

sistance to the families of RKKA soldiers<sup>18</sup> who were fighting the Denikinists further north. Typical Bolshevik gratitude.

The Shtarm at first didn't believe in the possibility of a coup but initiated an investigation to look into it. Belash illustrates the improbability of a coup by citing figures indicating that only 10% of the army's personnel were former Red Army soldiers and only 1% were Communists-Bolsheviks.<sup>19</sup> A possible explanation for the ignorance of the Shtarm is the fact that the centre of the conspiracy

— Nikopol — was simultaneously the centre of the typhus epidemic. An enormous number of Makhnovists were seriously ill, corpses were lying about in the streets, and there were heaps of unburied bodies in the cemetery. Naturally under these conditions the vigilance of the locally-based kontrrazvedka of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, headed by Golik, and the morale of the insurgents generally, was strongly undermined and this favoured the development of the mutiny. A more vigilant attitude was displayed by the commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the former Communist Lashkevich, who demanded the removal of Communist cells from his unit. However this was prohibited by the VPS, probably to avoid the accusation of infringing on the official policy of political freedom.

When the investigation confirmed the conspiracy, an agent of the Kontrrazvedka was assigned to penetrate the conspiracy. On December 2, 1919, a large conference of the Makhnovist commanders was scheduled for Yekaterinoslav, which Polonsky was going to attend. On the same day, prior to the conference, a meeting of the conspirators who belonged to the Gubkom took place at which a certain Zakharov was present, a representative of the Central Committee (TsK) of the KP{b}U. He had supposedly been sent by the TsK to direct armed detachments in the Denikinist rear, in proof of which he presented an

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<sup>18</sup> See note 97, p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, op. eft, p. 362.

# Kontrrazvedka

## The story of the Makhnovist intelligence service

Vyacheslav Azarov

2008

It's suspicious that among the Alexandrovsk contingent of conspirators was a certain A. Orlov who was subsequently shot in Kharkov as a White Guard provocateur. This fact suggests that the Denikinist kontrrazvedka may have had a hand in fomenting the conspiracy. This is indirectly confirmed by Volkovinsky's information that the Denikinists were aware that part of the Insurgent Army supported the Communists and were waiting for the moment when they could transfer to the RKKA.<sup>15</sup> In this context Makhno's declaration at the Shtarm conference that Polonsky was dealing with the Whites seems not so absurd.<sup>16</sup> According to Konevets, after the exposure of the conspiracy Makhno accused Polonsky of straight-out treason — of giving out passwords to Slashchev's detachments.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of all the secrecy, details of the Bolshevik conspiracy immediately became known to the Makhnovist army headquarters. The deputy commander of the Iron Regiment, Ogarkov, was recruited by the conspirators but went to the Shtarm and confessed his guilt. For six weeks he was the eyes and ears of the staff at the very heart of the conspiracy. According to Ogarkov's testimony, Polonsky's goal in going to Yekaterinoslav was the poisoning of Makhno himself, as well as the bribing of doctors who were supposed to poison the Makhnovist commanders who were being treated for illness. At the end of November — beginning of December 1919, a severe epidemic of typhus was raging in the Insurgent Army, mowing down something like 35,000 insurgents. So when there is mention of sick commanders being poisoned, this implies a massive kill-off of the Shtarm. It's worth noting that while this was going on, the "Makhnovist Social Service" was rendering material as-

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<sup>15</sup> V. Volkovinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>16</sup> V. Miroshchinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>17</sup> Konevets, *op. cit.*, pp. 87.

data, in 26 of the Makhnovist regiments the desire to become part of the RKKA predominated, as well as support for Bolshevik rule.<sup>10</sup> This is probably a great exaggeration. But all the same the threat was extreme. According to Miroshkevsky, “an illegal army committee was created which was psyched up against the Batko and frequently sought permission from the Gubkom to carry out a military coup.”<sup>11</sup>

In the conspiracy were included such people as a former RKKA inspector and the former chairman of the revtribunal. Polonsky himself was appointed commander of the military district of the Nikopol sector of the Front, and the Communist N. Brodsky was in charge of the Nikopol garrison.<sup>12</sup> But at the end of the month they were dismissed for spreading Bolshevik propaganda and came to Yekaterinoslav under the pretext of seeking treatment for illness. After the surrender of Alexandrovsk, most of the conspirators followed Makhno to Yekaterinoslav.<sup>13</sup> The conspirators followed all the rules of secrecy but understood that such a large scale operation would be impossible to conceal perfectly. Therefore the Kontrrazvedka was presented with the “legend” that their goal was to prevent conflict of the RPAU(m) with the RKKA for which purpose it was necessary to create Communist cells in all the units. Supposedly these cells were propagandizing the notion of reconciliation of the Makhnovists with the Red Army troops.<sup>14</sup>

KP(b)U]” **Letopis Revolyutsii** [Annals of the Revolution], No. 4(13), 1925, p. 93–94.

<sup>10</sup> A. V. Timoshchuk, **Anarkho-kommunisticheskiye formirovaniya N. Makhno** [The Anarcho-Communist Formations of N. Makhno], [www.makhno.ru/lit/Timoshchuk/07.php](http://www.makhno.ru/lit/Timoshchuk/07.php)

<sup>11</sup> V. Miroshkevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>12</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>13</sup> Levko (Chetolin), **Vtoroy period Yekaterinoslavskogo podpolya** [The Second Period of the Yekaterinoslav Underground], **Letopis Revolyutsii** [Annals of the Revolution] No. 4 (13), 1925, p. 96.

<sup>14</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

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actively supported the advancement of members of the KP(b)U to command positions in the: Makhnovist army.

Thus at the Alexandrovsk .congress, the Gubkom succeeded in inserting into the staff of the: VPS its own member P. Novitsky, who, it's true, was compelled to "be cautious about expressing his own convictions."<sup>6</sup> By October 18 around Polonsky there were already clustered a group of conspirators occupying responsible posts in the Insurgent Army. Immediately after the capture of Yekaterinoslav by the Makhnovists, the Bolsheviks organized an underground revkom headed by Pavlov who was directing propaganda activities in the city with the aim of demoralizing its Makhnovist garrison – Lashkevichs 13<sup>th</sup> Crimean Regiment. Recruitment for the mutiny was carried on mainly among former Red Army units which had joined the Insurgent Army. The Makhnovist staff had left the organization and officer core of these units intact. Thus the soldiers of the regimental machine gun unit and the English battery were recruited.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time there were ongoing attempts to create underground cells for the coup in other, purely Makhnovist, units. For this purpose the Gubkom mobilized Communists who had been liberated by the Makhnovists from the Yekaterinoslav prison. As a result Communist cells sprouted up in almost all the units, except Kozhins machine gun regiment, Shchuss's cavalry regiment, and the Kontrrazvedka itself.<sup>8</sup> According to the instructions of the Gubkom, each cell had to be well informed about all the administrative, operational, and logistical functions of their units, so they would be prepared to take over at the appropriate time.<sup>9</sup> According to the Gubkom's

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<sup>6</sup> V. Miroshkevky, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>7</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. dr.*, p. 360.

<sup>8</sup> Konevets (Grishuta), *op. cit.*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>9</sup> **Kommunisty sredi partizan (otchyot Yekateri noslavskogo Gubkoma Zafrontbyuro TsK KP(b)U** [Communists among the Partisans (an account of the Yekaterinoslav Gubkom of the Zafrontbyuro of the TsK

After the Insurgent Army had destroyed the Denikinist rear, one of the chief dangers for the Makhnovshchina became the Bolshevik semi-underground. Although Bolshevik organizations, equally with other left-wing parties, were permitted in the zone controlled by the RPAU(m), they continued to carry on underground work as well as official activities. As V. Golovanov noted, “Makhno couldn’t get rid of the underground: it gnawed away at his army day and night, preparing its collapse and the transfer of its most battleworthy units to the Reds.”<sup>4</sup> Still in Alexandrovsk, when preparations were going forward for the 4<sup>th</sup> Insurgent Congress, a meeting of the semi-legal committee of the KP(b)U took place. A participant in this meeting was M. Polonsky who was going to attend the congress. Polonsky was commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Crimean Regiment (a former regiment of the RKKA — at the time the conspiracy was uncovered its name had been changed to the “Iron Cavalry Regiment”). Polonsky became head of the conspiracy and his unit was supposed to become the strike force of the coup.

Polonsky supplied part of the financing for the conspirators. More financial support for the conspiracy came from a loan which Gubkom members Grishuta and Mlirkin obtained from the Alexandrovsk bourgeoisie.<sup>5</sup> At the meeting it was decided to clandestinely mobilize worker detachments which would link up with Polonsky’s regiment. The Iron Regiment was part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Azov Corps and was based in Nikopol. It was planned to make this city the centre of the mutiny and to seize it before the Red forces arrived. Polonsky’s adjutant Semenchenko was even sent to inform Moscow about plans for the mutiny and arrange for the coordination of actions. According to Polonsky’s report at this meeting, the underground

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<sup>4</sup> V. Golovanov, *Tachanka s yuga* [Tachankas from the South], Moscow (1997), p. 243.

<sup>5</sup> Konevets (Grishuta), 1919 *god v Yekaterinoslavye i Alexandrovskye* [1919 in Yekaterinoslav and Alexandrovsk], *Letopis Revolyutsii* [Annals of the Revolution], 4 (13), 1925, pp. 83–84.

## About the Author

Vyacheslav Azarov is a native of Odessa, Ukraine. In 1985 he graduated from the Odessa Marine Institute of the Fishing Industry as a marine electrician and has worked on fishing and merchant marine vessels ever since. In the 1990’s he was active in the Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (SDPU) but left that party when its anarchist fractions were expelled.

In 1999 Azarov was one of the founders of the political party “Union of Anarchists of Ukraine” (SAU). The Party stands for legal anarchism and the evolutionary destatification of society. At the founding congress Azarov was elected chair of the the chief executive organ of the SAU, a position he still holds. During the Orange Revolution of 2004 in Ukraine, SAU took a position of “critical neutrality,” exposing these events as a struggle for power between two oligarchical clans.

Azarov is author of many essays on the history of Russian/Ukrainian anarchism and application of anarchist concepts to contemporary politics.

Vyacheslav Azarov’s website is [www.azarov.net](http://www.azarov.net).

## Translator's Introduction

When the Russian autocracy came to an end in 1917, various political movements sprang to life to fill the power vacuum in the vast empire. Eventually one of the most authoritarian solutions, Bolshevik communism, was to prevail, but not before many other experiments in organizing political and social life were tried. One such experiment was the Makhnovshchina (1917–1921), a movement of peasant anarchism in steppe (southeast) Ukraine.

When Nestor Makhno, the eponymous hero of the Makhnovshchina, visited his provincial capital, Yekaterinoslav, in December, 1917, he found five different governments (all un-elected) claiming to rule the province. Makhno had a different vision of the future — a federation of free rural communes and worker-controlled industrial enterprises. Eventually Makhno's ideas were embraced by several million peasants in a region with a long history of independence and communal ownership of land.

Almost from the beginning, the Makhnovist movement took on a military character because of the necessity to protect the “conquests of the Revolution” from attacks which were liable to be delivered from any direction. The instrument created to protect the territory on which the Makhnovists carried out their attempts to construct a new type of social system was the Insurgent Army. This army included a cultural section (the Kultprosvet) which carried out propaganda work among the partisans of the Army and the peasantry. This section was staffed by veteran anarchists as was another section — the Kontrrazvedka (intelligence service).

## The Polonsky Conspiracy

According to Volin, in the regions occupied by the Makhnovists, “Without delay were announced freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, and of association — for all”<sup>1</sup> (this was intended to apply to left-wing parties). Coupled with this, Makhno warned the socialists, and the Alexandrovsk Revkom personally, that if they created organs of power they would be shot.<sup>2</sup> This was reported to members of the Yekaterinoslav Revkom by Lashkevich, commander of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment.<sup>3</sup> It is within the framework of these positions that the “Polonsky conspiracy” developed, the most important such event in the history of the Makhnovshchina. The investigation of the conspiracy was conducted by the military branch of the Kontrrazvedka. However, the conspirators were arrested and shot by Lepetchenko and Vasilevsky — members of Makhno's personal kontrrazvedka who were in charge of its civilian punitive operations. Finally, the most famous scandal concerning the Kontrrazvedka was linked with this conspiracy, resulting in the transfer of the Kontrrazvedka's punitive functions to a “Commission for Anti-Makhnovist Activities.” That's why I consider it logical to examine the “Polonsky conspiracy” in the context of the activities of the Civilian Kontrrazvedka.

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<sup>1</sup> Volin, *Neizvestnaya revolyutsiya 1917–1921* [The Unknown Revolution 1917–1921], Moscow (2005), p. 458.

<sup>2</sup> P. Arshinov, *Istoriya makhnovskogo dvizheniya (1918–1921)* [The History of the Makhnovist Movement (1918–1921)], Moscow (1996), p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> V. Miroshesky, *Volny Yekaterinoslav* [Free Yekaterinoslav], *Proletarian Revolution*, No. 9(1922), p. 198.

during the mutiny in Yaroslav in July 1918 was close to 200,<sup>34</sup> and in Finland, where the White movement was victorious, up to 8,400 people.<sup>35</sup> The number of victims of the Red Terror in “liberated” Crimea alone is estimated at 100,000 -150,000. In one night were shot, by machine guns: in Simferopol – 1,800 persons, in Kerch – 1,300, in Feodosia – 420. In Sevastopol alone the Cheka shot up to 29,000 people in total.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the level of freedom in the Makhnovist region can easily be grasped by the example of the press. After the second taking of Yekaterinoslav on November 11, 1919, according to the normal Makhnovist practice, freedom of speech was declared in the city. Among other publications, the Yekaterinoslav Gubkom of the KP{b}U published No. 131 of the newspaper Zvesda [The Star] which was sharply critical of the Makhnovshchina. Makhno saw this issue and blew his top. He was going to order Golik or Zinkovsky to arrest and shoot the authors of the articles as well as the whole editorial staff: The Shtarm talked him out of this with difficulty.<sup>37</sup> But this case demonstrates that the Batko was not a dictator, in fact it shows just the opposite. It must be realized that already by October 18 the nucleus of a Bolshevik conspiracy had been formed inside the Insurgent Army. According to Belash, the Batko wanted to shut down Zvesda because he knew about the conspiracy of the Red underground.<sup>38</sup> And yet, faced with such a serious threat, Makhno nevertheless refrained from suppressing their newspapers. And the Makhnovist patrols did not interfere with the distribution of the Red press.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Yaroslvsky myatezh [The Yaroslav Mjtiniv1//www.hronos.kiri.ru/

<sup>35</sup> Krasny i bely terror [Red and White Terror] 7www.mHnnerlieim.fi/nnannerheim v/06 vsota/e terror.htiri

<sup>36</sup> S. P. Melgunov, *Krasny terror v Rossi I 1918–1923* [The Red Terror in Russia 1918–1923], Moscow (1990), pp. 66–67.

<sup>37</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. at.*, p. 354.

<sup>38</sup> *bid.*, p. 360.

<sup>39</sup> A. Shubin, *op. eft.*, p. 277.

The Makhnovists in 1917–1920 regarded the Counter-Revolution – in the form of the Whites, the Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Entente – as their main enemies. Therefore they were willing to form alliances with the only ally available to them, the Bolsheviks. In fact they formed four such alliances, all of which were beneficial to both sides. And when these alliances broke down, as they inevitably did, the results were detrimental to both sides. In the last phase of their struggle (1920–1921) with the Counter-Revolution crushed, the Makhnovists had to defend themselves against the overwhelming power of the Soviet state.

The text presented here is an attempt by the contemporary Ukrainian anarchist Vyacheslav Azarov to reconstruct the history of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka. Azarov has not carried out new research but has resurrected a number of obscure sources, in some cases undeservedly forgotten, which will certainly be unfamiliar to the English reading public. In a previous essay, Azarov has demonstrated the connection between the Makhnovist movement and the Kronstadt rebellion of 1921. In the present study he shows how the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka was involved in the wave of counter-terror which attacked the heartland of the Soviet regime in the fall of 1919.

The most important primary source used by Azarov is the memoirs of Viktor Belash. Belash was born in a village in southeast Ukraine in 1893 and became a railway engineer. In 1908 he was already an anarcho-communist. In January, 1919, he joined the Insurgent Army, becoming its chief of staff. Belash was a brilliant military strategist, responsible for developing plans of movement for a force which varied in size from a few dozen partisans to more than 100,000. For his participation in the Makhnovist movement the Whites killed his father, grandfather, and two brothers. On September 23, 1921, Belash, heavily wounded, was captured by the Reds and ended up on death row in the Kharkov prison. While in prison he

was encouraged by the authorities to write his memoirs of the Makhnovist movement, aided apparently by a campaign diary. Released by an amnesty in 1923, Belash worked as a mechanic for many years before being arrested again in 1937 and shot in the following year. He was rehabilitated in 1976. His son Alexander, a World War II veteran, was able to retrieve his father's manuscript from the archives and published it, with the addition of many previously unknown documents, in 1993.

Although written from an anarchist perspective, Azarov's text is by no means an apologetical work. All the forces in the Russian Civil War had intelligence services which included secret police functions and the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka was no exception. The murders of Grigoryev and Polonsky, and the attempted murder of Petlyura, would have been approved by Machiavelli but were hardly compatible with anarchist ideals. On a moral plane they were no different than the Bolsheviks' repeated attempts to assassinate Makhno.

The leading personality of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka, although not its actual chief, was Lev Zinkovsky. In the Soviet era he acquired a sinister reputation, for example, through his depiction in Alexey Tolstoy's potboiler "The Road to Calvary." Historians have generally assumed Zinkovsky was a double agent since he later joined the GPU. Azarov suggests a different interpretation of Zinkovsky's strange career, in which he continued to pursue the anarchist dream even after Makhno's death.

Despite its unique achievement — the creation of an anarchist society for a significant length of time on a significant territory — the Makhnovshchina has attracted little serious attention from historians. After some valuable studies in the 1920s, the movement was execrated and stigmatized for decades in the Soviet Union. Ukrainian nationalist historians have tended to patronize the movement as lacking a patriotic perspective. In the last two decades much serious work has been done but

answered to the city commandant. The latter also included a "regular detachment of Makhnovist military police with its own command staff, responsible for the maintenance of order and discipline in places where troops are stationed."<sup>31</sup>

And yet in the Makhnovshchina even the Batko himself couldn't unilaterally pronounce such death sentences. Kalashnikov, commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Donetsk Corps and in charge of the city's defense, along with his deputy Karetnikov, requested confirmation of the sentences from the army chief-of-staff Belash. All the arrested were screened at a meeting arranged by the Kontrrazvedka. As Belash assessed the order to Makhno himself, "This would be motiveless terror which, if carried out, would not improve the existing situation: the army is withdrawing, and the city is doomed to surrender. Such massive terror would, naturally, stir up the population and, ultimately, we would have a reciprocal White Terror from the Denikinists directed against the workers."<sup>32</sup> As a result of the screening, all the "jackasses" were released after giving their word of honour not to take part in the White movement and not to help the Whites materially. Belash's account seems accurate: none of the workers were shot by the Denikinists.

The insignificance of the "Black Terror" of the Makhnovists can be comprehended only on a comparative basis. Here is what the figures say. After the capture of Yekaterinoslav, the investigative organs of the Denikinists could find only 70 bodies of victims of the "extrajudicial organs" of the Makhnovists.<sup>33</sup> Alas, there are no data on the number of victims of the Black Terror in the whole Liberated Zone in the autumn of 1919. But I'm absolutely convinced that these figures would not even come close to the number of victims of the White and Red Terrors. For example, the victim count of the White Terror

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<sup>31</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> A. Shubin, *op. cit.*, p. 273.



to deal with a whole procession of complainants on account of the abuses of the Kontrrazvedka, an organ which he regarded with horror.<sup>28</sup>

Makhno himself recalled that the Kontrrazvedka was given practically unlimited powers in the liberated regions. This applied, in particular, to the searching of homes in the zone of military operations or the arrest of persons, especially those identified by the local population. The Batko acknowledged that some of the actions of the Kontrrazvedka caused him “mental anguish and embarrassment when he had to apologize for their excesses.”<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Makhno categorically rejected Volin’s critique. According to the Batko, Volin himself frequently turned to the Kontrrazvedka for help. Thus in Yekaterinoslav he and the Bolshevik Orlov asked for a warrant to search the property of an anarchist who had defected to Denikin and confiscate any goods for the local committee of the KP(b)U. And when Volin made a trip to Krivy Rog to deliver a lecture (he was arrested there by the Reds) in the autumn of 1919 he was accompanied by Golik personally with a squad of 20 of the best agents of the Kontrrazvedka.<sup>30</sup>

But, in spite of all attempts at community control, the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka, especially during periods of military reverses, resorted to motiveless terror. Thus during the retreat of the 1<sup>st</sup> Donetsk Corp from Alexandrovsk on November 3–4, 1919, Makhno gave the Kontrrazvedka a list of 80 Alexandrovsk “jackasses” including Mensheviks, Narodniks, and “some Right SR bigwigs.” In the prevailing Black Terror these “jackasses” could only expect to be liquidated. Remaining in the city were the Kontrrazvedka of the Corps, headed by Zinkovsky, and the self-defense units which

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<sup>28</sup> Kubanin, *op. cit.*, p. 116,

<sup>29</sup> A. Shubin, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>30</sup> A. Skirda, **Nestor Makhno – kazak svobody** (1888–1934), [Nestor Makhno – Freedom’s Cossack (1888–1934)] Ch. 2 //www.makhno.ru/lit/book4.php

to this day many aspects of the movement have not been properly researched.

For contemporary anarchists it is important to study and understand the successes and failures of the Makhnovshchina. There are others who would claim this heritage, namely, the Ukrainian nationalists who never had a figure like Makhno and would love to include him in their pantheon of martyrs. Azarov’s text was written in the context of the struggle to reclaim this valuable part of anarchist history.

The translator would like to thank V. Azarov for his help and encouragement in preparing this edition although the latter is in no way responsible for the views expressed in the editorial apparatus. The translator would also like to acknowledge the expert editing skills of Gail Silvius.

## Preface

As far as I'm aware, the present work is the first attempt at a detailed study of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka. It's true that in 2004 the magazine *Vmire spetslyzhd* [In the World of Spies] published an article by I. Andriyenko entitled "The Secret Service of the Makhnovist Army."<sup>1</sup> However, in spite of its description as a "scientific investigation," the article in question was more like an introduction to the theme, popularizing it by facts of a superficial nature. My own work, on the other hand, doesn't claim to be an exhaustive investigation of this special organ of the defense of the Third Anarchist Revolution<sup>2</sup> since it is based entirely on sources which are public and accessible to me. I'm convinced that in the Ukrainian and Russian archives there is still a multitude of interesting discoveries in this field which await researchers.

The Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka, from its founding in the spring of 1919, was subordinate to the Operations Section of the staff of the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine (Makhnovist) — the RPAU(m). In turn, the staff was supervised by the Military-Revolutionary Soviet (VRS) and, from the summer of 1920, by the Soviet of Revolutionary Insurgents of Ukraine (Makhnovist) — the SRPU(m). One of the directors of all these structures was Viktor Belash, and his memoirs

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<sup>1</sup> The article cited was accessible to me only on the internet: [www.chv.cv.ua/04-11-26/71.htm](http://www.chv.cv.ua/04-11-26/71.htm).

<sup>2</sup> *In the anarchist historiography of the Russian Revolution, the two upheavals of 1917 (in February and October) were political revolutions to be followed by the social, libertarian revolution. The Makhnovists saw themselves as part of this Third Revolution.*

was authorized to prescribe punishment. For serious offenses, "courts of honour" -open meetings of the military unit — determined the sentence. Thus In September, 1919, four insurgents from the 7<sup>th</sup> Tavrian Regiment were shot for the the illegal search and robbery of a peasant.<sup>25</sup> There are even cases known where a Makhnovist commander was punished for similar abuses. Thus on October 14 the chief of staff of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, Bogdanov, was shot for imposing a levy for his own persona! benefit on the bourgeoisies of Nikopol and Alexan-ilrovsk, aties which had just been captured by the Makhnovists.<sup>26</sup> Law and order in the rear areas was provided by the Kontrrazvedka and, probably, with the rare exception, by the military police of the Makhnovists. But not one of the kontrrazvedniks was ever punished for pillaging.

When the lawlessness of the Civil Section was submitted to review by the Alexandrovsk Congress on November 2, 1919, Resolution #3 set up a Special Commission to look into the activities of the Kontrrasvedka. The members of this Commission were drawn from 1 he VRS, supplemented by representatives from worker and peasant organizations. It's true the Commission was saddled with a vague and rather feeble mandate: "the investigating and resolving of any grievances and misunderstandings between the population and the insurgents on the one hand, and the organs of the Kontrrazvedka on the ether."<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the Commission had the effect of bringing the operations of the Kontrrazvedka more into the public eye which naturally resulted in limiting its arbitrary actions. A severe critic of the Kontrrazvedka, not only in the autumn of 1919 but also later in emigration, was the head of this Commission and chair of the VRS, V. Volin. In the deposition he gave to the revolutionary tribunal of the 14<sup>th</sup> Army he stated that he had

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<sup>25</sup> T. A. Bespechny and T. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>26</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 322.

were even referred to as “shubniks” (creatures with fur coats). But Kurgan also notes that such robbery did not appear as cruel as the brigandage of the Denikinists.<sup>20</sup> Hutman echoes him: “There was no wholesale pillaging under Makhno as there was under the Volunteers” and the regime of the anarchists was more orderly than the rule of the Denikinists.<sup>21</sup> Without excusing the Makhnovists, I note that the provisioning situation of their army was catastrophic and they were forced to risk their lives for essential supplies. For example, clothing was salvaged from dead soldiers while under enemy fire.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the money confiscated by the Kontrrazvedka wasn't just used to support the army. For example, in Yekaterinoslav the “Makhnovist Social Security” carried out a widespread redistribution of wealth in the form of material assistance to the poorest strata of the population. Up until the abandonment of the city by the Insurgent Army, each morning thousands of people were lined up at headquarters. The Makhnovists made a special effort to help the orphaned children of the city with goods and funds to the amount of nearly 1 million rubles.<sup>23</sup> Finally, all the testimonies about the lawlessness of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka deal exclusively with cities: Berdyansk, Yekaterinoslav, Alexandrovsk, and Nikopol. Cases of repressive actions by the Kontrrazvedka are unknown in the villages<sup>24</sup> where the majority of the population of the Makhnovist Liberated Zone lived. Thus, relative to the general population, the amount of pillaging was negligible.

The VRS tried in every way possible to maintain discipline in the army. In the case of minor offenses, the commander

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<sup>20</sup> R. Kurgan, *Makhnovtsi v Yekaterinoslave* [The Makhnovists in Yekaterinoslav], MMD, p. 79.

<sup>21</sup> M. Hutman, *op. cit.*, pp. 81,84.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 80.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 82.

<sup>24</sup> A. Shubin, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

are the most complete account of a direct participant of the military-political activity of the Makhnovists. Naturally the facts presented by Belash form the mainstay of my work. But these facts must be interpreted correctly.

If one wishes to understand the logic of the actions of anarchists (rather than seek to discredit them in the Soviet manner), one must temporarily set aside one's statist education and view their history through the prism of the anarchist worldview. Above all one must understand that for an anarchist the State is a criminal organization which creates immeasurably more harm than good. The State's basic preoccupation is terror against the civilian population: open, in the form of struggle with its political opponents; and hidden, in the form of forced redistribution of wealth. Anarchists of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century envisaged the neutralization of “open terror” by opposing it with surgically “precise” terror directed against the top rulers of this criminal organization, as well as the organs which provided security for its rule. As far as possible this counter terror avoided causing harm to ordinary citizens who were drawn into the activity of the State through ignorance or compulsion.

But, in their understanding of “hidden terror,” the anarchists considered the wealth in all the State's financial institutions, and also the personal hoards of capitalists, as having been forcibly extracted from the people. Correspondingly, the extraction of money from criminal entities (the State and Capital) to be used to liberate the people was viewed as a permissible and necessary means of financing the anarchist movement. This was the basis of expropriations (ex's). After the October 1917 upheaval the Bolsheviks declared their rule identical with the rule of the people, and all wealth -the people's wealth. But the anarchists believed that even though the commissar regime called itself a “people's regime,” in practice it was still stifling the people's rights and seizing their wealth. Only the methods of State terror had changed but

not its essence. Consequently the anarchists felt they had full rights to relieve the “people’s” credit unions and banks of the means to assure the real liberation of the masses. The Soviet authorities, on the other hand, viewed ex’s as criminal acts.

It was undoubtedly true that, as in other revolutionary organizations, criminals had found a place in the anarchist underground and used ex’s as a means of personal enrichment. Such practices, for example, flourished from the summer of 1905 on. “Ideological” anarchist organizations spent money from ex’s on dynamite, leaflets and newspapers. But there were also “spontaneous” groups which cloaked themselves in anarchist slogans but carried out ex’s for personal gain. They bore appropriate names: “Black Mask,” “The Extortionists,” “The Racketeers,” etc.<sup>3</sup> In respect to the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka there are no proven cases of such activity. On the contrary, according to the testimony of M. Tyamin there was the case of R. Sobolev, a member of the Kontrrazvedka and a leader of the combat group “The Anarchists of the Underground.” Although he was holding several hundred thousand rubles obtained by ex’s, Sobolev refused to spend 1,000 rubles on a pair of pants. As Tyamin wrote, “so he died in dirty old army trousers.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> V. Savchenko, *Anarkhisti-terroristi v Odessa (1903–1913) [Anarchist-Terrorists in Odessa (1903–1913)]*, Odessa (2006), pp. 61–62.

<sup>4</sup> *Sobolev was killed in shoot-out with Cheka agents in Moscow in 1919.*

the Denikinists ditched their weapons and dispersed to their homes.<sup>16</sup>

But I don’t think the working masses and other inhabitants were upset by reprisals against the Denikinists. Just as in the spring of 1919, the Makhnovist treasury was replenished by means of expropriations and “contributions.” This meant, first of all, the expropriation of all the banks and credit unions. In Maryupol, Yuzovo, Berdyansk, Melitopol, Genichesk, Alexandrovsk, Aleshki, Novo-Vorontsovka, Krivy Rog, Novy Bug, and Yekaterinoslav, expropriation was carried out in an official manner, namely in the form of a legal confiscation. But, according to Belash, there was also practiced an “aggressive system of contributions” which were imposed on individual pomeshchiks, financiers, industrialists, and landlords.<sup>17</sup> This system created abundant opportunities for abuse. Nevertheless, a bourgeoisie drained by war could not satisfy the demands. Thus, according to the Yekaterinoslav Gubkom, in Alexandrovsk a levy of 50 million rubles was imposed but only 10 million was received. Corresponding figures for other cities were: Yekaterinoslav 50 vs. 7; Berdyansk 25 vs. 15; and Nikopol 15 vs. 8.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, the Makhnovists commandeered all the pawnshops which the Denikinist hadn’t touched and in which the citizenry hid their clothing and jewelry.<sup>19</sup> Finally, with the onset of cold weather, outerwear was collected for the poorly clad insurgents. As R. Kurgan writes, “Literally all the clothing was requisitioned from the inhabitants.” The Makhnovists

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<sup>16</sup> V. Miroshesky, *Volniy Yekaterinoslav [Free Yekaterinoslav]*, *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya [Proletarian Revolution]* (1922), No. 9, p. 198.

<sup>17</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

<sup>18</sup> *Kommunlsty sredi partizan (otchet Yekaterinoslavskogo Gubkoma Zafrontbyuro TsK KP(b)U)* [Communists among the Partisans (report of the Yekaterinoslav Gubkom to the Zafrontbyuro of the TsK KP(b)U)], *Letopis Revolyutsli [Annals of the Revolution]*, No. 4(13), 1925, p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> M. Hutman, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

The Civilian Section also had a multitude of agents among the civilian population. These were unpaid volunteers, keeping the Kontrrazvedka informed about anti-Makhnovist actions. Such a plenitude of agents helped to ensure that “political conspiracies were nipped in the bud in the majority of cases before they could ripen.”<sup>11</sup> For its work in the rear areas, the Civilian Section received support from the Military Kontrrazvedka, the activity of which was reduced mainly to uncovering White Guardists who had gone into hiding. The Kontrrazvedka shot all those who had been connected with the punitive or police organs of the Denikinists: officers, cops, prison guards, spies, provocateurs. Quite a few collaborators were found among the ranks of civic officials and the bourgeoisie.<sup>12</sup> The punitive actions of the Kontrrazvedka were directly supervised by Makhno himself.

However it’s impossible to call even these repressive actions arbitrary. All sentences were regarded as class-directed Black Terror and were reviewed by the secretariat of Nabat, the Gulai-Polye Union of Anarchists, or the VRS.<sup>13</sup> According to Hutman, pillaging took place under the pretext of searches for hidden weaponry. A common type of pillaging in which the Kontrrazvedka got involved was the looting of the quarters of Denikinist officers who had been liquidated by the Makhnovists. This was supposedly done with the knowledge of Makhno himself.<sup>14</sup> But of course Makhno didn’t authorize pillaging — this was an arbitrary action of the kontrrazvedniks.<sup>15</sup> In Yekaterinoslav there were many such cases since, according to the secretary of the local Gubkom of the KP(b)U, V. Miroshevsky, when the Whites abandoned the city many of

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>14</sup> M. Hutman, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> A. Shubin, *Anarkhiya — mat poryadka* [Anarchy — the Mother of Order], Moscow (2005), p. 271.

## Origins, Founders, Structure

The creation of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka is often connected with the name LevZadov. Thus, in the words of I. Teper (Gordeyev) — anarchist, member of Nabat,<sup>1</sup> and former editor of the Makhnovist newspaper *Put k svobode* [The Road to Freedom] — the Kontrrazvedka was headed by the Zadov brothers, “both Jews, both long-time criminals” They served the anarchist movement before the Revolution by carrying out expropriations.<sup>2</sup> However, one must treat Teper’s information cautiously: as a repentant anarchist he was prone to exaggerate the excesses of the past. In reality, from 1910 the metalworker Zadov was an anarchist-terrorist, a “bezmotivnik”<sup>3</sup> and member of the Yuzovsk (Donetsk)

Group of Anarcho-Communists. He really did participate in expropriations: he robbed an artel official at a mine, a post office in the village of Karan, and a cash office in De-

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<sup>1</sup> *Nabat* [Tocsin] was the name of the Ukrainian Federation of Anarchists (1918–1919). With headquarters in Kharkov it had branches in a number of Ukrainian cities and produced a large quantity of literature before being suppressed by the Bolsheviks.

<sup>2</sup> I. Teper, *Makhno: Ot’edinogo anarkhizma” k stopam rumynskogo korolia* [Makhno: from a “United Anarchism” to the Feet of the Romanian King], Moscow (1924), p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Bezmotivny (motiveless) terror was directed against persons occupying positions in the power structure which entitled them to be considered enemies of the people. Becoming widespread in the Russian Empire around 1905, it differed from the earlier form of terrorism which took the form of retributive acts against specific individuals perceived as tyrants.

baltsevo.<sup>4</sup> If Teper concluded from this that Zadov was a criminal, then so was Stalin.<sup>5</sup> In 1913 the Yuzovsk Group was destroyed and Zadov ended up in prison. He was released only after the February Revolution of 1917 with the pseudonym Zinkovsky. It is under this name that he was known in the MakHnovshchina.

It is precisely in the ex's as well as in the terrorist activity of the anarchist groups at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that one can see the origins of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka. The acquisition of finances for anarchist work by means of raids on banks or the robbing of wealthy capitalists naturally involved elements of intelligence work. Estimating the wealth of a bank or a factory's cash office, determining the schedule of money deposits, the internal layouts of buildings, the number of guards, etc. required the carrying out of serious reconnaissance measures. Analogous tasks were executed by anarchists planning a raid on private capital: appraising wealth, locating the place where valuables were stored, and determining the number of servants. The elements of intelligence work in the preparation of terrorist acts included researching the targeted individual's daily routine, the visitors received, the numbers of body guards, plans of the site, and convenient escape routes. In each instance the recruitment of informers could be an important part of the plan.

The Revolution of 1905–1907 was distinguished by an unprecedented surge of political and economic terrorism. According to Savchenko's data, during these years 4,500 officials were killed or wounded. From January 1908 to May 1910, 19,957 terrorist acts and ex's were carried out.<sup>6</sup> Many of them were ac-

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<sup>4</sup> T. A. Bespechnii & T. T. Bukreyeva, *Leva Zadov: chelovek rz kontrrazvedki [Leva Zadov: the Man from the Kontrrazvedka]*, Donetsk (1996), p. 225.

<sup>5</sup> Stalin masterminded the robbery of the Tiflis State Bank in 1907 in the course of which dozens of people were killed or wounded.

<sup>6</sup> V. Savchenko, *op. cit.*, p. 9–10.

stuck out of the water, washed ashore by the waves.”<sup>7</sup> Of course such accusations make the Civilian Section of the Kontrrazvedka the crowning disgrace of the Makhnovist movement. It also means that this activity requires very careful investigation. It is quite easy to refute the lie about Zadov. In the GPU's case against Zinkovsky in 1924<sup>8</sup> and the NKVD's case against him in 1937 there is not a word about brutality and torture.<sup>9</sup> In the first instance, at a time when thousands of witnesses of the Makhnovshchina were alive and Zinkovsky's group voluntarily surrendered to the Soviet authorities, the Chekists conducted a scrupulous investigation. And during the “Great Terror” of 1937–1938, the slightest pretext generally resulted in people being branded as “enemies of the people.” But no such thing occurred. In fact such evidence has not been discovered up to this time.

Belash writes about the Civilian Section of the Kontrrazvedka.<sup>10</sup> However, the absence of specifics about its structure suggests that it merely encompassed the duties of the Kontrrazvedka outside the war zone. This would include the Kontrrazvedkas of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps in Alexandrovsk and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Nikopol and, above all, Makhno's personal Kontrrazvedka — the “Black Sotnia.” The Civilian Section was assigned punitive functions in the struggle with enemy agents, as well as exposing “anti-Makhnovist” elements in the Insurgent Army. The latter function was ensured by a dense network of agents, admittedly inexperienced, which extended down to the squad level in Makhnovist units. Besides the commander and his deputy, one insurgent in ten was a secret agent of the Kontrrazvedka.

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<sup>7</sup> M. Hutman, *Pod vlastyu anarkhistov (Yekaterinoslav v 1919)* [Under the Rule of the Anarchists (Yekaterinoslav in 1919)], MMD, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> F. Zinko, *Koye-cto iz istorii Odesskoy ChK [Who's Who from the History of the Odessa Cheka]*, Odessa (1998), p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> T. A. Bespechny and T. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

<sup>10</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

ing the puni-live activities of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka. This propaganda made use of Bolsheviks who had tangled with the Makhnovists as well as Denikinists and former anarchists. Not surprisingly, in the accounts of the Reds one most often finds descriptions of Zinkovsky, who personified the whole Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka so far the Holsheviks were concerned.

for example, F. Levenzon, commander of the 133<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Brigade, clashed with the Makhnovists in Alexandrovsk: "At my quarters arrived ... the head of the Kontrrazvedka, the butcher and former com -mon criminal – Levka."<sup>2</sup> According to Teper, murder and torture became a special kind of sport for the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka. The kontrrazvedniks made these activities "a profitable part of their business plan."<sup>3</sup> He claimed that in the field of the Kontrrazvedka's punitive politics, the Left SR Popov led the way, researching various methods of torture and murder. Popov had supposedly sworn to slay 300 Communists, but when Teper met him he had only up to 190.<sup>4</sup> Teper also wrote about the Tatar Alim who was Makhnos personal executioner.<sup>5</sup> The former White Guard Gerasimenko also wrote about the Batko's personal executioner, identifying him as a certain Kiyko, a metalworker, who tortured officers.<sup>6</sup>

And the manager of a shelter for refugees in Yekaterinoslav, Hut-man, wrote that in the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka not a day passed without shootings and bodies of the executed thrown in the Dnieper, And supposedly "dozens of corpses

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<sup>2</sup> F. Levenzon, **Protiv Makhno na denikinskom fronte** [Against Makhno at the Denikinist Front], MMD, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Teper, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> H. V. Gerasimenko, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

complicated by intelligence-gathering activities. The majority of these acts could be attributed to anarchist practice which during that period was based on the view that terror against the representatives of the State and the ruling classes was the most effective means of bringing about the downfall of the government and Capital. One can be certain that anarchists who passed through the crucible of terror of 1905–1910 and the subsequent reaction were fully qualified as professional intelligence agents. Their skills were especially valuable to the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka because, according to Belash, the tasks of this organ included ex's and terrorist activity behind enemy lines.<sup>7</sup>

With regard to the future Makhnovist Liberated Zone, there is no doubt that intelligence work was already being carried out in this region by the "Union of Poor Peasants," in which the young Makhno participated. In 1908 this group prepared ex's in Yekaterinoslav, Alexandrovsk, and Nogaysk. The first instance of anarchist intelligence activity in Gulai-Polye mentioned by Belash was the work of 17-year-old M. Prodan, who in 1909 was assigned the task by the still-at-large members of the "Union," V. Antoni and A. Semenyuta,<sup>8</sup> of gathering information about the movements of the policeman Karachentsev. This policeman, as the person responsible for the destruction of the group, was sentenced by them to death. The spy reported when Karachentsev would be attending the "Coliseum" theatre and when he emerged from the show he was shot by Semenyuta.<sup>9</sup> Thus at the time of Civil War the combat wing

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<sup>7</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, **Dorogi Nestora Makhno [The Paths of Nestor Makhno]**, Kiev (1993), p. 350.

<sup>8</sup> *The Gulai-Polye Union of Poor Peasants was an anarcho-communist group founded in 1906 and had as many as 200 members. When Karachentsev broke up the group with mass arrests, its founders, Antoni and Semenyuta, fled abroad but later returned, seeking revenge. At the time of the attack on Karachentsev, Makhno was in prison, charged with killing another policeman.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

of the anarchist movement had serious experience in intelligence work. Veterans of this experience who were part of the original staffing of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka included K. Kovalevich, P. Sobolev, and Ya. Glazgon.

As indicated above, Zinkovsky also had this kind of background. According to Teper, there was a long tradition of expropriation in the Makhnovshchina.<sup>10</sup> In September 1917 – April 1918, Zinkovsky was a deputy of the Yuzovska Soviet, and afterwards a member of the staff of the Red Guard of the Yuzovo-Makeyevska region. Zinkovsky's detachment fought with German-Austrian troops, retreated through Lugansk to Tsaritsin, and then fought with General Krasnov's Cossacks. Zinkovsky rose to the rank of chief-of-staff of a combat unit in Kruglyak's brigade, and in the summer of 1918 he was chief-of-staff of Chernyak's detachment in the Tsaritsin region.<sup>11</sup> In the autumn of 1918 he was sent by the staff of the Southern Front to Ukraine to carry out underground work behind German lines. But en route Zinkovsky stopped in Yuzovka, where he and his brother Daniilo, along with eight other anarchists, created their own combat group. The group headed for Gulai-Polye and Makhno.<sup>12</sup> Zinkovsky's work for Makhno began in November 1918 with the formation of detachments in villages of Yuzovka, Grishinsk, and Maryupol raions. Later he was elected a deputy regimental commander.

Already in March 1919 Zinkovsky's former commander Chernyak organized a Special Group to collect contributions and carry out requisitions in these cities liberated by the Makhnovist 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the Zadneprovsky Division of the

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<sup>10</sup> I. Teper, *op. erf.*, p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> T. A. Bespechny & T. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>12</sup> V. Zinkovsky, **Anarkhlst i chekist** (Anarchist and Chekist), <http://www.zavtra.ru/fai/veil/ data/zavtra/01/371/52.html>

## The Civilian Section

In October 1919 while Deniken's Volunteer Army was attacking Moscow, its rear areas were wiped out by the Makhnovist corps. The insurgents liberated a huge region from Yekaterinoslav and Nikopol to Melitopol and Berdyansk. The building of a new life was begun. On October 20, 1919, the 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Congress opened in Alexandrovsk. At the Congress there was issued a draft "Declaration of the RPAU(m) about Free Soviets." In the article about setting up a judicial process it was said: "A system of real justice must be organized, but it must be a living, free, creative act of the community. The self-defense of the population must be a matter of free, living self-organization. And so any moribund forms of justice: judicial institutions, revolutionary tribunals, codes of penalties, police institutes, Chekists, prisons — all this must collapse under its own weight."<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand, this is an understandable protest of the anarchist-Makhnovists against the punitive organs of the State. But on the other hand, such a formulation of the question of justice leads to the dictatorship of emotional impulses, the tyranny of momentary rage, and opens wide the possibility of manipulation of "people's justice" by special-interest groups. In other words, it leads to lynch law. Furthermore, it allows any kind of abuse to flourish on the grounds of the "just struggle with the exploiting classes." Such precedents were exploited in any way possible by Bolshevik propaganda, which spoke of the arbitrariness and lawlessness of the anarchists, cit-

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<sup>1</sup> **Proyektdeklaratsii Revolyutsionnoy Povstancheskoymarii Ukrainy {makhnovtsev}** [Draft of Declaration of the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine (Makhnovists)], **MMD**, p. 161.



together with their units, it's natural to assume that the agents carrying out surveillance on the atamans also made efforts to win over the rank-and-file Petlyurists. The Petlyurist commanders who proved their loyalty to the RPAU(m) were given commands of regiments of the Free Cossack Insurgent Group of Yekater-inoslavshchina. But, on the other hand, Matyazh and Levchenko were condemned to death. Teper connects their sentences with an increase in anti-Semitism and agitation for pogroms after their detachments had joined the Insurgent Army.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Teper, op. df., p. 50.

RKKA.<sup>1314</sup> Later such work became the responsibility of the Civilian Section of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka. Therefore Chernyak's Special Group can be considered its precursor. Moreover Chernyak was experienced in this field. According to Kubanin, already at the beginning of 1918 he organized a kontrrazvedka for one of the staffs of the Southeast Front. This was the first anarchist kontrrazvedka.<sup>15</sup> Later Chernyak proposed to Makhno the creation of a kontrrazvedka for the Makhnovist brigade based on Chernyak's "collection group." Its initial membership included Chernyak's associates Ya. Glazgon and Kh. Tsintsiper, as well as Zinkovsky and his brother D. Zadov.<sup>16</sup> Its remarkable that Chernyak, the founder of Makhno's Kontrrazvedka, remains a mysterious figure to this very day.

Belash often mixes up Chernyak and Cherednyak. For example, he names the former as the head of the Kontrrazvedka and of recruiting in Berdyansk<sup>17</sup>, but further on the head of recruiting in the same city is listed as Cherednyak.<sup>18</sup> The founder of the Kontrrazvedka also bears the surname Cherednyak in one of Belash's footnotes,<sup>19</sup> although in the text the name Chernyak is everywhere associated with the Kontrrazvedka in the spring of 1919. In Belash's account there appears to be at a minimum two Chernyaks and two Cherednyaks. The Chernyaks are (1) an anarchist writer from Ivanov-Vosnesensk and (2) a certain "anarchist from the ranks

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<sup>13</sup> T. A. Bespechny and T. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>14</sup> *The Zadneprovsky Division was the cornerstone of the Red Army (RKKA) in the spring of 1919. It was commanded by the Bolshevik ex-sailor Pavel Dybenko. As the result of agreements concluded in February, 1919, it included the brigades of the Ukrainian atamans Makhno and Grigoryev.*

<sup>15</sup> M. Kubanin, **Makhnovshchina** [The Makhnovshchina], Leningrad (1927), p. 220.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>17</sup> A. V. Belash and B. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, note 14, p. 584.

of the Red Army.”<sup>20</sup> The Cherednyaks are (1) the head of the Kontrrazvedka and (2) an insurgent commander from Kharkov Province. In June 1919 Chernyak appears as the head of one of the groups from Nikiforovas detach-

mentput together from the Kontrrazvedka and the detachments of Shuba and Cherednyak. Chernyak’s group headed off for Siberia.<sup>21</sup> Cherednyak does not figure in this enterprise at all. It’s clear that this Siberian “Chernyak” couldn’t be either a writer or a Red Army man, but was the same Chernyak who appears in the spring of 1919 as chief of the Berdyansk branch of the Kontrrazvedka.

Subsequently in Belash’s text, this Chernyak from Nikiforova’s detachment does not reappear in the Makhnovshchina. But, according to a report of the Donets Provincial Cheka of February 13, 1921, the head of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka is identified as Chernyak.<sup>22</sup> Dubovik, in the name index he prepared for Volin, tries to remove the confusion of Chernyak and Cherednyak. M. Cherednyak appears as the head of the Berdyansk branch of the Kontrrazvedka in the spring of 1919 and also as the chief of brigade recruitment. And further on is a reference to A. Chernyak, who was appointed already in March 1919 as chief of the recruitment section and head of the Kontrrazvedka for Makhnos whole brigade.<sup>23</sup> So, according to this index both Chernyak and Cherednyak worked in the Kontrrazvedka. Against this version there is one serious objection: none of the authors of memoirs about the Makhnovshchina ever mentions these two important figures of the Kontrrazvedka meeting each other. In short, the founder

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>22</sup> T. A. Bespechny & T. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>23</sup> A. Dubovik, **Imennoy ukazatel** [Name Index]/V. Volin, **Neizvestnaya revolyutsiya** [The Unknown Revolution (1917–1921)], Moscow (2005), pp. 598,600.

Immediately after the signing the Makhnovist Kultprosvet began to issue anti-Petlyurist leaflets and started work on demoralizing the rank-and-file of the UNR army with the goal of joining its units to the Makhnovists.

And the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka began to prepare an attempt on the ataman’s life, in order to “settle all accounts with him finally, as with Grigoryev.” For this purpose a group of terrorists from the Kontrrazvedka advanced on Uman where a meeting of Petlyura with Makhno had been arranged. The group was supported by a cavalry brigade, probably to neutralize the Petlyurist garrison.

However, Petlyura, evidently learning from the example of Grigoryev, took off in his staff train without waiting for the Batko.<sup>41</sup> According to Telitsin, an unknown group of terrorists arrived in Uman. Not even the Petlyurist Kontrrazvedka knew to whom they belonged. But their appearance in the city did not go unnoticed. Several hours before the intended action against Petlyura, the house where the commandos were holed up was surrounded by UNR troops with machine guns. In the resulting two-hour battle, all the commandos were killed with the exception of a few who burst out of the building. News about this battle forced both Makhno and Petlyura to withdraw to their respective bases.<sup>42</sup>

Later, in the autumn of 1919 when the Insurgent Army reached the apogee of its power, detachments of Petlyurist atamans began to join it. These atamans included Matyazha, Melashko, Gladchenko, Ogiya, and others who declared themselves anarchists and enemies of the Petlyurists. According to Belash, their sincerity, loyalty, and real plans had to be clarified by agents of the Kontrrazvedka.<sup>43</sup> And when one considers the fact that these atamans transferred to Makhno

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<sup>41</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 305,

<sup>42</sup> V. Telitsin, Nestor Makhno, Moscow (1998), p. 236.

<sup>43</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

master of Ukraine. The Makhnovist staff suspected the UNR army of having relations with Denikin. Makhno even received a report from agents of the Kontrrazvedka that negotiations were on-going at Khristinovka between the Pet-lyurists and Denikinists. According to Chop, the Batko himself in disguise visited the staff of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Ukrainian Galician Army and encountered there a Denikinist colonel with whom he got into a scuffle.

Chop also alludes to an intrigue involving Shchus, Shpota, and Kuzmenko which aimed at replacing the Batko and merging the entire Insurgent Army with the Petlyurist Army of the UNR.<sup>39</sup> This version has points in common with Teper's account, according to which the cultural-educational group of Nabat anarchists, temporarily leaving the Makhnovist movement during the retreat in the summer of 1919, was replaced by a nationalist group of Ukrainian intellectuals. It won over the wife of the Batko, Galina Kuzmenko, who subsequently prosyletized nationalism until 1922. And this nationalist cultural group was planted in the Makhnovshchina directly by the Petlyurist staff. Teper connects the presence of this group among the insurgents with the temporary flare-up of antisemitism in the Makhnovshchina.<sup>40</sup>

After these disturbing developments, an order was given to the Kontrrazvedka to prepare an attempt on the life of Petlyura, in the event of betrayal of the recently signed agreement between the

RPAU(m) and the UNR army. This agreement was concluded by Volin and Chubenko from the Makhnovist side, and by Petlyura and Tyutyunnik from the nationalist side, on September 19, 1920, at Zhmerinka Station.

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<sup>39</sup> V. Chop, "Coyuz i zмова" ["Alliance and Accord"], [www.makhno.ru/lit/113.php](http://www.makhno.ru/lit/113.php)

<sup>40</sup> Teper, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka, as a real kontrrazvednik, has up to now not yielded his secret to researchers.

In April 1919 separate "civilian sections" of the Kontrrazvedka were formed by Chernyak and Zinkovsky in the cities of Maryupol and Berdyansk. These sections were concerned mainly with provisioning the army. Such forms of military procurement as expropriation, contributions (levies) or so-called "living off the land" were widely used from 1917 on by Red Guard and Black Guard (anarchist) detachments. With the start of the transformation of the Red Guard into the RKKa this practice ceased in Central Russia. But in Ukraine it continued longer. For example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the Zadneprovsky Division under Grigoryev occupied itself with self-supply after the capture of Odessa in April 1919.<sup>24</sup> Probably the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Zadneprovsky Division, under Commander Dybenko, supplied itself by the same means. An analogous means of supply was also practiced in the division commanded by Shchors.<sup>25</sup>

For the Makhnovists this practice remained still more urgent. Thus, according to the March 21 report of the chief of the Kontrrazvedka of the Brigade, L. Golik, the Red Command was beginning to suppress the insurgents by cutting down their supplies.<sup>26</sup> Naturally the specialists in expropriation joining the Makhnovist troops from Russia got involved in the supply problem. It's impossible to exclude the possibility that they were even specially invited, "summoned" by Makhno for this specific purpose. Their specialization is indirectly confirmed by the testimony of A. Tyamin who mentions that in April 1919 the well known anarchist V. Bzhostek in Kharkov, as well as the militant Sobolev in Gulai-Polye, were seeking tough, "reli-

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<sup>24</sup> V. Savchenko, "Pogromny" ataman Grigoryev [The "Pogrom" Ataman Grioorvevl//[www.makhno.ru/other/36.php](http://www.makhno.ru/other/36.php)

<sup>25</sup> T. A. Bespechny and T.T. Bukreyeva, **Nestor Makhno: pravda I legend!** [Nestor Makhno: truth and legends], Donetsk (1996) p. 60.

<sup>26</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op cit.*, p. 110.

able types” to carry out the seizure of 40 million rubles from a certain institution in Moscow.<sup>27</sup> But from May 6 Sobolev was already working in the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka.

The backbone of the Kontrrazvedka was formed from two basic groups: these arriving “specialists” in ex’s and terror; and the closest associates of Makhno himself. Among the latter one can name I. Lyuty, G. Vasilevsky, and A. Lepetchenko. Vasilevsky and Lepetchenko were anarchist-terrorists from the Gulai-Polye group of anarchists, so they were well versed in problems of intelligence gathering. Lyuty generally acted as Makhno’s bodyguard. According to the memoirs of the Batko,<sup>28</sup> Lyuty joined him from the very beginning of the Makhnovist organization.<sup>29</sup> Around April 19, 1919, in Volnovakh, Makhno ordered him to arrest all the regimental commissars imposed on the Makhnovist Brigade by the Bolsheviks.<sup>30</sup> Later Makhno assigned all three to reinforce the Maryupol branch of the Kontrrazvedka, the head of which at that time was Zinkovsky. As representatives of the first group it is possible to name the specialists who arrived around May 6 to strengthen the so-called “anarcho-amateurs”: P. Sobolev, M. Grechannik, Ya. Glas-gon, and K. Kovalevich.<sup>31</sup> According to Kubanin, Glazgon reached the Makhnovshchina earlier, together with Chernyak, and took part in the foundation of the Kontrrazvedka.<sup>32</sup>

During the first period of activity of the Kontrrazvedka in the spring of 1919, its structure was as follows. The basic nucleus was found at the staff of the Brigade, and when

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<sup>27</sup> *Krasnaya kniga VChK t.I* [The Red Book of the Cheka], Vol. 1, Moscow, 1990, p. 362.

<sup>28</sup> “Batko” (literally “Father”) was a title bestowed on military leaders in the Ukrainian Cossack tradition.

<sup>29</sup> N. I. Makhno, *Ukrainskaya revolyutsiya/ZVospominaniya. kn. 3* [The Ukrainian Revolution]/Memoirs, Vol. 3], Paris, 1937, p. 79.

<sup>30</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>32</sup> M. Kubanin, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

itary Kontrrazvedka was carrying out terrorist activity in the rear of the enemy.

Although the usual targets of the Kontrrazvedka were the Volunteer Army and the RKKA, in July – September 1919, its agents were also active in the Petlyurist army of the UNR. This was especially the case during the period of contact of the Makhnovists with the UNR army and the insurgent detachments connected with it. In particular, one of the kontrrazvedniks – Vasilevsky – participated on June 25, 1919, in the joint meeting of the Makhnovist and Grigoryevist commanders,<sup>34</sup> which marked the beginning of the unification of the detachments of the two atamans. According to Timoshchuk, before the meeting of Makhno with Grigoryev, the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka investigated Kherson and Nikolevsky uyezds,<sup>35</sup> where the Grigoryevists were active. It ascertained the number of Grigoryevist troops and the mood of the peasantry. And on July 27 the kontrrazvedniks Lepetchenko and Lyuty took part in the liquidation of Ataman Grigoryev,<sup>36</sup> charged with pogroms and negotiations with the Denikinists. According to Teper, Zinkovsky told him that he had killed Grigoryev himself.<sup>37</sup>

As the retreating Makhnovists approached the Petlyurist positions, an exchange of delegations began for the purpose of concluding a military agreement of the Insurgent and UNR armies. But parallel to this Petlyura was carrying on negotiations with the Denikinist generals, hoping that Makhno and Denikin would bleed each other white<sup>38</sup> and thereby make him

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>35</sup> A.V.Timoshchuk, *Anarkho-kommunisticheskyeformirovaniya N. Makhno* [The Anarcho-Communist Formations of N. Makhno], <http://www.makhno.ru/1it/Timoshuk/06.php> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, pp. 296.

<sup>36</sup> A.V. Belash and V.F. Belash, *op. cit.*, pp. 296]

<sup>37</sup> Teper, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>38</sup> V. Volkovinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

in the region of Novy Bug and Pomoshnaya, the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka played an undoubted role in the coup which led to units of the 58<sup>th</sup> Division of the RKKA joining the insurgents. According to Volkovinsky, Makhno detachment maintained secret contacts with the regiments of the former Makhnovist commanders Kalashnikov, Dermenzhi, and Budanov which formed the heart of this division.<sup>30</sup> Judging by the subsequent practice of the Makhnovist Shtarm in dealing with vacillating Red Army units, such contacts were made by agents of the Kontrrazvedka. After this, retreating under the pressure of the Denikinists, the Makhnovist Army at the beginning of September, 1919, began its own re-organization in the Dobrovelichkovsky region, adapting to the conditions of mobile partisan warfare. On September 1 an all-army meeting was convened for re-election of the political organization of the Makhnovshchina, resulting in a new slate for the VRS.

At this meeting the Army also received its most familiar name – RPAU(m). At the same time, besides the various departments and services of the Shtarm, Makhno also organized his own separate “security service” and kontrrazvedka of 500 mounted personnel with 10 machine guns. According to Teper, this “Black Sotnia” was formed from the most experienced insurgents and was headed by Gavryusha Troyan.<sup>31</sup> According to Belash, this sotnia and Makhno himself were obsessed with punitive politics, the first instance of which was the purging of the Shtarm of Bolsheviks.<sup>32</sup> The population, the soldiers, and even the commanders were afraid of this sotnia. One of the Batko’s chief kontrrazvedniks, Vasilevsky, was a member of a terrorist unit from 1918 to 1920.<sup>33</sup> Namely, his role in the Mil-

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<sup>30</sup> V. Volkovinsky, **Nestor Makhno: legendi i realnist** [Nestor Makhno: legends and reality], Kiev (1994), p. 133.

<sup>31</sup> Teper, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>32</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, pp. 301,303.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, note 36, p. 581.

large cities, such as Berdyansk and Maryupol, were occupied, separate subdivisions of the Kontrrazvedka were organized in them which were characteristically involved in civilian activities: the provisioning of the Brigade through expropriations and the collection of contributions, as well as the pursuit of agents and former collaborators of the Whites. In the summer of 1919, during the retreat of the Makhnovist army to the west, the functions of the Kontrrazvedka were carried out by the Batko’s entourage – his bodyguards and adjutants. At the time of the re-organization of the RPAU(m) in September of 1919 these same people headed Makhno’s personal security service, known as the “Black Sotnia” (a.k.a. “The Devil’s Sotnia” or “The Batko’s Sotnia”).

Judging by the data I have collected, the activity of the Kontrrazvedka bore a centralized character only when the army was on the move and only in cases of relatively small Makhnovist formations, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the Zadneprovsky Division in the spring of 1919 which was the nucleus of the Insurgent Army, or the Special Army Group SRPU(m) in 1920. On the other hand, at the peak of the movement in the autumn of 1919 the organizations of the Kontrrazvedka had a network structure and its zone of responsibility was spread to each of the four corps. For example, Golik is named by Belash first as the head of the Kontrrazvedka of the whole army,<sup>33</sup> and later of only the 2<sup>nd</sup> corps.<sup>34</sup> Judging by the character of the Makhnovist Army and its disdain for bureaucratic red tape, I don’t think such information indicates a reassignment, especially since the time interval involved extends only from just after November 11 to just after December 2, 1919. In the sources available to me there is no mention about any central organ of the Kontrrazvedka during that period to which the secret services of the corps would be subordinate.

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<sup>33</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 364.

It is well known that during the period just mentioned the head of the Kontrrazvedka of the I<sup>st</sup> Donetsk Corps, based in Alexandrovsk, was Zinkovsky.<sup>35</sup> And the Kontrrazvedka of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Azov Corps, based in Nikopol, was headed by Golik.<sup>36</sup> Who the heads were of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Yekaterinoslav and the 4<sup>th</sup> Crimean Corps I have so far not been able to determine. They faced problems very different from the tasks of the first two corps. I can't exclude the possibility that the Kontrrazvedka activities of the two first corps were extended to the corps adjacent to them, although this contradicts the evidence that smaller military units had their own kontrrazvedkas. This is demonstrated by the example of the Free Cossack Insurgent Group in Yekaterinoslav Province.<sup>37</sup> The presence of kontrrazvedkas in each Makhnovist unit is confirmed by Kubanin as well.<sup>38</sup> With such a network system, each of the kontrrazvedkas of the corps or other military groups would be directly subordinate to the Operations Section of the Shtarm (Army headquarters).

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 331.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 364.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 340.

<sup>38</sup> M. Kubanin, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

for the Bolsheviks. The depth of this hatred is shown by the episode described by Gerasimenko, when a Red convoy of supply wagons fled through the Petlyurist front line heading north and the Makhnovists launched hit-and-run attacks on it “producing enormous losses to the column of Bolsheviks”<sup>28</sup> Then followed the breakthrough of the RPAU(m), its smashing of the Denikinist rear, and the creation by the Makhnovists of their own federation of Free Soviets. During this period MOAP did not carry out terrorist acts and the preparation of them for the anniversary of the October Revolution was only in the discussion stage. News from Ukraine was still reaching Moscow. This meant the members of MOAP could have known about the successes of the Makhnovists and taken a wait-and-see position.

Finally, according to Baranovsky's testimony, explosives were stored in Moscow for use in the event that the Bolsheviks again returned to their former tactics relative to the insurgents and Makhno.<sup>29</sup> This testimony dates from the middle of November, 1919, that is, at the peak of the Makhnovist federation. If Baranovsky can be believed, the Moscow “Anarchists of the Underground” could have been waiting for the outcome of the junction of the RPAU(m) with the RKKA, which was pursuing the Denikinists. Correspondingly, if MOAP had not been annihilated before December, 1919, when the Reds unleashed treacherous blows in the back of the Insurgent Army, one would have expected from the kontrrazvedniki — “the anarchists of the underground” — the blowing up of the Kremlin as well as terrorist acts directed against informers of the VChK and MChK and much else.

While MOAP was obtaining the resources required for underground work by means of ex's, at the end of August, 1919,

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<sup>28</sup> N. V. Gerasimenko, **Batko Makhno. Memurari belogvardeytsa** [Batko Makhno. Memoirs of a White Guard] Moscow (1990), p. 60.

<sup>29</sup> **Krasnaya kniga VChK. 1.1. op. cit.**, p. 378.

about the creation of MOAP by a coalition of Left SRs and Anarcho-Makhnovists.<sup>23</sup>

Is it possible that such reasoning was simply convenient for the Soviet authorities as the basis for repression against the Makhnovshchina? No. As evidence of a special operation of the Kontrrazvedka of the RPAU(m) there are the leaflets and the testimonies of the Moscow “anarchists of the underground” themselves. Thus, according to the MOAP “Proclamation,” the blowing up of the MK RKP(b) was revenge for the shooting in Kharkov of members of Makhnos staff.<sup>24</sup> Belash directly states that MOAP was created by Makhnovist kontrrazvedniks.<sup>25</sup> Even while MOAP was being liquidated by the Chekists, Glazgon was planning to return to Makhno for reinforcements.<sup>26</sup> And finally, the anarchist Baranovsky in his testimony conjectured that “later, after Denikins defeat, an agreement would be reached between Makhno and the Bolsheviks and the necessity of terrorist struggle against the Bolsheviks on our part would generally be eliminated.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, Baranovsky made a direct connection between the cessation of struggle of “the anarchists of the underground” and a Soviet-Makhnovist accord, implying that “the Anarchists of the Underground” were a unit of the Makhnovist Army.

This version is indeed confirmed by the chronology of events in the autumn of 1919. The MK RKP(b) was blown up on September 25. At that moment the Bolsheviks had fled Ukraine which came as a direct consequence of Trotsky's purge of the Makhnovshchina and the resultant collapse of the Front. The Insurgent Army was forced back by the Denikinists all the way to Uman and didn't conceal its hatred

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<sup>23</sup> L. Bichkov, *Vzriv v Leontyevskom pereulke* [Explosion in Leontyevsky Lane], Moscow (1934), p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> *Krasnaya kniga VChK*. 1.1, op. cit., p. 329-330.

<sup>25</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, op. cit., note 127, p. 587.

<sup>26</sup> V. A. Klimenko and P. M. Morozov, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 378.

## The First Recruitment

A partisan detachment, which must be able to launch sudden attacks and elude pursuers, naturally depends on excellent reconnaissance. That's why the Makhnovist detachment in the period of struggle with the Austro-German occupiers already had its own reconnaissance unit. This unit was set up by former frontier guards,<sup>1</sup> who were more familiar with this sort of work than other veterans. The reconnaissance unit assured success in the famous battle for Bolshaya Mikhaylovka in September 1918, after which Makhno was declared a “batko.” This victory by the remnants of the exhausted Makhnovist detachment over superior forces became possible only because of the reconnaissance of the enemy's dispositions in the village.<sup>2</sup> Makhno recalled how, along the route of the detachments' advance, the reconnaissance unit “checked out each bush, each knoll, each gully, and thereby protected the detachment from ambushes and sudden attacks by the enemy.”<sup>3</sup> In analogous fashion, the Kontrrazvedka of the spring of 1919 was designed to protect the Makhnovist socio-political organization.

The first news about the Kontrrazvedka of the Makhnovists appears in March 1919. At the beginning of February 1919, the Makhnovist Insurgent Army concluded an agreement with Soviet army group under P. Dybenko approaching from the north (later it became the Zadneprovsky Division). This agreement was a necessity for the Makhnovists, called for by the acute shortage of weaponry and ammunition which was making

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<sup>1</sup> N. I. Makhno, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> N. I. Makhno, op. cit., p. 98.

it impossible to offer opposition to the advancing Whites. In exchange for armaments, the Insurgent Army became operationally subordinate to the Reds and received the name “the 3<sup>rd</sup> Zadneprovsky Brigade” of the RKKA. After the capture of Berdyansk by the Makhnovist brigade on March 15, Chernyak was appointed by the staff of the Brigade as chief of recruitment and of the Kontrrazvedka for the city. The first task of this kontrrazvedka was the tracking down of former inhabitants of Gulai-Polye who had earlier acted as agents of both the Austro-German occupying forces and the White Guards, betraying insurgents to the authorities.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the kontrrazvedkas in both Berdyansk and Maryupol requisitioned clothing for the Makhnovist regiments, and also unloaded goods from passing trains for the use of the Brigade.<sup>5</sup>

It is indisputable that at that time there existed a purely military kontrrazvedka at the staff of the Brigade which, probably from the very beginning, was headed by Lev Golik. Not a lot is known about him. According to Belash, the machinist Golik was an anarchist-terrorist before 1917 so he possessed the appropriate skills for kontrrazvedka work. During the second half of March 1919, when Makhno was summoned to the division headquarters in Yekaterinoslav, Golik’s spies reported about the Red command’s intense interest in the insurgents and displeasure with their growing influence. And when, wary of going to Yekaterinoslav, Makhno agreed to meet with Brigade Commander Dybenko in Berdyansk, the Kontrrazvedka warned about an attempt on the Batko’s life being prepared by Dybenkos bodyguards.<sup>6</sup>

Also in March, 1919, Chernyak reported to Makhno that in Berdyansk, as well as the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka there was also a local branch of the Cheka, which was harming the

<sup>4</sup> A.V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, pp. 111,1 OS,

<sup>5</sup> T. A. Bespechny and I. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>6</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, pp. 105,110.

the dacha was surrounded by a squad of 30 Chekists led by Mantsev and Martinov. A battle raged for two and half hours, with both sides blasting away at close range.<sup>18</sup> Finally the underground anarchists blew themselves up.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently the “Special Strike Group of the VChK for the Struggle with Banditism” was created for the liquidation of branches of the anarchist underground in other cities of Russia. This Group hunted down “anarchists of the underground” also in Ukraine. Thus, in Kharkov the Group arrested a member of MOAP, the Latvian anarchist K. Kapostin, who was later shot.<sup>20</sup>

Relevant for the present work is the question: should the Pan-Russian Committee of the “Anarchists of the Underground” be regarded as an independent organization or as a special operations unit of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka? In favour of the first interpretation is the wide scope of the Committee, which had branches in Bryansk, Tula, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Samara, Ufa, etc. The Kontrrazvedka didn’t send its agents to these places. But if one looks at MOAP, its nucleus was made up of kontrrazvedniks: Sobolev, Kovalevich, Glazgon, Grechanikov, and Tsintsiper. According to Kubanin, Glazgon and Tsintsiper arrived in the Makhnovshchina together with Chernyak and were both well experienced in kontrrazvedka work.<sup>21</sup> Certainly Soviet historians had no doubts about this question, beginning with Yakovlev (1921) according to whom the combat groups of the “Anarchists of the Underground” were dispatched to Russian cities by the Makhnovist VRS.<sup>22</sup> Similarly Bychkov (1934) wrote

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 353.

<sup>19</sup> For more details, see V. Azarov, **Bomba dlya Kremlya** [A Bomb for the Kremlin], <http://www>.

<sup>20</sup> **Na zashchiterevoiyutii** [In Defense of the Revolution. From the History of the Pan-Ukrainian Cheka 1917–1922], Kiev (1971), p. 147,

<sup>21</sup> Kubanin, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>22</sup> Ya. Yakovlev, **Russkiy anarkhizm I Velikaya russkaya revolyutsiya** [Russian Anarchism and the Great Russian Revolution], Kharkhov 09? 1], p. 45.



ing to Sobolev's calculations this would require one tonne of pyroxylin, and the explosion was postponed until this amount could be accumulated.<sup>13</sup> 'Die demolition of the Sovnarkom was planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the October Revolution. Explosives were transported from Bryansk, Tula, and Nizhny Novgorod, and were stored in a warehouse in Odin-stovo. In addition, a bomb laboratory was set up in a dacha in Kraskovo.

But already by the end of October the Chekists had established that an apartment formerly used by Nikiforova was the secret hangout of illegal anarchists. An ambush was set up there which caught Kovalevich. Mortally wounded, he was conveyed to the MChK where he died.<sup>14</sup> Then, at the apartment of MOAP member Voskhodov, another ambush wiped out other members of the organization and a roster of the organization was found. As the account of the MChK describes it, "Using this information the arrests of the gunmen were carried out, but almost none of them surrendered without resistance."<sup>15</sup> At the next secret address Tsintsiper and 10 more militants were ambushed.<sup>16</sup> Later Sobolev showed up at the same address and was killed. A bomb he threw fell by chance into the briefcase of a commissar who squeezed it shut with one hand while shooting the leader of MOAP with the other hand.<sup>17</sup> Finally, in an ambush at a secret address on the Ryansk Highway, seven more anarchists were killed.

The last centre of resistance of the Moscow "Anarchists of the Underground" was the dacha in Kraskovo, where the print shop and bomb laboratory were located. On November 5, 1919,

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 374.

<sup>14</sup> V. A. Klimenko and P.M. Morozov, **Chrezvychaynyezashchitniki revolyutsii** [Extraordinary Defenders of the Revolution], Moscow, 1980, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> **Iz istorii VChK 1917 -1921** [From the History of the Cheka 1917 -1921 ], Moscow (1958), p. 351-352.

<sup>16</sup> V. A. Klimenko and P. M. Morozov, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> **Iz istorii VChK 1917 -1921** [From the History of the Cheka 1917 -1921 ], Moscow [1958], p. 351-352.

work of the Kontrrazvedka in any way possible: it was interfering with recruiting and it was arresting Kontrrazvedka agents (kontrrazvedniki). Judging from his report, Chernyak was prepared to act resolutely, only regretting the presence in the Cheka branch of former insurgents from the Operations Section. From a discussion between Makhno and one of the commissars it emerged that, according to the agreement between the RKKA and the Insurgent Army, in the region of the anarcho-communist experiment of the Makhnoshchina, i.e. in the Makhnovist Liberated Zone, repressive Red organizations like the Cheka or the prodorgans were not permitted. The commissar objected that the workers themselves organized the Cheka for defense against Makhnovist guerillas. Nevertheless, Makhno without hesitating ordered Chernyak to break up the Berdyansk Cheka.<sup>7</sup>

By agreement with the staff of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army of the RKKA, on May 16, 1919, the Makhnovist VRS announced the reformation of its brigade into the 1<sup>st</sup> Insurgent Division. At that time the conflict of Makhno with the Red command developed into naked repression against the Makhnovists. In order to remove the source of friction and at the same time avoid exposing the Front, Makhno resigned from the post of brigade commander and headed for Alexandrovsk with a detachment of 300 cavalry and 500 infantry. But the machinery of repression had been set in motion: Voroshilov arrested the staff of the Insurgent Division and later they were shot. Naturally the Division's Kontrrazvedka also collapsed. It had good reason to fear the repression of the Reds as it had been responsible for carrying out a purge of the RKKA commissars from the Makhnovist brigades. Some of the Kontrrazvedka agents — especially the Gulyaipolyans — stuck with the Batko.

On the other hand, the outside "specialists," the highly professional terrorists and expropriators, joined the re-organized

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58-59.

detachment of M. Nikiforova which had a complement of 60 militants. This detachment set itself the task of ending the Civil War by surgical strikes against the headquarters of the White armies. For this purpose, one group of 20 led by Nikiforova set out for Rostov to blow up Denikin's staff. A second group of 15 under Chernyak and Gromov headed for Siberia to liquidate Kolchak's staff. The third group of 25 led by Kovalevich, Sobolev, and Glazgon, left for Kharkov to free the staff of the Makhnovist Division and, in case that wasn't possible, to blow up the Cheka headquarters.<sup>8</sup> On June 15 Nikiforova caught up with Makhno at the station of Bolshoy Tokmak and wrested funds from him for her projects. According to Belash, the Batko was opposed to these ventures and initially refused to give her money as a result of which they "almost shot each other." But in the end Makhno handed over 250,000 rubles to her detachment.

The first two groups did not achieve their goals. Nikiforova was arrested by the Denikinist Secret Service in Sevastopol on July 29, 1919.<sup>9</sup> On September 3 she was convicted and shot soon afterwards (according to some sources, hanged). Her group left for the Kuban and was absorbed in the "Green" movement. The Chernyak-Gromov group penetrated through the Urals and took part in the insurgent movement against Kolchak. In the early part of December, 1919, in the Shitkinsk partisan region, an SR-anarchist conspiracy against the Bolshevik authorities was liquidated. The head of the conspiracy was a certain Gromov.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that this was our kontrrazvednik. The leaders of the mutiny were executed.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 255.

<sup>9</sup> V. N. Chop, **Marusya Nikiforova**, Zaporozhye (1998), p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> Ye. S. Seleznev and T. A. Seleznev, **Politicheskaya ssilka, revolyutsionniye sobitiya nach. XX v. I grazhdanskaya voyna na territorii Tayshetskovo reyona** [Political Exile, Revolutionary Events at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and during the Civil War in the Tayshetsky Region], [www.tai5het.ru/history/sel2.html](http://www.tai5het.ru/history/sel2.html)

By the time Kovalevich's group arrived in Kharkov, the Makhnovist staff had already been shot. The kontrrazvedniks at first planned to liquidate the leadership of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in revenge. But then they decided to transfer their campaign of retribution to Central Russia. Together with D. Cherepanov's Left SR group, they created in Moscow a large anarchist underground organization: "The Pan-Russian Insurgent Committee of Revolutionary Partisans — the Anarchists of the Underground," with branches in a dozen cities of Russia, Ukraine, and even Latvia. The Moscow organization of the "Anarchists of the Underground" (for convenience — MOAP) busied itself with propaganda (leaflets, newspapers), exs (obtaining funds for publishing, explosives, and weapons), and terrorist acts against the Bolshevik leaders. The most important terrorist act was the explosion at the Moscow Committee of the RKP(b) on September 25, 1919. Lenin, Bukharin, Kamenev, and other leaders were supposed to be present at this meeting. The leaders were saved only because they showed up late.

MOAP set up a wide network of agents. In particular the leader of the combat group Sobolev had agents in the VChK and the Kremlin.<sup>11</sup> It's likely his group was preparing a terrorist act against the Chekists. Thus a certain employee of the VChK passed on to the anarchists the address of a hostel where dozens of secret agents of the MChK and VChK were living.<sup>12</sup> Despite all sorts of precautions (MOAP was structured on the principle of groups of seven), a second employee of the VChK, a certain Katya, was let in on all the secrets of the organization which could only carry out its goals with the participation of Chekists in its work. Thus it was planned to blow up the Kremlin along with the whole Soviet government. Accord-

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<sup>11</sup> **Krasnaya kniga VChK. 1.1** [The Red Book of the Cheka, Vol. 1J], Moscow (1990), p. 374. *Ibid*, p. 375.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 375.

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Vyacheslav Azarov  
Kontrrazvedka

The story of the Makhnovist intelligence service  
2008

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<https://libcom.org/history/kontrrazvedka-story-makhnovist-intelligence-service-vyacheslav-azarov>

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“extremely large credential printed on cloth.”<sup>20</sup> Zakharov was informed by the Gubkom of everything that was going on. Belash tells us that Golik personally prepared the agent for this assignment. The suggestion is that Golik’s direct involvement was required not only by the importance of the matter but also by the danger of information about the ruse leaking out.

According to Zakharov, the meeting resolved to liquidate Makhno and the senior commanders of the Insurgent Army. For this purpose, it was planned to invite them that same evening after the conference to Polonsky’s apartment for his wife Tatyana’s birthday celebration and serve them poisoned cognac.<sup>21</sup> The Batko was to be poisoned by Polonsky’s wife, a professional actress. By the time the conference ended it was well past midnight. Polonsky invited Makhno, as well as some of the commanders and members of the VRS to the birthday celebration and left to prepare for the arrival of the guests. However, instead of the invited guests, a group of kontrrazvedniks led by Karetnikov showed up at the apartment. They arrested Polonsky, his wife, and three other conspirators. Later a trap set at the apartment caught four more, and near the building a dozen Communists who were part of a back-up group were nabbed.

The second group of conspirators were found to be carrying incriminating documents from the Gubkom. The wine and cognac were sent for analysis and found to have traces of a strong poison. According to Volkovinsky’s version, Makhno and his commanders arrived at the Polonsky apartment. The food at Makhno’s table was poisoned with strychnine. Chubenko tried it first, and when he felt there was something wrong, signalled to Makhno and the commanders. Zinkovsky reported about this on December 3 at a meeting of the VRS.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Konevets, op. cit., pp. 86.

<sup>21</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, op. cit., p. 362.

<sup>22</sup> V. Volkovinsky, op.cit.p. 156.

The Kontrrazvedka quickly carried out an investigation and pronounced the death sentence on the four leaders of the conspiracy. This sentence was confirmed by the commanders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Donetsk and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Yekaterinoslav Corps. The Kontrrazvedkas report was dated at 4 p.m. on December 2.

According to Belash, all four were executed by Lepetchenko, Vasilevsky, and Karetnikov on the bank of the Dnieper alongside the road to the Kontrrazvedkas headquarters.<sup>23</sup>

From Belash's account, it's difficult to understand whether the investigation was carried out directly in Polonsky's apartment and the sentence pronounced there, or whether the conspirators were executed in a fit of rage while being transported to the Kontrrazvedka headquarters and then the report was written to cover the tracks of this event. I'm inclined to the second version, as the investigation and the analysis of the liquor could hardly be carried out in the conspirators' apartment. According to Konevets, Polonsky was killed separately, in the middle of the night, i.e. immediately after his arrest. He was taken to the river bank and killed there.<sup>24</sup> But according to Miroshevky, all the shootings took place on December 5. However the memoirs of the Communists are difficult to accept because they contain a huge quantity of ideologically-inspired "factoids." For example, we are told that the conspirators were shot by a certain "Mishka Levchik," a professional criminal and head of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka.<sup>25</sup>

The members of the Gubkom who were still at large were afraid the Kontrrazvedka would raid the apartment where their headquarters was located, so the next morning they switched to full underground mode.<sup>26</sup> The Communists in the Insurgent Army demanded an open trial for the conspirators. They were supported by the Nabat members Arshinov, Volin, Aly,

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<sup>23</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

<sup>24</sup> Konevets, *op. cit.*, pp. 86.

<sup>25</sup> V. Miroshevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>26</sup> Konevets, *op. cit.*, pp. 86.

and Chubenko. However the Gulai-Polye contingent of the of the Shtarm insisted that since the conspirators occupied command posts in the army that immediate shooting was in order. Makhno himself was challenged before the VRS to give an accounting for the unsanctioned shootings. But the Batko answered that any conspirator was now working for Denikin and threatened the VRS with his revolver. The chairman of the VRS, Volin, responded by calling him “a Bonaparte and a drunkard.”<sup>27</sup> The reaction of the VRS was to create an investigatory commission made up of Volin, Uralov, and Belash. According to Chetolin, the Gubkom was preparing to retaliate by organizing protests by the workers, but the Whites prevented this by driving Makhno out of the city.<sup>28</sup>

The punishment of the conspirators lead to the worsening of Makhnos relations not only with the army’s Communists but with the anarchists. In accordance with the limitations of the Batko’s powers, he did not have the right to shoot the Communists without the approval of the Gulai-Polye Union of Anarchists. This was the accusation he had to face at the VRS, rather than the charge of executing conspirators — a normal occurrence under wartime conditions. For me the chief lesson to draw from this scandal is tolerance of the Makhnovist political system for nonconformism. Neither the Gubkom, nor rank-and-file Communists, were persecuted under the suspicion of being involved in the conspiracy, and their newspaper *Zvesda* continued to publish legally. For the Bolsheviks in an analogous situation this would have been simply unthinkable. For the Makhnovists the principles of freedom of speech and association were more precious than the emotions evoked by the conspiracy.

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<sup>27</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *Op. eft.*, pp. 362–363.

<sup>28</sup> Levko, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

## The Commission for Anti-Makhnovist Activities

From the beginning of 1920, typhus, exhaustion from heavy battles with the Denikinists, as well as treacherous blows from the RKKA which was attacking from the north, finally brought about the downfall of the Liberated Zone. On January 11 at a general meeting of the army officers, headquarters staff, and the VRS, it was decided to give the insurgents a month's furlough. In practice this meant the dissolution of the Army. But when, at the end of the spring and beginning of the summer of 1919, the Insurgent Army began to revive from its treacherous suppression by the Bolsheviks, the insurgents were naturally inclined towards revenge. This mood was aggravated by the prodotryads and the Red Terror directed against the Makhnovists and their families. As a result Black Terror flourished again in the Makhnovist army, directed against Communists, Chekists, the militia, prodrazverstka agents, chairmen of executive committees, and officials of Komnezams, trade unions, co-operatives, and other economic organizations.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes this amounted to lynchings carried out by the insurgents, or else there was a semblance of justice with the commanders of detachments passing sentence.

In the summer of 1920 a reorganization of the structure of the reborn Insurgent Army was carried out in which the Kontrrazvedka became subordinate to the operations section of the SRPU(m). At the same time, the Kontrrazvedka was relieved of its judicial and punitive functions, which were trans-

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<sup>1</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, op. c/f, p. 420.

ferred to a Commission for Anti-Makhnovist Activities (KAD), which in turn was subordinate to the organizational section. In other words, the Civilian Section of the Kontrrazvedka was abolished and its activities, which had given rise to the most complaints about the Kontrrazvedka, were transferred to KAD. The SRPU(m) remembered the lawlessness of the Batko's associates in connection with the execution of Polonsky, and the Commission was created in order to remove judicial functions from commanders and "especially from Makhnos milieu." KAD was created at a meeting on July 9, 1920, in the village of Vremyevka, during re-elections to the VSR.

It's noteworthy that in his speech at this meeting Belash criticized the commanders for not adjusting to the changing situation and, along with the head of "power-hungry" organization, killing leaders of such grass-roots organizations as trade unions and co-operatives without carrying out an investigation — just like regular bandits.<sup>2</sup> Belash was upset, apparently, because while the Kontrrazvedka had been assigned judicial functions in 1919, after its re-organization and transformation into an exclusively intelligence-gathering organ, the right to punish was acquired by each command and even each insurgent. He indicated that such practices benefited criminal elements who had latched on to the movement. The resolution to create KAD was passed unanimously. As its chairperson N. Zuychenko was elected — he was an anarchist from 1906 who had been active in the "Union of Poor Peasants."<sup>3</sup> The other members of the Commission were G. Kuzmenko, Vasilenko, and Chaikovsky.

Subject to the judgment of the Commission were both captured soldiers and commanders of the Red and White armies and Petlyurist formations as well as commanders and rank-

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 421.

<sup>3</sup> /fw'd, note 9, p. 578.

and-file insurgents of the SRPU(m) Army.<sup>4</sup> According to Teper, KAD was created as a result of pressure from Baron, Sukhovolsky, and Belash.<sup>5</sup> KAD's mandate was defined as follows: "to apply justice carrying out the investigation and punishment to persons of the other camp, i.e. anti-Makhnovists."<sup>6</sup> Also according to Teper, KAD was given the right to condemn, without investigating: Chekists, prodrazverstka agents, and heads of sovkhoses and kolkhozes. And from the Communists any "who with weapon in hand or by word of mouth attacked the Makhnovshchina."<sup>7</sup> It is significant that from the beginning the KAD was organized out of the cultural-educational section<sup>8</sup> – the Makhnovist organization which carried out ideologically sound education and was staffed exclusively by anarchists who were theoretically adept and had a clear idea about what a free anarchist society must be and what kind of justice it must have.

From this time KAD replaced the Civilian Section of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka, about which there is virtually no mention from the beginning of 1920. KAD is mentioned by Belash only a few times. Thus at the end of July, 1920, the Commission sentenced a Petlyurist insurgent detachment to be disarmed, and its commander, Levchenko, to be shot for being an anti-Semite and a pogromist. KAD also sentenced all members of prototryads to be shot. For example, in September 1910 near Millerovo station, the Commission condemned the members of a prototryad noted for its cruelty. Among the condemned was the young M, Sholokhov. Only the personal intercession of Makhno allowed him to escape death. As the

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<sup>4</sup> A. V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 421.

<sup>5</sup> Teper, *op. cit.*, p. 81,

<sup>6</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

<sup>7</sup> Teper, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 505.



Batko said, “We’ll let him grow up and see what he does. If he doesn’t straighten up, we’ll hang him next time.”<sup>9</sup>

KAD sentenced to be shot all White officers taken prisoner, as is shown by the example of Nazarov’s shattered formation, the rank-and-file soldiers of which were absorbed in the Insurgent Army.<sup>10</sup> After the Starobelsky Soviet-Makhnovist agreement of September 1920, Makhno’s staff sent an order to all Makhnovist units in Ukraine to cease military activity against RKKA and assemble at army headquarters. This order produced a split in the ranks of the Makhnovshchina. Many local detachments refused to carry out this order and continued their struggle with the Bolsheviks. Desertion started from the Insurgent Army’s core — the Special Group of the SRPU(m). Thus the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment wanted to leave for the Poltava region. But its commander, the old insurgent Matyazh, was arrested and shot on October 16 by order of KAD.<sup>11</sup> Already during the operations in Northern Tavria in the second half of October, 1920, the Insurgent Army absorbed into its own ranks the “White-Makhnovist” units created by the Russian Army from insurgents who had been deceived by propaganda about an alliance of Makhno with Wrangel. Some of their repentant commanders were allowed to remain at the head of their units by decision of the VRS. But Yatsenko and Savchenko, who issued appeals on behalf of Wrangel, were shot by order of KAD.<sup>12</sup>

Already near the end of the Crimean operation in the middle of November 1920, the Bolsheviks began to look for a pre-

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, pp. 427,442.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 444.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 457,

<sup>12</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 464. Belash writes that these commanders were sentenced at a general meeting of the SRPU(m) and the Shtarm. But since KAD was part of the structure of the VRS and since such sentences were its prerogative, there is no basis to doubt that officially the sentence was confirmed by this commission.

text for breaking their agreement with the Makhnovists. Thus, according to the Starobelsky Accord (Section 2, Article 2), the Makhnovists were forbidden to accept into their ranks any Red Army troops or deserters therefrom.<sup>13</sup> And the Red command focussed attention on the slightest violations of this point. In order not to give cause for severing the agreement, KAD sentenced insurgents to be shot even for insignificant violations. Thus Chaly, the commander of a regiment, was shot for enticing a platoon of Red soldiers with two machine guns to join him.<sup>14</sup> A short time later, when the Bolsheviks were already preparing to treacherously attack the Makhnovists, seven terrorists sent to Gulai-Polye by the Cheka to liquidate Makhno and his staff were arrested and shot on November 27, by order of the Commission.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, even after the agreement was ruptured, the Commission did not become vindictive and administrative personnel who came under its power (chairpersons of executive committees, members of soviets, policemen, members of Komnezams) frequently were released for reason of “compulsory service.”<sup>16</sup> Generally this was the practice in “anti-Bolshevist” regions. For example, in the Kherson and Kiev regions, although the population was compelled to participate in Soviet structures, the directors of these institutions continued to help the Makhnovists. The Shtarm also turned over to KAD for investigation matters not connected with the political struggle. For example, in February 1921 in Korochoa near Kursk, the commander of the Crimean cavalry regiment Kharlashko together with Savonov looted a church. Upon learning that KAD was

<sup>13</sup> **Voенно-politicheskoye soglasheniye Revolyutsionnoy armii (makhnovtsev) s Sovetskoy v iastuy u** [The Military-Political Agreement of the Revolutionary Insurgent Army (Makhnovists) with Soviet Power], **MMD**, p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 484.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 487.

<sup>16</sup> /b/d, p. 531,

## 1919

## 1920

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| January 9   | Makhno outlawed by the Bolsheviks.                               |
| October 15  | Makhno’s fourth alliance with the Bolsheviks against the Whites. |
| November 26 | Makhnovists attacked by Bolshevik forces.                        |

## 1921

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| August 28 | Makhnovist detachment crosses border into Rumania. |
|-----------|--|

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| January 26   | Makhnovist forces become part of the Red Army as the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the Zadneprovsky Division. |
| March 15     | Makhnovist forces capture Berdyansk from the Whites.   |
| March 29     | Makhnovist forces capture Maryupol.  |
| May 7        | Ataman Grigoryev revolts against the Bolsheviks.   |
| June 6       | Whites capture Gulyay-Polye.   |
| June 9       | Makhno resigns his command in the Red Army.  |
| June 15      | Makhno declared “outside the law” by the Bolsheviks.   |
| June 17      | Makhnovist commanders shot by the Bolsheviks.  |
| July 27      | Grigoryev killed by Makhnovists.   |
| September 26 | Battle of Peregonovka: the Insurgent Army defeats pursuing White force.                                    |
| October 5    | Insurgent Army captures Alexandrovsk.  |
| October 28   | Insurgent Army captures Yekaterinoslav.  |
| November     | Makhnos third alliance with the Bolsheviks.  |
| December 3   | Liquidation of Polonsky’s conspiracy.  |

investigating the crime, they did not wait for the sentence but assembled their regiment and took off for Izyumsky uyezd.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 537.

## The Military Section

If one can interpret the punitive activity of the Civilian Section of the Kontrrazvedka as a detriment to the Makhnovist movement, then the work of the Military Section can be considered with confidence one of the brightest lights of the anarchist insurgency. Reconnaissance was the passion of Makhno himself. He disguised himself as a peasant woman and went about cracking sunflower seeds under the very noses of the Whites. He posed as a vendor in the bazaar or a beggar, and once he even played the part of the bride at a church wedding.<sup>1</sup> Naturally the Military Section of the Kontrrazvedka in the Makhnovist Army was organized splendidly.

Even in September, 1919, near Uman, at the point of maximum withdrawal from the Liberated Zone and under the threat of complete annihilation of the RPAU(m) by the Denikinists, the network of agents of the Kontrrazvedka worked assiduously far in the Denikinist rear and maintained contact with the main body of the Insurgent Army. Before the decisive battle near Peregonovka on September 26, 1919, Makhno had become aware through this network of the military vacuum in the Denikinist rear.<sup>2</sup> Agents returning to the Shtarm reported that there were no regular Denikinist units as far as Nikopol. This information led to the decision by the staff to make a dash back to the Left Bank. And later as the Makhnovist corps were advancing Kontrrazvedka agents were sent out far ahead and reported that no enemy forces were to be found in the directions of Alexandrovsk, Pyatikhatki, and Yekaterino-slav.

<sup>1</sup> N. Sukhogorskaya, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> V. Chop, op. cit, p, 44.

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| February 9 | Ukrainian Central Rada signs treaty with Central Powers, allowing German-Austrian forces to invade Ukraine and suppress the Revolution.  |
| March 3    | Bolsheviks sign Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, agreeing to withdraw forces from Ukraine, effectively ending Makhnos first alliance.  |
| April 15   | Gulyay-Polye seized by German-Austrian troops, forcing the anarchists to flee or go into hiding.   |
| July       | Makhno returns to Gulyay-Polye raion.  |
| October 5  | Battle of Dibrivki, in which partisans under Makhno and Shchus defeated a mixed force of Austrian and Ukrainian hetmanate troops as well as local pomeschchiks and German colonists. |
| December   | Bolsheviks reappear in Ukraine and Makhno forms a second alliance with them.   |

# Chronology of the Makhnovshchina

## 1917

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| March 24  | Makhno returns to Gulyay-Polye after being released from prison in Moscow.                  |
| September | Gulyay-Polye anarchists form Black Guard to safeguard and extend the Revolution.            |
| December  | Makhnos first alliance with the Bolsheviks to oppose the Whites and Ukrainian nationalists. |

The agents also reported that in Nikopol there was disorder, in Krivy Rog 25 – 50 sentries, and in Kherson 100 – 150 officers. Along the Dnieper between Nikopol and Kherson there were no troops at all.<sup>3</sup>

During the period of the historic destruction of the Denikinist rearguard by the Makhnovists in October, 1919, one of the most brilliant operations of the Kontrrazvedka was ensuring the fall of Berdyansk. According to Gerasimenko, the fate of the city was determined by an attack, organized by the Makhnovists, of fishermen from the nearby settlement of Liska. In this night attack, the fishermen seized a Denikinist battery, the guns of which were then used by the Makhnovists to rake the city.<sup>4</sup> Of course^ the attack of the fishermen was not organized by Makhno in person, but by the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka. On the other hand, when the Insurgent Army retreated from Alexandrovsk on November 4, 1919, the Batko ordered Zinkovsky to find 20 – 30 barrels of spirits and toss them in the middle of one of the villages. The calculation turned out to be correct: the spirits held up the pursuit of the “Shkurovtsy” for several hours.<sup>5</sup> The Kontrrazvedka then set to spreading rumours. While the retreat was going on due to the pressure of Shkuro’s cavalry, the Makhnovist agents penetrated to villages in the hands of the Denikinists and encouraged the peasants to believe that Makhno was not far away and would soon recapture these places. Such tactics lead to constant uprisings in the rear of the Whites which seriously hindered their advance.<sup>6</sup>

At the peak of the Makhnovist movement in the autumn of 1919, the underground intelligence centres of the Kontrrazvedka were found in all the cities, towns, and large villages of southern and eastern Ukraine. These centres were usually

<sup>3</sup> Kubanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 86–87.

<sup>4</sup> N. V. Gerasimenko, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Konevets, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> N. V. Gerasimenko, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

situated in artels, inns, boarding houses, cafeterias, restaurants, and shoemakers' or tailors' shops – in fact anywhere where one could expect to meet soldiers. Secret agents in the rear of the enemy were to be found in factories, plants, and mines. It is from these agents that the Makhnovist Shtarm received information about conditions in the rear and the mood of the workers.<sup>7</sup> The network of agents of the Kontrrazvedka extended from Odessa to Novorossysk and sent information on the movement of White units.<sup>8</sup> Secret addresses of the Kontrrazvedka were maintained in Odessa, Kherson, Nikolayev, Poltava, Yuzovka, Taganrog, Rostov-on-Don, Yeysk, Sevastopol, Kharkov, Cherkassy, and Kiev.<sup>9</sup> Direction for the Military Section of the Kontrrazvedka behind enemy lines was provided by the Operations Section of the Shtarm.

According to Belash, Makhnovist agents served in Denikin's Volunteer Army.<sup>10</sup> Savchenko more precisely states that agents of the Kontrrazvedka worked in almost all the enemy's units, starting at the regimental level up to the army staff. A large part of the Kontrrazvedka's finances went to the underground behind the lines of the Whites and Reds, for bribing the enemy's military specialists, or for the creating of military groups in Moscow, Warsaw, and Siberia.<sup>11</sup> Incidentally, service as an intelligence agent was so dangerous that it was sometimes used as a form of correctional labour for delinquent Makhnovists. Thus one of the widespread types of punishment meted out by either a commander or a tribunal for minor infractions in the autumn of 1919 was a transfer to service behind enemy lines.<sup>12</sup> Indeed Belash indicates that

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<sup>7</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

<sup>8</sup> A. Shubin, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

<sup>9</sup> V. A. Savchenko, **Makhno**, Kharkov, 2005, p. 234.

<sup>10</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

<sup>11</sup> V. A. Savchenko, *op. cit.*, pp 234–235.

<sup>12</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

**volso** an administrative unit, in Ukraine equivalent to a raion.

**Volunteer Army** the White military force in south Russia and Ukraine (1918–1920) led by General Denikin.

**VRS** Military-Revolutionary Soviet, an elected body which coordinated civilian affairs between insurgent congresses (1919–1920). Despite its name, it exercised only nominal control over military matters.

**Whites** the main counter-revolutionary force in the Russian Civil War, represented politically by the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets).

**RKKA** Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, better known as just the Red Army.

Russian Army the White military force in southern Ukraine in 1920, successor to the Volunteer Army, led by General Wrangel.

**Shtarm** the common abbreviation for the staff of the Insurgent Army

sotnia literally a group of hundred, so in a military context roughly equivalent to "company." In Cossack and Left Bank Ukrainian towns the inhabitants were organized into sotnias, roughly the equivalent of wards, which were like a community within a community.

**Sovnarkom** Council of People's Commissars, the government of the early Soviet republic.

**SR** member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (PSR), the larg

est left-wing party in Russia, which claimed to represent the interests of the peasantry. Socialist but non-Marxist, it was prone to factionalism and underwent a number of splits. In Ukraine were found nationalist variants of the SR Party.

**SRPU{m}** Soviet of Revolutionary Insurgents of Ukraine (Makhnovist), the successor of the **VRS** (1920–1921).

**Union of Poor Peasants** the first anarcho-communist group in Gu-lyaypole (1906–1909). Starting as a propaganda group it later embarked on a campaign of terror.

**UNR** the Ukrainian National Republic, the nationalist government

which tried to establish an independent Ukraine (1918–1921). Its leading figure was Simon Petlyura.

**uyezd** an administrative unit, a subdivision of a gubernia. Alexandrovsk was the administrative centre of a uyezd (also named Alexandrovsk) which included several raions (including Gulyaypole Raion).

**VOKhR** Troops of Internal Security of the Republic (militarized guards)

agent networks were sometimes wiped out after which they had to be re-established.

Parallel with its core work, the Kontrrazvedka established communications between separated units of the Insurgent Army and maintained contacts between the Makhnovshchina and the secretariat of the "Nabat" federation in Kharkov.<sup>13</sup> The Military Kontrrazvedka was also entrusted with the job of distributing the Makhnovist press and anarchist literature behind enemy lines.<sup>14</sup> In November – December, 1919, the Insurgent Army was stricken by a terrible epidemic of typhus. In an effort to save the army, the Kontrrazvedka apparatus in the Denikinist rear carried out intensive purchasing of drugs in Sevastopol, Simferopol, Yalta, Feodo-sia, Kerch, Novorossysk, Rostov, Taganrog, Odessa, Kherson, and Kharkov.<sup>15</sup> Finally, at the beginning of December, 1919, Belash sent a messenger to Moscow – the kontrrazvednik Misha, to tell the Bolshevik leadership about the successes of the Makhnovists in the struggle with Denikin.<sup>16</sup>

In telling about the dispatch of terrorists by the Cheka to liquidate Makhno in the summer of 1920, Belash insisted that the Makhnovists, due to ideological considerations, rejected similar terrorist acts against the leaders of their opponents. "We believed in the free competition of ideas and didn't attempt the assassination of senior officials. Such a policy was never adopted although there were certainly proposals to do so."<sup>17</sup> However he was writing this in the USSR under the supervision of the GPU and was compelled to censor his work. That's why we think the scene with Nikiforova's gang in June 1919 is described by Belash as if Makhno wanted nothing to do with

<sup>13</sup> I. Teper, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> V. V. Komin, **Nestor Makhno: mify i realnost** [Nestor Makhno; myths and reality] // [www.makhno.ru/lit/komin/komin.php](http://www.makhno.ru/lit/komin/komin.php)

<sup>15</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, op. cit, p. 345.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 376.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 415.

terrorism. Relative to the situation in the autumn of 1919, Belash directly states that the Military Section was occupied with “high-level intelligence work as well as terror and expropriation.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, the Makhnovist agent network committed terrorist acts as a minimum against Denikinist officers and officials.

Thus on September 14, 1919, one of the terrorist groups of the Kontrrazvedka carried out a raid on Pyatikhatka Station and shot all the officers and “bourgeois” in the station and on board a passing “Alexandrovsk-Yekaterinoslav” train.<sup>19</sup> In similar fashion, Miroshkevsky recalled a whole series of armed attacks by the insurgents on troops trains and the major railway stations around September 1919.<sup>20</sup> Expropriations meant bank robberies with the goal of obtaining the financial means to support the Insurgent Army So, parallel with the official confiscation of money from banks in the Liberated Zone, “underground expropriators” of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka carried out bank robberies in the Denikinist rear: in Rostov, Taganrog, and Melitopol.<sup>21</sup>

After the dissolution of the Insurgent Army in January 1920, the Reds occupied Nikopol and appointed a certain P. Lebed who, with his own squad, began shooting Makhnovist commanders and breaking up the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Azov Corps.<sup>22</sup> However its chief, Golik, was able to save himself. The whole winter and spring of 1920 he, together with his staff, hid in the underground in Gulai-Polye. According to Golik’s diary, during the whole of January the army reconnaissance never ceased to function even when

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 350.

<sup>19</sup> **Grazhdanskaya voyna na YekaterinoslavHchinye, Dokumenty i materialy.** [The Civil War in Yekaterinoslav. Documents and materials.] Dnepropetrovsk (1968), p. 178.

<sup>20</sup> V. Miroshkevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>21</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 375.

kontrrazvedka literally “counter-intelligence.” In the Makhnovshchina it involved a range of activities including reconnaissance, recruitment, and procurement of supplies.

**KP(b)U** Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine

**Kultprosvet** the Cultural Enlightenment Section of the Insurgent Army which engaged in propaganda and educational work. It was the home of the movements intellectuals.

Left **SR** member of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, formed in October 1917 from the left-wing of the SR Party.

**Makhnovshchina** the regime of the Makhnovists. A pejorative term in Soviet historiography, but used by the Makhnovists themselves.

**MOAP** the Moscow Organization of “The Anarchists of the Underground,” a terrorist organization active in the fall of 1919

**Nabat** federation of anarchist groups of Ukraine (1918–1919), with headquarters first in Kursk, later Kharkov. Suppressed by the Bolsheviks.

Narodnik member of a dissident faction of the Left SR Party.

**pomeshchik** owner of a large rural estate

**prodrazverstka** food requisitioning by the state during the period of War Communism (1918 – 1921). The requisitioning was carried out by **prodotryads** (food brigades)

**raion** an administrative unit, a subdivision of a uyezd. The village of Gulyaypole was the administrative centre of a raion (also named Gulyaypole) which included several other (much smaller) villages and hamlets.

revkom Revolutionary Committee. After the October Revolution of 1917 local Soviets set up revkoms to organize the military defense of the Revolution. A gubrevkom was a revkom for a whole province (gubernia).

**RPAU(m)** Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine (Makhnovist), the official name of the Insurgent Army.

**RKP(b)** Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik); its Moscow branch was run by the MK **RKP(b)**.



## Glossary

**ataman** Cossack term for chieftain.

**batko** Ukrainian for “little father” but also a military title similar to the Russian ataman.

**Cheka** street name derived from the acronym **VChK** which stands for the “All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Profiteering and Corruption,” the original secret police organization set up by the Bolsheviks shortly after taking power. The **MChK** was the Moscow branch of this organization. The **VChK** became the **GPU** (State Political Directorate) in 1922, and later the **OGPU** (1924) and the **NKVD** (1934).

**ex** abbreviated form for “expropriation.” Exes were carried out by “ex-ists”

**gubernia** an administrative unit which can roughly be translated as “province.” Yekaterinoslav was the administrative centre of a gubernia (also named Yekaterinoslav) which included several uyezds (including Alexandrovsk Uyezd).

**Gubkom** provincial committee of the Communist Party

**Gulyaypole Anarcho-Communist Group** formed in 1917 from remnants of the Union of Poor Peasants. As a member of this group Nestor Makhno had to submit to its discipline even at the height of his powers.

**ispolkom** the executive committee of a local soviet.

**KAD** Commission for Anti-Makhnovist Activities (1920–1921)

**Komnezam** Committee of the Poor, a institution of War Communism used by the Communist to help with the prodrazverstka

the nucleus of the Insurgent Army had shrunk to 30 people. In particular, contact between the remnants of Makhnovist groups and units was maintained by the surviving agents of the Kontrrazvedka. Thus on February 16, 1920, the Shtarm, then hiding underground, received a secret agent from the 4<sup>th</sup> Crimean Corps who told about its collapse.<sup>23</sup> The Kontrrazvedka mapped out a route through the numerous RKKA units which were engaged in mopping-up operations in the Makhnovist region, helping the Makhnovists to avoid open conflict with the superior forces of the enemy.

The agent network sought out objectives for attack: for example, on February 18 the supply section of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was located at Pologi Station. Ten machine guns were removed and 12 large guns disabled (the bolts were removed).<sup>24</sup> On February 21 the presence in Gulai-Polye of army transport wagons carrying cash was discovered by the Kontrrazvedka. Two million rubles were seized, and applied to the payroll of the insurgents.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the rebirth of the RPAU(m) — the attracting of insurgents back into its ranks, the provisioning of the army, its famous raids and victories — this would be unthinkable without the Kontrrazvedka. Moreover, the Kontrrazvedka continued to punish Makhnovists who had committed crimes. Thus, according to Golik’s diary, there was hiding in the village of Bolshoi Yanisol the former commander of the Yekaterinoslav garrison Lashkevich, who squandered 5.5 million rubles of contributions collected for the army’s treasury. Golik writes: “There was a meeting of commanders which pronounced the death penalty for Lashkevich. My lads carried out the sentence”<sup>26</sup> From these lines it is evident that Golik had a certain group of his “lads,” most likely belonging to the Kontr-

<sup>23</sup> V. Bilash, **Na pasputye** [At the Parting of the Ways], **MMD**, p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> V. Befash and V. F. Belash, op. cit, p. 392.

<sup>25</sup> Dnevnik nachalnika makhnovskoy kontrrazvedki L. Golik [The Diary of L. Golik, Chief of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka], **MMD**, p. 168.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 170.

razvedka. Most likely it was from this group that an “agent” arrived from Makhno at Belashs group in Novospassovsky on May 8.<sup>27</sup>

A theme demanding a separate investigation is the duel of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka with the Cheka. Here I can only touch briefly on its more dramatic episodes. Still in the spring of 1918 the Komsomol member M. Spector was assigned by the Nikolayev Cheka to infiltrate the “Nabat” federation. In “Nabat” as well as the Makhnovshchina he was well known under the name M. Boychenko. Besides him the group of Chekists in the Makhnovshchina included the sailor I. Loboda and the soldier V. Naydenov who worked in the Makhnovist Shtarm. Among other things, this group counted among its achievements the provocation of quarrels between Makhno and Grigoryev.<sup>28</sup> On June 20, 1920 while the Special Combat Group of the SRPU(m) was stationed in the village of Turkenovka, two Red terrorists were arrested: the former agent of the Insurgent Army Kontrrazvedka F. Glushchenko and the professional criminal Ya. Kostyukhin. Their assignment was to murder Makhno. The failure of this attempt was due to Glushchenko giving himself up voluntarily.

At the beginning of May, 1920, Dzherzhinsky himself was put in charge of pacifying the rear area of the Southwest Front. With his appearance is connected the Cheka terror in Ukraine aimed at annihilating Makhnovists, anarchists and “ex-ists” — brigands. In particular, Glushchenko and Kostyukhin were members of the “Special Strike Group of the Cheka for Struggle with Banditism,” which was directed by Martinov, a participant in the storming of the Kraskovo dacha of MOAP. According to Arshinov, this group was staffed not with Chekists, but ... anarchists and criminals condemned to the death penalty. “The

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<sup>27</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, op. *tit.*, p. 399,

<sup>28</sup> Spektor, Mark Borisovich, V logovye Makhno [In Makhno’s Lair], *Podvlg* [ 5, Moscow (1969), p. 399–400.

## Notes

**MMD = Nestor Ivanovich Makhno. Vospominanniya, materialy I dokumenty I** Nestor Ivanovich Makhno. [Memoirs, Materials and Documents], Kiev (1991), p. 161.

“The Makhnovshchina was an event of extraordinary breadth, grandeur and importance, which unfolded with exceptional force ... undergoing a titanic struggle against all forms of reaction.”<sup>13</sup> And let us remember that without the Kontrrazvedka this struggle would have been lost much earlier. In which case the Makhnovshchina would generally not been able to develop its full strength and show the world the heights of the human spirit liberated from authority.

And one more important observation. Anarchists are usually depicted in one of two modes: either as romantic idealists cut off from real life — inexperienced youth or senile oldsters; or as degenerate criminal types, physically incapable of living in “normal society.” To the State and, with its encouragement, conformist citizens generally, it is convenient to perceive people who uphold a different way of organizing society as “abnormal.” The Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka, the unique organ of defence of the emerging alternative future, shows better than any other anarchist structure how competent, sensible, composed, and resourceful people can be who are true to the anarchist ideal. May they rest in peace and may their memory live forever.

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<sup>13</sup> V. Volin, preface to P. Arshinov, **Istoria makhnovskogo dvizheniya (1918–1921)** [History of the Makhnovist Movement (1918–1921)], Moscow (1996), p. 7.

agents in this group were recruited exclusively from former robbers sentenced to be shot who, in order to save their lives, promised to work for the Cheka... Their links to the anarchist movement were mainly military.”<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, besides robbers, Arshinov also named anarchists in the ranks of the Special Strike Force: Peter Sidorov, Tima-Ivan Petrakov, Zhenya Ermakov, Chal-don, and Burtsev, and the Kharkov anarcho-individualist known as “Big Nicholas.”

«Knowing many of the clandestine addresses of the underground from the times of the Denikinists, they burst into apartments and literally carried out massacres... all the anarchists known to them to be more or less hostile to the Bolshevik authorities were arrested and shot.”<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that, according to Kubanin, Chaldon arrived in the Makhnovshchina as part of Chernyak’s group,<sup>31</sup> so he may have been a Makhnovist kontrrazvednik. Kostyukin took part in the operations of the Special Strike Force in Kharkov, Yekater-inoslav, and Odessa. At an inquiry into the assassination attempt, it was clarified that the plan had been developed personally by the head of the All-Ukrainian Cheka Mantsev, along with Martinov and Glushchenko. Kostyukin and Glushchenko were also supposed to recruit Zinkovsky.<sup>32</sup> On June 21 both terrorists were shot.

In June, 1920, Makhno tried to transfer his partisan warfare to the rear of Wrangel’s Russian Army, which had occupied Northern Tavria. Dzerzhinsky pointed to the undesirability for the Reds of such a development, evidently fearing an alliance of the Makhnovists with the Whites. From Belash’s memoirs it is possible to understand that the top-secret location of the place where the Makhnovist vanguard would cross through the front line was reported to the Cheka by its informants in

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<sup>29</sup> P. Arshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 111.

<sup>31</sup> M. Kubanin, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>32</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

the Makhnovshchina — I. Gordeyev and M. Boychenko.<sup>33</sup> As a result on June 24 the vanguard ran into an ambush set by the 520<sup>th</sup>, 521<sup>st</sup>, and 522<sup>nd</sup> infantry regiments and was practically annihilated. Out of 2,000 cavalry only 300 riders and 200 dismounted soldiers were left. Makhno, wounded in this battle, blamed Zinkovsky for the disaster. According to Spector, he screamed: “What happened to the bloody razvedka! Why didn’t they warn us? I’m going to shoot somebody!...”<sup>34</sup>

The raids of the Insurgent Army in the summer of 1920 were marked by the pitiless nature of the Soviet-Makhnovist struggle. Thus on July 13 the Chaplino group of VOKhR annihilated the Makhnovist group of Klein. Two thousand (!) Makhnovist prisoners were shot by the Chaplino force.<sup>35</sup> The Reds carried out massive repressions in relation to the peaceful population — who were considered “accomplices of the Makhnovshchina.” The peasants of “Makhnovist” villages were liable to be seized as hostages or deported to Siberia. As evidence for the latter we can look at the demands of the Makhnovist delegation to Kharkov in the autumn of 1920. On the basis of the political part of the agreement with the Soviet authorities, the delegation identified the number of persons deported by the Bolsheviks and eligible to return (mainly peasants) — as over 200,000 (!).<sup>36</sup> Naturally, such actions provoked a corresponding reaction from the Makhnovist side — Black Terror. Thus already on July 15 Klein in revenge raided Grishino and wiped out all the Soviet organizations there.

According to Belash, the second raid through Yekalerinoslav, Kharkov, and Poltava provinces “was characterized by the destruction of the state apparatus and terror directed against administrative officials (chairs of revkoms and kom-

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 412.

<sup>34</sup> M. Spector, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

<sup>35</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. tit.*, p. 427.

<sup>36</sup> S. P. Melgunov, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

natural that in the rear of the Volunteer Army, under martial law, that the Kontrrazvedka developed a rather formidable repressive apparatus which the VRS had difficulty controlling. However it is also possible to draw the opposite conclusion from this: for most of the time of existence of the Makhnovist movement the Kontrrazvedka was smaller, proportional to the amount of territory controlled. Its function was more concentrated on basic reconnaissance and the struggle with hostile agent networks, and less to the repressions of the Black Terror. Finally, it was more subject to control of the main elected organ of the Makhnovshchina.

In the history of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka we confront the thorny question of the relationship of anarchists to secret services and punitive organs. The most freedom-loving ideology and the principled enemy of any kind of compulsion, anarchism was always hostile to structures similar to those of its chief enemy — the State. Nevertheless, any active organization of anarchists was compelled to make use of weapons and mechanisms of “the old society” in order to pave the way towards an anarchical future. Compelled for the simple reason that there were no other effective mechanisms. The main question here is whether the anarchists could control these mechanisms or would there be yet another State regenerated under their, albeit black, banners. This question was faced in full measure by one of the most important anarchist movements in the history of humanity — the Makhnovshchina.

The history of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka displays all the traps and temptations of power which await human weakness in the process of making use of such a dangerous weapon. But it also displays the steadfastness and will power of people who find in themselves the strength to recognize and offer resistance to the degeneration of this weapon into the normal murderousness of a statist secret service. I have no intention of idealizing or even justifying the retributive politics of the anarchists during the Civil War. But let us recall Volin:

RKKA, on January 19, 1920, in Gulai-Polye the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division shot typhus-stricken Makhnovists. Among those executed was the kontrrazvednik of the “Black Sotnia” Aleksandr Lepetchenko. The Crimean group of the Insurgent Army escaped from the battles in Tavria but on November 30, 1920, at the city of Orekhov found itself in a cauldron surrounded by overwhelming Red forces. During the battle the head of the field Kontrrazvedka Lev Golik suffered a heart attack and died. In early January 1921, Grigory Vasilevsky, a kontrrazvednik of the “Black Sotnia” and one of the chairpersons of KAD, was slain in battle with the 8<sup>th</sup> Division of the Red Cossacks.

Against this background of loyalty stands out almost the only traitor from the ranks of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka — Fedor Glushchenko. Arrested by Chekists, he agreed to work in the Special Strike Group of the VChK only in order to warn Makhno about the attempt being prepared against him. Arriving in Turkenovka, Glushchenko immediately gave himself up along with his partner Kostyukin. Before they were shot Kostyukin cursed Glushchenko for leading him there and then betraying him.<sup>10</sup> By an irony of fate, of the founders of the Kontrrazvedka there remained alive only its mastermind Max Chernyak (Cherednyak). After heading the Siberian group of Nikiforovas detachment in June, 1919, he somehow survived. Later he surfaced abroad. In 1924, based in Warsaw, he maintained contact with the remnants of the Kharkov-based group “Nabat.” Acting as a courier, he frequently crossed into the USSR.<sup>11</sup> According to Belash, he was still alive in 1930.<sup>12</sup>

The greatest quantity of references to Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka and its terror occur in the autumn of 1919 — the peak of the Makhnovist federation of Free Soviets and the time when the Liberated Zone embraced the most territory. It was

<sup>10</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

<sup>11</sup> “The Self-Composed Testimony of the Accused, Victor Fedorovich Belash,” [www.makhno.ru/lit/Belash/Beiash.php](http://www.makhno.ru/lit/Belash/Beiash.php)

<sup>12</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, note 74, p. 584.

nezams, militia, Chekists, punitive detachments, etc.)”<sup>37</sup> The Kontrrazvedka “purged” the cities and villages occupied by the Makhnovists of Soviet and Party workers. That’s what took place, for example, in Izyum.<sup>38</sup> Certainly, as a result of the re-organization of the Insurgent Army, all sentences passed through KAD. If the common goal of the summer raids of 1920 was to bring about an upsurge of the peasant movement outside the Makhnovist region, then the occupation of cities served the purpose of replenishing the army treasury and capturing booty, which the insurgents distributed to the peasants. This provided the peasants with some measure of revenge for the violence done to them by the prodrazverstka (food surplus appropriation system). For example, a village in the Lugansk region in the space of one week was raided by detachments from: the RKKA and the Labour Army; the Metalworkers’, Miners’, and Soviet Employees’ unions; the Gubkom and the revkom; as well as individual factories and production combines.<sup>39</sup>

During the time of the raids in the summer and autumn of 1920, the agent networks of the Kontrrazvedka identified the presence of supplies or money in various cities. Thus the occupation of cities by the Makhnovists wasn’t arbitrary but had the object of replenishing the supplies and finances of the Insurgent Army. For example, agents detected the presence of 22 million rubles in the Starobelsk bank. On September 3 the city was taken, with the seizure of major spoils, and money was paid out as wages to the insurgents. Twenty-two party and soviet workers were shot.<sup>40</sup> Another goal for the Makhnovists was the seizure of sugar refineries, for example,

<sup>37</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. tit.*, p. 428.

<sup>38</sup> V. Volkovinsky, *op. Cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>39</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 437.

<sup>40</sup> T. A. Bespechny & T. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 252; T. A. Bespechny & T. T. Bukreyeva, **Nestor Makhno: pravda i legendi** [Nestor Makhno: truth and legends], Donetsk, 1996, p. 136–137.

the Tsiglerovsky, Vengersky, and Glebensky plants.<sup>41</sup> And later, in the winter of 1920 – 1921, the insurgents seized 18 Ukrainian refineries and requisitioned 17,000 poods of sugar.<sup>42</sup> This commodity, scarce in the villages, functioned as a currency used to pay the peasants for supplies and horses.<sup>43</sup>

One of the most brilliant, but practically unresearched, pages in the history of the Kontrrazvedka of the SRPU(m) was its operation in the Makhnovist units of Wrangel's Russian Army (the so-called "White Makhnovists"). As is well known, from the end of the spring of 1920, Wrangel's headquarters tried to secure Makhno's support before the White advance out of Crimea, and White propaganda spread the myth that such an alliance had already been established. Some of the insurgents naively fell for this hoax; for others it was simply convenient. But the result was that in the Russian army auxiliary units were formed under Makhno's name. For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> Insurgent Division of Volodin; and the regiments, brigades, and detachments of Chaly, Ishchenko, Yatsenko, Savchenko, Grishin, Prochan, Samko, Khmara, and Golik. Officially the staff of the Insurgent Army and Makhno personally angrily rejected the overtures of Wrangel and the former insurgent commanders associated with the Russian Army. The White enoys were shot.

But the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka undoubtedly carried on work in the ranks of the White-Makhnovists, as Belash indicates with the following words: "The Shtarm issued directions to these detachments (to Volodin, Prochan, Savchenko, Ishchenko, Samko, Chaloma, and Yatsenko) about ceasing military action against the Red Army, informing them of our alliance and our advance against Wrangel. I recall I wrote that they should not break off their 'peaceable' relations with Wrangel for the time being, but be prepared to strike him from

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<sup>41</sup> V. Belash and V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 541.

<sup>43</sup> V. Chop, **Nestor Ivanovich Makhno**, Zaporozhye (1998), p. 54.

former chairman of KAD N. Zuychenko, Ye. Boychenko, and P. Karetnikov.<sup>7</sup>

Zinkovsky, naturally, denied his guilt. But, in distinction from others, he didn't save his own skin by "ratting" on his former colleagues. Although, as head of the Kontrrazvedka he certainly know enough about them. Recalling the lies of the "Great Terror" it's possible to believe that Zinkovsky fell an innocent victim of Stalinist repression. For his son Vadim, a veteran of the Armed Forces of the USSR, whose sister died for the "Soviet homeland" in 1942, it was psychologically necessary to believe in this innocence when, in 1990, he was informed of his father's rehabilitation. But, on the other hand, there were thousands of Makhnovists in and around Odessa with close connections with the Foreign Centre. It is by no means proven with whom "Leva" played fairly and whom he used as a screen. It is equally possible to believe that Zinkovsky remained an anarchist till the end of his days "by virtue of my political convictions" as he declared at his interrogation. Lev Zinkovsky was shot on September 25, 1938, in the cellar of the Kiev NRVD<sup>8</sup> and buried somewhere in Bykovna, one of the sections of the Darnitsky woodland park complex,<sup>9</sup>

Practically none of the other leading kontrrazvedniks outlived their comrade. Nor did they betray their cause. Here is a bit about several of them. Somewhere near Uman, most likely in the battle at Peregonovka on September 26, 1919, which sealed the fate of the White movement, Isidor Lyuty was killed fighting as a member of Makhno's "Black Sotnia" Surrounded by Chekists in the dacha in Kraskovo on November 5 1919, Yakov Glazgon along with the five last members of MOAP blew themselves up along with their bomb lab. After the breakup of the Insurgent Army due to typhus and the treachery of the

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<sup>7</sup> F. Zin ko, *op. cit.*, p. S3.

<sup>8</sup> V. Zinkovsky, **Anarkhist i chekist** [Anarchist and Chekist], [www.zavtra.ru/cai/veil/data/zavtra/01/371/52.html](http://www.zavtra.ru/cai/veil/data/zavtra/01/371/52.html)

<sup>9</sup> T. A. Bespechny and T. T. Bukreyeva, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

department of the Odessa OGPU. Officially he and his brother, stationed in Tiraspol, ran an agent network in Rumania, using Makhnovists living there and the Foreign Centre itself. Their work was distinguished and they received awards from the GPU-NKVD. But when, in 1935, the whole network collapsed and an inquiry was started, it turned out that the real goal of the brothers' return was the creation of a Makhnovist underground centre in Odessa. According to the testimony of the former Makhnovist I. Chuprin, the Zadovs "infiltrated the GPU under Makhno's orders in order to form underground Makhnovist detachments in Ukraine."<sup>3</sup>

According to materials pulled together in 1937, Zinkovsky had penetrated the Soviet secret police structure especially in order to ensure the safe return of the Makhnovists from Rumania and their legalization in Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> Belash's testimony says that Zinkovsky surrounded himself with veteran Makhnovists who had been amnestied.<sup>5</sup> The underground Makhnovist organization in Odessa was the connecting link between the Foreign Centre and the former Makhnovists in Gulai-Polye. Moreover, it was planned to create several Makhnovist detachments in the Odessa region itself, as there were thousands of former insurgents living there. Even after the death of Makhno in 1934 Zinkovsky continued to receive instructions from the Foreign Centre. When the Odessa Makhnovist organization was exposed in August 1937, it consisted of 90 people.<sup>6</sup> Besides Chuprin and Belash, testimony about Zinkovsky was also given by other Makhnovists: the

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<sup>3</sup> F. Zinko, **Koye-cho iz istorii Odesskoy ChK** [Who's Who from the History of the Odessa ChK], Odessa (1998), p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> V. A. Savchenko, **Makhno**, Kharkhov, 2005, p. 400.

<sup>5</sup> **Sobstvennortichniye pokazaniya obvinyayemogo Belasha Viktora Fedorovicha** [The Confession of the Accused, Victor Fedorovich Befash], [www.makhno.ru/lit/Belash/Belash.phe](http://www.makhno.ru/lit/Belash/Belash.phe)

<sup>6</sup> R. Fattelberg Si V. Savchenko, **Levye Zadovu bylo suzhenno ne roditcyia vOdessye, no po-gibnut** [Lev Zadov's destiny was not to be born in Odessa, but to die there], [www.makhno.ru/other/2.php](http://www.makhno.ru/other/2.php).

the rear when ordered to do so by the Soviet."<sup>44</sup> These orders were delivered by a secret agent. The relevant order relates to the beginning of October 1920 and graphically demonstrates the results of the final stage of work by the Kontrrazvedka in the "Makhnovist" auxiliary units of Wrangel.

It's probable that at the moment this order was issued, the Shtarm already completely considered the White-Makhnovist units as their own "fifth column" in Wrangel's rear area. Belash's words testify to this: "The Soviet government acknowledged the presence of our (*my emphasis* – V. A.) formations in Wrangel's rear area and counted on their "favourable" participation."<sup>45</sup> Of course, this was dependent on the "favourable" participation of Wrangel in the formation, arming, and provisioning of these units. For the Makhnovists, constantly experiencing an acute shortage of ammunition and equipment, this was such a valuable windfall that one is compelled to imagine a planned operation by the Shtarm as part of the revival of the Insurgent Army (after its dissolution in the winter of 1919–1920) by equipping its own units at the expense of the enemy. To reject this logical version of events is only possible because of the absence today of its evidentiary base.

But, even if one sticks to the view that the White-Makhnovists were not a premeditated scheme of the Shtarm, it is necessary to concur that, even if they were created by a deception, these detachments were transformed into "our formations" of the SRPU(m) through long, hard work by the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka in their ranks. As a result of this work, the White Makhnovists (or at least some of these detachments) began to carry out implicitly the orders of the Shtarm. This is proven, for example, by the actions of Volodin's division near Kakhovka. At that point after October 8 Wrangel created a strike force composed of the Babiyev's

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<sup>44</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 452.

<sup>45</sup> (*ibid.*, p. 452).

Kuban division, Barbovich's cavalry corps, two guard infantry divisions, and the Batko Makhno (Volodin's) cavalry division. The strike force advanced in the direction of Nikopol and Khortitsa with the aim of cutting off the Reds' Kakhovka bridgehead and bringing about a junction with the Polish Army.

If this operation had been successful, the Bolsheviks would undoubtedly have been driven out of Ukraine again. However the White attack got bogged down as a result of the "anti-Wrangel actions" of Volodin. When he received his orders from the Shtarm, he withdrew his division of 800 cavalry from the front and, between Nikopol and Alexandrovsk, began to harass the rear of the attacking groups, killing officers. His goal was the annihilation of the staff of General Kutepov's 1<sup>st</sup> Army. Troops were thrown into battle against him and his division was disarmed. Volodin himself was shot on October 25 in Melitopol.<sup>46</sup> There is no doubt that such murderous orders could be executed only under conditions of complete subordination of the White Makhnovists to the staff of the Insurgent Army. Only the agent network of the Kontrrazvedka could ensure such conditions.

Already at the beginning of the Makhnovist operation against Wrangel in Northern Tavria, the Shtarm received from the White Makhnovist units not only intelligence about the enemy's rear area, but also direct assistance in penetrating the front line. For example, the commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Batko Makhno brigade, Chaly, by order of the Shtarm crossed the front line in the middle of October, 1920 and arrived at the Insurgent Army.<sup>47</sup> As a result, Chaly's brigade allowed the Makhnovist cavalry of Marchenko and Petrenko's group to pass through the front and then conducted them to the rear

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<sup>46</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

<sup>47</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

## Afterword

Up until the downfall of the Makhnovist movement, the agent network of the insurgents was not a separate entity composed of kontrrazvedniki but was based on the system of underground Makhnovist organizations, local partisan units, and collection points for food and other supplies and the exchange of horses. This was the powerful grass roots system of the movement. Even after Makhno went abroad, this system was not uncovered by the Chekists<sup>1</sup> and for many long years served as a contact network for former Makhnovists. According to Dubovik, the Makhnovist insurgency in the form of armed struggle persisted in Ukraine until the middle of the 1920s. Later, underground groups of former Makhnovists sprang up in Gulai-Polye, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa, Maryupol, and elsewhere right up until 1938. In that year was annihilated the group referred to by the NKVD under the dubious name "The Gulai-Polye Military-Makhnovist Counterrevolutionary Insurgent Regiment."<sup>2</sup> This name smacks of the falsifications of the "Great Terror,"

In 1925 the Makhnovist Foreign Centre in Bucharest, established earlier by Zinkovsky, became more active. Makhno himself began to prepare for a campaign in Ukraine. Zinkovsky and his brother D. Zadov-Zotov had crossed the Rumanian frontier and surrendered in 1924; in the following year they were amnestied. Zinkovsky was recruited by the foreign

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<sup>1</sup> V. Chop, *op. cit.*, p. 54–55.

<sup>2</sup> A. V. Dubovik, **Anarkhicheskoye podpolye v Ukrainye v 1920-1930-x gg.** [The Anarchist Underground in Ukraine in the 1920's and 1930's], [www.s-a-u.org/home/publications/anarh\\_pod](http://www.s-a-u.org/home/publications/anarh_pod)



During the period of the next lull in the fighting (March — April, 1921) the insurgents were helped by the heretofore hostile German colonists. Embittered by the repressions of Soviet power, they allowed the Makhnovist underground to make use of their colonies and carried out reconnaissance themselves, informing the Shtarm about the movements of Red forces.<sup>65</sup> At that time the chief of staff of the RKKA reported secret agents of the insurgents had penetrated “into all the pores of the military organism.”<sup>66</sup> Even from the underground, the Shtarm of the SRPU(m) with the help of the Kontrrazvedka directed the operations of the dispersed insurgent units.<sup>67</sup> Finally, one can consider as the last action of the Kontrrazvedka Zinkovsky’s efforts in organizing the departure of the Makhnovist detachment across the border in August 1921. At the Dniestr crossing, Zinkovsky with 20 insurgents, dressed in Red Army uniforms and having the appearance of a punitive detachment, approached a detachment of border guards. Zinkovsky blunted the vigilance of the guards by asking: “Did you summon us to help? Where are the Makhnovists? It’s time to finish them off?” Then the Makhnovists disarmed them and crossed into Rumania.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p. 554.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p. 555.

<sup>67</sup> V. Zinkovsky, **Anarkhist i chekist** [Anarchist and Chekist], [www.zavtra.ru/cai/veil/data/zavtra/01/371/52.html](http://www.zavtra.ru/cai/veil/data/zavtra/01/371/52.html)

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, p. 573.

of the Drosdovsky Division.<sup>48</sup> The outcome of the Kontrrazvedka’s work in transforming the White Makhnovists into a “fifth column” of the SRPU(m) was the penetration of the two Makhnovist groups of Petrenko and Zabudko into the rear of the Don Army in the zone of the White Makhnovists. As a result of this operation, the Don Army was cut off from Wrangels main forces and began to retreat in disorder.<sup>49</sup>

The goal of this raid by the Makhnovist groups was not so much to carry out Frunzes fantastic order to seize the Perekop isthmus. According to Verstyuk, the chief goal was rather to extract from the forces of the enemy the insurgent detachments of Volodin, Chaly, Yatsenko, Savchenko, Samko, Ishchenko, and Golik.<sup>50</sup> Taking account of all the circumstances, it is possible to conclude that in raiding northern Tavria the Makhnovists were bringing to fruition the schemes of the Kontrrazvedka. The goal — the reinforcement of the Insurgent Army with White Makhnovists. And these were serious additions. In the reserve of the Don Army stood Samko’s detachment — 400 infantry, Ishchenko’s brigade — 700 infantry, and Golik’s regiment — 200 infantry. In the reserve of Kutepov’s 1<sup>st</sup> Army stood: Chaly s brigade — 1,000 infantry, Yatsenkos brigade — 500 infantry, and Savchenkos brigade — 500 infantry and 200 cavalry.<sup>51</sup> Thus through the efforts of the Kontrrazvedka the attacking Insurgent Army received a new, well-armed brigade composed of 3,300 infantry and 200 cavalry.

A promising approach for future research would look at the participation of Zinkovsky in the campaign against Wrangel by Karetnikov’s Crimean group in which Zinkovsky held the rank of commandant. Golik — the Military Kontrrazvedka chief —

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<sup>48</sup> V. Golovanov, *op. cit*, p. 446,

<sup>49</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. tit*, p. 469.

<sup>50</sup> V. Bilash, **Po tilam Vrangelya** [In Wrangel’s Rear Areas], **MMD**, note, p. 108.

<sup>51</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. cit*, p. 461–462.

also went to Crimea with this group. According to the source materials available to me about the Makhnovshchina, these two insurgents were always involved in Kontrrazvedka work. Even though during the last period of the movement,

Zinkovsky was the head of Batko's body guard, this didn't mean that he ceased to carry out intelligence functions. This participation of the leading members of the Kontrrazvedka in the Crimean campaign, possibly accompanied by their co-workers, can be viewed as one more indirect confirmation of contacts of the Kontrrazvedka with the White Makhnovist units and with the agent network in Crimea. Finally, the forced crossing of the Sivash lagoon on November 8 1920, a complex and risky operation, must have been preceded by a careful reconnaissance of the different routes.<sup>52</sup>

The liquidation of Martinov's terrorists in June 1920 was not the final clash between the Insurgent Army and the Cheka's Special Strike Force. Already after the Crimean operation and the destruction of Wrangel, the Bolsheviks began to get ready to break the Starobelsk Agreement. As part of the preparations of an attack by the Reds on Gulai-Polye, in November 1920 a whole detachment of 40 members of Martinov's gang were sent from Kharkov into the Liberated Zone with the goal of disrupting the Makhnovshchina and, in case of failure, liquidating its leadership. Ten members of this bunch arrived in Gulai-Polye itself in the guise of anarchist-universalists with the task of liquidating the leadership of the SRPU(m). However the Kharkov group had been infiltrated by agents of the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka, led by Cherednyak's former adjutant Mirsky. Thanks to his secret reports, the Shtarm from the very beginning of the Chekist operation knew all about the plans of Martinov's agents.

According to Arshinov, on November 23, 1920, several days before the Reds attacked the Makhnovists, the Kontrrazvedka

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 473.

unit gathered information from the local inhabitants. On campaign, the cavalry reconnaissance unit acted as a vanguard; 1/8 of its complement was dispatched still farther forward and in lateral directions. During armed clashes, the field reconnaissance unit and the Kontrrazvedka did not take part in the fighting but carried out intelligence functions, defended the rear and flanks of the army's transport, and dispatched separate groups in various directions. The Kontrrazvedka, together with quartermaster personnel, ensured the provisioning of the army by means of raids. They were dispatched to villages along the march route and, when the main forces arrived, they were met by tachankas with fresh horses, food, and forage. In this way, the replacement of horses and replenishment of supplies could take place without halting the movement of the army. The Kontrrazvedka assured not only the elusiveness, but also the continuity of motion of the Insurgent Army.<sup>63</sup>

During the period at the end of 1920 — beginning of 1921 when the Insurgent Army was dispersed into a multitude of independent detachments and small groups, contact between them was also maintained by means of secret agents. Contact was also made with Red units which showed an interest in transferring their allegiance to Makno. For example, at the beginning of December 1920 agents arrived from Masklakov, commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Brigade, and reported that he was prepared to switch sides along with his brigade but was waiting for a propitious moment. In the meantime he was trying to stir up the commanders of nearby divisions. Secret agents sent to the 30<sup>th</sup> Division reported that a purge was being carried out of officers sympathetic to the Makhnovists and its prospects of transferring had collapsed. Agents sent to establish contact with Mironov's 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Army did not return.<sup>64</sup> Probably they were exposed and annihilated.

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 506, 509.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 525–526.

by the Makhnovists, the brigade was annihilated in 30 minutes. A Red battalion which sped to the scene found only a handful of “crazed Kirghiz trick riders from whom nothing sensible could be learned except for the words ‘massaya Makhno’, who had cut the whole brigade to pieces.”<sup>61</sup> Such actions, supported by a professional intelligence service, led to the utter demoralization of nearby Red units and raised the military elan of the Makhnovists to the utmost. The Kirghiz soldiers who returned from captivity told of the Makhnovists being in high spirits. And this was going on while the Makhnovists were supposedly in the grip of the Bolshevik colossus!

During this period the Kontrrazvedka reported to the Operations Section of the SRPU(m), which consisted of two people — the leaders of the Makhnovshchina — the Batko himself and Belash. Basing itself on information supplied by the Kontrrazvedkas agent networks, this department designed the tactical operations of the army. Belash mentions that this department was independent of the Soviet, did not submit its plans to the plenum of the SRPU(m), but only transmitted them to the Shtarm.<sup>62</sup> This autonomy can probably be explained by considerations of secrecy in view of the activization of a Cheka network inside the Makhnovshchina starting from 1920. When battles took place, the conduct of operations was entrusted to the fully empowered Soviet, which carried them through on its own responsibility. The Operations Section provided general direction to the Kontrrazvedka: this function was carried out by Makhno himself, but sometimes he was replaced by Belash or Petrenko.

Besides the Military Kontrrazvedka the Shtarm had its own fiel cavalry reconnaissance unit which patrolled the main thoroughfares in which direction an attack by the Reds might be anticipated. Ranging over a distance of 10 to 15 versts, this

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<sup>61</sup> M. Ribakov, *op. Cit*, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. tit*, p. 505.

arrested nine agents of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division, which was trying to establish the current lodgings of the Batko, members of the staff of the SRPU(m), and prominent Makhnovist commanders, so they could be rounded up when Gulai-Polye was captured by Red forces.<sup>53</sup> According to Belash, when on November 24, 1920 the Cheka terrorists arrived with bombs at Makhnos quarters, where there was a gathering to celebrate some holiday, they were arrested. Sentenced by KAD, seven of them were shot. Furthermore, thanks to Mirsky’s information about the forthcoming general onslaught of the Reds against the Makhnovists and, in particular, of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division against Gulai-Polye,<sup>54</sup> the Shtarm was not taken unawares.

Thus it was only thanks to the Kontrrazvedka that the core of the Makhnovist movement avoided destruction in the autumn of 1920. And judging from Belash’s information about the arrival of the arrival of the Makhnovist kontrrazvedniks together with Martinov’s agents directly from Kharkov, one can deduce that the Military Section must have begun to prepare a response to the Special Strike Force immediately after the attempt on Makhos life. Even when there was an agreement in effect with the Reds (or not long before this) it was considered wise to infiltrate Makhnovist secret agents into the Cheka’s secret unit for struggle with banditism. Or, as a possible variant, to re-recruit anarchists who formed the backbone of the Special Strike Force.

At the end of November 1920, two-thirds of the troops used in the Crimean operation — 58,000 soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry and 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Armies — were thrown into the battle to liquidate the Makhnovist insurgency. The Liberated Zone was literally inundated with Red units. That’s why the Insurgent Army broke up into several groups and detachments which easily escaped from their pursuers and proceeded to defeat them

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<sup>53</sup> P. Arshinov, *op. cit*, p. 123.

<sup>54</sup> A.V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. tit*, p. 487–488.

piecemeal, causing severe panic among the Red Army soldiers. These operations took place over a huge expanse from Yekaterinoslav to Berdyansk and Maryupol. And, according to a participant – the Red commander M. Ribakov – it was the skill of the Kontrrazvedka which was the key element in the freedom of manoeuvre and consequent victories of the Makhnovists.

“The spies and scouts of the Makhnovist insurgents were found in each village, on each khutor, darting here and there. Some were disguised as beggars, some as Red Army soldiers looking for their units, some as workers from a mine exchanging coal for bread, some as remorseful deserters, some as ex-Communists, even some as abandoned widows and orphans seeing “protection and justice,” etc.<sup>55</sup> The agent network of the Kontrrazvedka continued the same work in 1921. According to the testimony of the deputy chief of the Military Kontrrazvedka of the SRPU(m) N. Vorobyev: “To maintain contact between separate groups and the main staff of the band we used as kontrrazvedniks women and boys of 14–15, wearing peasant dress. They carried documents stamped by the volost ispolkom of a different gubernia. The Kontrrazvedka derived great success from the use of oldsters playing the role of vagabonds.”<sup>56</sup>

Gerasimenko supplements this information from October 1919: in the village of Khoduntsa Cossacks of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Terek Division captured a Makhnovist wagon train in which was found 400 (!) women serving in the Military Kontrrazvedka.<sup>57</sup> There’s also the episode of February 1921 with the 20-year old beauty Oksana, who arranged a concert in one of the villages for the soldiers of the International Cavalry Brigade. She then rushed to a neighbouring village to warn the Makhnovists about the Red cavalry. Oksana was arrested, released for lack

<sup>55</sup> M. Ribakov, **Makhnoskiye operatsii v 1920** [The Makhnovist Operation in 1920], **Krasnaya Armiya** [Red Army], 12 (1922), p. 12.

<sup>56</sup> M. Kubanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 169–170.

<sup>57</sup> N. V. Gerasimenko, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

of evidence, and then taken prisoner in battle as a member of a female tachanka machine gun crew which was covering the retreat of the Makhnovists. At their trial before a revolutionary tribunal the crew members told about their exploits while serving in the detachment of Marusya [Nikiforova? – V. A.]. They met their fate with indifference.<sup>58</sup>

Thanks to their agent network the Makhnovist Shtarm had access to detailed information not only about the dispositions of Red units, their strength and movements, but also about the state of morale in the various formations and even the characteristics of their commanders. According to the words of a participant in the operations against Makhno, R Ashakhanov, the Makhnovist Kontrrazvedka was so efficient, that the Makhnovists were aware of the literacy level and military competency of a certain brigade commander who couldn’t figure out the scale of a topographic map,<sup>59</sup> With the aid of his intelligence agents, Makhno could disinform the enemy about his intentions. In a letter to Arshinov, he recalled his usual modus operandi when, in March 1921, with the help of the Kontrrazvedka the Makhnovists forced one of the RKKa formations to deploy along a front for 24 hours in expectation of a battle, while the Insurgent Army was completing a forced march of 60 versts.<sup>60</sup>

The actions of the Makhnovist intelligence service were vividly displayed in the legendary destruction of the Kirghiz Brigade on December 3, 1920 at the village of Komar. According to Ribakov, the Makhnovist spies spent the night in Komar along with the Kirghiz Brigade, then left the village in carts while it was still dark and alerted their own units, stationed in Bogatir. As a result of concentrated fire followed by an attack

<sup>58</sup> A. V. Belash & V. F. Belash, *op. cit.*, p. 546–547.

<sup>59</sup> P. Ashakhmanov, **Makhno i ego taktika** [Makhno and His Tactics], **Krasny komandir** [Red Commander] 24–25, (November – December, 1921), p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> P. Arshinov, *op. cit.*, p. 132.