ble. Soon after he returned in 1917, after an initial rebuff, he was appointed on March 3 to the powerful Russian Bureau of the Bolshevik Party. He soon became a member of the newly formed Political Bureau and the chief editor of the party newspaper, Pravda, and finally a member of the Soviet Military Revolutionary Committee and the party Military Revolutionary Center. Because the evidence does not fit Slusser's thesis, he frequently is compelled to bend it to his needs. In order to minimize Stalin's role in Party affairs in 1917, Slusser passes lightly over Stalin's delivery of the major reports at the Sixth Congress in July and August of 1917 and his role in the crucial discussions at meetings of the Party Central Committee on October 10, 16, 20, 21 and 25. He sees both Stalin's absence from a meeting of the Central Committee on October 24 and his presence at the meeting of October 25 as proof that Stalin was "missing the revolution." They cannot both be true.

What Slusser demonstrates is that Stalin suffered some setbacks and embarrassments in 1917 and did not play an active role in the military action which constituted the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd. He does not, however, prove his thesis that Stalin was "missing in 1917" or that he did not play an important role in the Bolshevik seizure of power. Instead, apparently unintentionally, he proves that Stalin was, without a doubt, one of the foremost Bolshevik leaders in 1917 in several different capacities, a fact that would have been even more evident if this study had been extended through December to include the creation of the new Soviet state.

George Jackson


Karol Wedziagolski was a "Russianized" Pole of aristocratic origin, who served as an administrative officer in the Russian army after a seven year training in the Polotsk Cadet Corps. Prior to February 1917 he secretly sympathized with the revolutionary movement. After February he was appointed a Commissar of the Provisional Government in the Eighth Army, where he became closely associated with Boris Savinkov who served first as the Commissar of the neighboring Seventh Army, then as the Commissar for the whole Southwestern front, and subsequently as the Acting Minister of War in Kerenskii's government. During the Civil War Wedziagolski accompanied Savinkov in the latter's wanderings from one front to another, sharing in his desperate efforts to muster anti-Bolshevik resistance, which led eventually to the ill-fated alliance with Pi-sudski under the banner of a "historical Russo-Polish reconciliation."

Wedziagolski viewed Savinkov as a fascinatingly complex personality whose stormy and violence-marked life epitomized the revolutionary chapter of Russian history. Accordingly he meant to write his biography as a personal account of war, revolution and counter-revolution, "descriptions of Savinkov's various embodiments against the backdrop of changing history."

Though the author does not deal with Savinkov's earlier, revolutionary career, he explains Savinkov's role in 1917 in terms of his "metamorphoses." Abandoning his earlier "revolutionary romanticism," Savinkov came to the conclusion that the Russian masses lacked civic maturity and therefore needed to be ruled from above by a mature
and conscientious elite. Thus he saw it his mission to save Russia and the revolution from "the clumsy hands" of his erstwhile comrades who led the revolution to its ruin. He proposed to do so first and foremost by restoring to the army its fighting capacity and using it to suppress the Bolsheviks for the reluctant Premier, Kerenskii. The author follows Savinkov's involvement in the Komilov Affair, the experiences he and Savinkov shared with Kaledin's Cossacks at the Don after October, Savinkov's attempts to cooperate with the White generals, and finally the establishment of the Russian Political Committee in Poland and its military operations until the conclusion of peace between Piłsudski and the Soviet regime.

The book is a translation from a Russian manuscript written in Sao Paulo in 1962. Its editor, Tadeusz Swietochowski, shares the author's view of Savinkov. Moreover, he presents the book as a contribution to the understanding not only of the once famous, albeit controversial, revolutionary but also as a reflection of "Russia's ordeal, torn between two extremes" and, following Savinkov's Na puty k tret'ei Rossii (Warsaw 1920), a representation of a "Third Russia"—neither "Bolshevized" nor reactionary. However the book does little toward either justifying its title or fulfilling the editor's promise in his foreward.

To begin with, Boris Savinkov owes his fame as a terrorist to his career in the Fighting Organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Within the P.S.-R Savinkov was one of the most ardent supporters of the primacy of terrorism over all other means of revolutionary struggle and of the independence of terrorism from party control. He rewarded other political strategies with an air of contempt, and gave ample expression, both in his first novel, Kon' blednyi (1909), and later in his memoirs, to his disdainful attitude toward party leaders and theoreticians as well as toward the idea of a parliamentary system as a precondition for a legal political struggle.

Savinkov maintained this position longer than most of his comrades who, following the exposure of Azef and its devastating effect on their Party, tended to question the primacy of terrorism and that of the Party's Fighting Organization. Contrary to them Savinkov saw his mission in "rehabilitating" terrorism morally as well as effectively by means of a spectacular terrorist act. Having failed in all his attempts, he withdrew from Party affairs and resorted to literary means (Chto chego ne bylo, [1912]) in order to settle his accounts with the Party leadership, which he regarded as responsible for the Socialist-Revolutionaries' debacle.

Savinkov's earlier career is not discussed in the biography and is mentioned only briefly and not too accurately in the foreword written by the editor. As a matter of fact the author met him but once before February 1917. Furthermore, the biography is marked by a deep unquestioning idealization. It does not seriously discuss Savinkov the individual or the political controversies surrounding him. Thus it does not help us understand his sudden decision to return to Soviet Russia and to his mysterious death at the Lubianka Prison in 1924.

The extreme complexity of the situation during the period discussed is treated in very naive and simplistic terms of "patriots" versus the "Bolshevized" who include, beside the Bolsheviks themselves, anybody hesitant in sharing Savinkov's and the author's views. Bearing in mind Savinkov's earlier revolutionary convictions, their reversal after February 1917 and the nature of his associates in his anti-Bolshevik campaign, his later call for a Constituent Assembly and the distribution of all the land to the peasants bears little credence and sounds like no more than an empty battle cry.

Thus, despite the author's and the editor's claims the book fails to refute Victor Chernov's appraisal of Savinkov cited in the Foreword: "A man of brilliant talents and