabinet of Ministers.

Naturally Mr. Francis had great confidence in you.

In his foreword you tell him the story—and he reports it—which is the proof of your contention—and his—against Robins. So you will not mind if I examine it with the care due to a direct open specimen of the sort of proof perhaps lying behind a lot of the other stories which our diplomats have asked us to believe out of Russia.

It springs—this story of yours—out of a certain extremely famous telegram which you received at Petrograd. It may have been a perfectly innocent telegram. But you will surely admit, Colonel, that it was a very strange one.

It came from the American Red Cross Mission in Rumania—a philanthropic foreign neutral mission. Yet it asked you—a well-known anti-Bolshevik—to send certain motor-cars (quite useful in military operations) to Rostov-on-the-Don, the headquarters of General Kaledine, leader of an anti-Bolshevik army. And it was wired to you through Mr. Francis—a foreign neutral diplomat living in Bolshevik territory and claiming diplomatic immunity and protection from the Bolshevik Government.

But Mr. Francis seemed to think it all quite normal. He received the telegram. It was in code. He had it de-coded. And then he sent a paraphrase to Raymond Robins, as head of the American Red Cross in Petrograd, and another paraphrase to you.

Soon then the Bolsheviks noted that you—a well-known and well-watched anti-Bolshevik—were going about getting a permit for the transportation of motor-cars. The destination of the cars was changed—by another telegram. It was changed to Jassy in Rumania. But you and your interest in sending those cars to some place outside of Bolshevik territory on a Bolshevik permit over a Bolshevik railroad were certainly easy to note; and on the night of

December 20, 1917, your flat in Kirochnaia Street was raided.

In that flat at that time—as you yourself tell Mr. Francis in his foreword—you had your paraphrase of that telegram about Rostov.

You went to jail. I would not overlook your experiences there.

You were taken to Peter and Paul Fortress and put into Cell 51. Cell 51 had been the home of the revolutionist Morozov for twenty years. It was your home for five months and seventeen days. At the end of that time you were released and—on page 245 of your book—sent home in a cab.

It was sporting of you, Colonel, to mention the cab.

But the Bolsheviks during your imprisonment were very murderous. They were always threatening to murder you and all the other numerous distinguished political prisoners then in Peter and Paul. And on page 208 of your book they do indeed “every night” shoot “several” prisoners—of a certain sort. But what sort? “Burglars.”

It is extremely sporting of you, Colonel, to show us the Bolsheviks exterminating burglars while you and your distinguished political fellow-prisoners so numerous keep on simply getting threatened—and getting spared—and then even getting released.

On page 131 of your book the great anti-Bolshevik Bourtzeff gets released “on account of his ill-health.” On page 221 the great anti-Bolshevik Purishkevitch gets released “because his son became ill with typhoid fever.” And on page 224 you feel very injured—or very flattered—because you are still in jail “when even the man who had tried to kill Lenin had been released.”

“Even the man who had tried to kill Lenin.” “Released.” Colonel! Can it be that you are trying to give support to the theory that the real Red Terror did not start in Russia till the Allied and Associated Governments forced it by filling Russia with foreign invasion and domestic treason?

But I exonerate you. When you strike your regular anti-Bolshevik stride, you have one of the easiest gaits I ever saw. On page 123 you say that “Bolshevism only produced murderers in Russia.” And you tell two anti-Bolshevik stories which I commend especially to Mr. Francis as tests of your gifts.

On page 75 you quote from the Bolshevik Government’s official newspaper Izvestia. You quote a speech by Trotsky. In it you make him say that he will “wipe out all Americans and foreigners who dare to plot,” etc.

Now I am always careful to know where there is an available file of Izvestia in America. In that file—at the date of your quotation—Trotsky does indeed say that the “heavy hand of the Revolution” will “fall” on foreign diplomats who abandon their diplomatic characters and become private counter-revolutionary participants in the Russian Civil War. But “fall” is mild. It might mean mere dismissal from Russia. “Wipe-out” means the firing-squad—blood—death—Bolshevism. And what Bolshevik so weak as only to slaughter diplomats? Let it be “all foreigners.” So you just naturally make it read that way; and we see Trotsky not “falling” on Mr. Francis but “wiping out” Mr. Francis and also all the rest of our beloved fellow-countrymen in Petrograd.

Now I dare say that your publishers, Colonel, have somebody who translates Russian for them. I should be glad to have him try to find Trotsky in Izvestia saying what you make him say.

Then on page 224 you quote from Derzhinsky. It is April 18, 1918. You are in your cell. The door opens. There stands Derzhinsky before you. His face has a harsh expression. His eyes move restlessly. He wears two revolvers. He wears a dark green velvet suit. He is "the Robespierre of the Russian Revolution." He angers you. And you report:

"In an indignant tone I began the following dialogue, no word of which I shall ever forget."

Then follows the dialogue. It shows that Derzhinsky is a Pole. You object to Poles in Russian quarrels. You object to them almost anywhere, I guess. And Derzhinsky helps you out. He helps you to show that the Poles are dangerous people. He says to you that "Poles are the best workmen for Bolshevism." And then he tremendously remarks:

"When the Allies have been stupid enough to supply Poland with money and everything it needs, we [the Bolsheviks] can swallow the country in a week."

O Andrew Ivanovitch Kalpaschnikoff! The date—I remind you—was April 18, 1918. On that date the Germans were in full and absolute possession of Poland. On that date the Allies were staggering under the task of defending France on the Western front. On that date the Allies were thinking of supplying Poland about as much as they were thinking of supplying Germany itself. But on that date the Robespierre—and Ezekiel—of the Russian Revolution pierced the future with his restless resistless eyes and saw the Allied Governments pouring munitions into Poland for the Polish War against Russia in 1920—when you wrote your book!

The trouble is, Andrew Ivanovitch, that diplomats do not seem to catch the spirit of your stories. Somebody says to you "Andrew Son-of-Ivan, now spin us a yarn." And you say: "Well! Let's see! Oh yes! Once there was a great fierce giant called Derzhinsky, and there was an honest Russian who was walking in the woods, and there was a pool of blood," and on you go. And Mr. Francis says: "Just wait a minute till I take down the dimensions of that pool of blood."

But in the next chapter after the Russian Robespierre has looked at you harshly and has got rebuked by you in your "indignant tone," you are released; and you drive home in that cab—which Uritsky, the prince of the devils of the Extraordinary Commission for Suppressing you and other Counter-Revolutionaries, tells Comrade Petrov to call for you—and you are restored to your flat, and to your faithful servant Daria, and to the "beautiful white Spitz," which we see Daria washing for you so faithfully during your absence; and you go to see Mr. Francis; and he reproaches you.

He reproaches you for not destroying that paraphrase—about Rostov-on-the-Don. He tells you that after your flat was raided a word-for-word copy of that paraphrase was read off by Trotsky in a public speech, thus causing the Ambassador "a great deal of trouble."

You thereupon politely tell the Ambassador—in his foreword to your book—the following story:

In your flat, in a desk, there was a "secret compartment." The paraphrase was in the "secret compartment." And when you got back to your flat from Cell 51, why, there that paraphrase still was—still in that same "secret compartment"—perfectly safe—in spite of the raid.

The Ambassador, listening, is "astounded." I agree with him. And he draws a conclusion. If you are right, and if Trotsky did not get your paraphrase, then he must

have got Robins's. "Then Robins or one of his attachés must have given Trotsky the verbatim copy which he read in his speech."

The Ambassador is scandalized. So he verifies the story. He makes you repeat it. He is a careful man. He says: "I had him repeat it." And then he begins his next sentence with the words: "I conclude therefore."

So we see an Ambassador reaching a conclusion in Russia. But then we see you—his only witness—going off and writing a book and remembering what happened in that raid on your flat and putting it down in detail—in chapter three—as follows:

"Sailors and workmen broke open all the drawers. . . . When they had stolen everything that was valuable, they began to take boots, motor-gloves, knick-knacks. . . . They examined everything very carefully. This task lasted from two in the morning until six o'clock in the next afternoon. Not only was everything taken out, but the faithful servants of the Bolshevik regime unsewed every curtain, cover, and lining, stripped the chairs, opened the frames of looking-glasses and photographs, and lifted every plank in the floor that looked to them suspicious."

That is the way the Bolsheviks went through your belongings—in your book. And in your book there is nothing about their not finding the paraphrase—nothing. In your book the raid is a complete raid.

But in the foreword the Ambassador does not seem to have read your book. In the foreword—back in Petrograd—you tell the Ambassador that after that raid you still have the paraphrase. And does he ask you to produce it? Does he ask you to let him see it, touch it? Certainly not. He is a diplomat. You are Colonel Kalpaschnikoff, a Russian of the old regime, a "patriotic" Russian, a "real" Russian. He simply asks you to tell him your wonderful story twice. And then he spreads it broadcast through America, no matter how scandalous and injurious he may think it to be to one of his own countrymen.

Honestly, Colonel, these western diplomats will never understand you. They take you literally when you are going through the conventional forms of daily political narrative about giants and fairies; and then when you are serious, when your heart is touched; they are as likely as not to think that you are being romantic.

They thought that you were oh so romantic about ikons and "Orthodoxy" and Russia the Holy. Now just let them read the last few pages of your book and see what happens to you in the core of you when the Poles—the resolute refusers of your sort of "Orthodoxy"—are sent to do battle for the Allies against the Bolsheviks.

You have already expressed your feelings toward the Allies in certain other matters. The Allies—you at last see and say—have been thinking less of saving Russia for the Russians than of saving her for themselves!

You say that they have tried "to cut her forests," "to pump out her oil," "to control her wealth." You say that they have "used" "a national sickness" to promote their own "personal and financial interests." You say that they have tried "to suppress both Russia and Bolshevism." And then you say what they have really succeeded in doing.

"They have thrown the Bolsheviks and 'Great Russia' into each other's arms." "They have lighted the torch of patriotism throughout Russia." You hail that patriotism. You begin to talk about the army of "Russia."

It will be "a very large army." It will march. And

where will it stop? You speculate. Will it stop before Warsaw? Before Berlin? Before Constantinople? You cannot quite tell. But you easily see it at the gates of any of those places. Only first—first—it will certainly march toward Warsaw.

The Poles have asked for it. "They have burned and destroyed several Russian Orthodox churches." Enough. You proceed. The All-Russian Patriarch has been released by the Bolsheviks—not murdered—released; and to all the Russian faithful he has issued a "Poslanie." It seems to settle it—this "Poslanie." It says that the Bolsheviks have been wicked but that the anti-Bolsheviks have been equally wicked and that now the Poles have burned those churches, and that now all Russians—all—with the blessing of the Patriarch upon them—must go out and fight the Poles.

Whereupon the Russian Revolution—you say—"is coming to a successful conclusion." Russia—you say—is "already saved." How? By revived "patriotism" and by revived "religion" hurling themselves in "a very large army" in a "Holy War" against Poland!

Andrew Ivanovitch, I will say one thing for you. You are really your sort of "real" Russian. You make good on it. You are genuine. You blow soap-bubbles, but you live up to the soap.

You lost a landed estate in Russia under the Bolsheviks. But when the Allies tell you that their price for downing the Bolsheviks for you will be just a few fragments off the edges of Holy Russia, and when the Allied and Associated Governments send anti-Bolshevik supplies to Poles, why, you lift your head and hear a "Poslanie" and start with all Russia for Warsaw, Berlin, Constantinople, Russian destiny, Bolshevik, non-Bolshevik, half-Bolshevik, Holy anyhow, Russian.

I commend your book, Colonel, to all Allied and Associated rulers both for its instructive romanticism about Bolsheviks and for its still more instructive realism about "real" Russians.

WILLIAM HARD.

## Georgians and Post-Georgians

*Wheels 1919, Fourth Cycle, edited by Edith Sitwell.*  
Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.

**W**HEELS is a poetical house party; it consists of the conversation of the Sitwells and their more intimate friends. At the same time it represents one of the two or three important developments in English poetry during the last decade—a strange commentary on the literary importance of one family. The note of this new anthology is honest, youthful sophistication. The simplicity of the Georgians had begun some years ago to develop into a fixed and imitable mannerism; from that time on the reaction was inevitable. Its form, its content, and the exact date of its occurrence was determined by the irruption of the Sitwell family into the circle of the poets.

In some respects *Wheels* marks only a return to the harlequinades and harlotry of the nineties. The technical experiments of the last few years interjected new features, however, and even in respect to sophistication a certain advance has been made; these younger poets are intelligent enough to laugh at their own antics. Again where the cenacle of the Yellow Book was youthful, the Sitwells and their associates are nakedly adolescent. The malady

of the nineties has attacked them in a much less malignant form; it is even so modified that scientists might call it a new disease.

Nine poets contributed to *Wheels*; three of these may easily be disregarded. Alvaro Guevara is represented only by two translations of uncertain quality. Arnold James is Beardsley in verse, only not half so good, and Iris Tree unveils her soul shamelessly, leaving one with the impression that it is composed of wind and words. Osbert and Edith and Sacheverell, three of the remaining poets, are Sitwells. A strangely unanimous family.

Out of their number Osbert Sitwell shows to the least advantage in this volume. In his other published work he has sometimes achieved surprising power, but the three poems he includes here make the mistake of revealing their sources too clearly. It was an error into which his brother did not follow him. He plays the Pantaloon of this comedy, clowning pleasantly in half a dozen languages besides his own very individual idiom. "Sprechen sie Deutsch? Parlez vous Français? Parlate Italiano? Dearest Child!" says the Lady from Babel in one of his poems. Her remark might be taken as a motto for all his work.

If Sacheverell is the Pantaloon of the volume, Edith Sitwell is the ringmaster. It was she who took charge of the editorial work; she also who collected the uproarious press clippings in the appendix. As sage counsel for young poets one of these deserves to be recorded along with a certain remark of Sir Philip Sydney's. She has just quoted the critic of the Cambridge Review who had asked her conception of the true function of Poetry. She replies:

"The editor of *Wheels* is always pleased to answer any questions as courteously put as the above. Miss Sitwell's conception of the True Function of Poetry is the same as her conception of the True Function of Space, Eternity, the Will to Be, the London Daily Mail, or any other eternal verity."

Her method is pointillism—she jumbles her impressions as acrobatically as a moving picture camera—and her medium is the couplet. Into this she packs her queer kaleidoscopic meanings, like Webster into his unrhymed pentameters. Her Pastor takes a restaurant car for Heaven, making the following comment on the journey:

Hot glassy light fills up the gloom  
As water an aquarium,

All mirror bright; beneath this seen  
Our faces colored by its sheen

Seem objects under water, bent  
By each bright-hued advertisement.

She finds an imitator in Sherard Vines, who is a young poet, deviously romantic, and an admirer of the Communists. One finds it difficult to make further statements about him; he is more a promise than a fulfillment. This judgment applies also to Wilfred Owen, and it has remained his final destiny. He was killed in action during the last year of the war, leaving behind him a few poems of ghastly intensity. Evidently it was a sort of patriotic snobbishness that caused his inclusion here, for except his age and a tendency to experiment with new rhymes and metres, he has little in common with these poets.