

PERIODICALS OF THE RUSSIAN LIBERATION COMMITTEE IN ENGLAND
(1919 - 1921)

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The Russian Liberation Committee organized in London in 1919 had the purpose to inform the western society about the events taking place in Russia. The Committee managed to receive the latest news from Russia and spread them among the British by publishing several periodicals in English. However, publishing Russian periodicals in London appeared to be a complicated task.

Keywords: The Russian Liberation Committee, Russian periodicals in England, «The New Russia» journal, Russian émigré in London.

Conference participant

The Russian Liberation Committee was established in London in February, 1919, because of the initiative of M.I. Rostovtzeff, a Russian academician in exile, and A. V. Tyrkova-Williams, a Russian writer and a political activist of the Cadet party. M. I. Rostovtzeff was a Chairman of the Committee, and A.V. Tyrkova-Williams was a secretary of it. Moreover, prominent political activists, predominantly cadets, were admitted in the membership (P. Milukov, P. Struve, V. Nabokov). The major goal of the Committee was to inform the British society about the real situation in Russia at that time, «to contribute to the revival of Russia and to raise the prestige of Russia abroad» [1, L.18]. The Committee was located on 173 Fleet Street in London and was supported financially by the Russian entrepreneur N.X. Denisov. However, since the spring 1919 the Liberation Committee started to receive a subsidy from the government of Admiral A.V. Kolchak, which was in Omsk. The Russian Telegraph Agency (PTA) was sending the latest news from Omsk to be published in England. Informing the British about events of the Civil War in Russia became the main activity of the Liberation Committee.

The Committee, engaged in the production of leaflets in English language, distributed them both to the members of the Parliament in London and to the British politicians. More than fifty newsletters were issued during three years of the Committee's work. Having established a link with the governing centers of the Russian liberation (Omsk, Ekaterinodar Helsingfors), the Russian Liberation Committee began to report to the British press daily about the information received by telegraph from different regions of Russia. The real situation in Russia was described in detail in that newsletters: for example, difficult conditions of cultural workers, the persecution of church officials

and scholars, etc. Thus, in the issue number 7 in April, 1919 the information about the bishops of Perm, being tortured to death recently by the Bolsheviks, was published. [1]

Furthermore, in June 1919, the Russian Liberation Committee began to publish the newspaper "Rassvet" ("Dawn"), which was to extend to the north of Russia in 10-20 days after releasing. [2] The first issue was published on June 10, 1919, due to the connection with the government of Admiral Kolchak and a subsidy for publishing. Nevertheless, only two issues of the newspaper were published because of the complexity of transportation in the conditions of the Civil war in Russia, which triggered the closing of the edition's publishing.

Among published newsletters about Russia several articles should be mentioned: an essay of P.M. Milyukov «Russia and England», G. William's essay «The Spirit of the Russian Revolution» and an article of I.V. Shklovsky's «Russia under the Bolsheviks». Moreover, noteworthy are an article of A. Tyrkova-Williams «Why Soviet Russia is starving» (about the causes of hunger in Russia) and of M.I. Rostovtzeff's «Proletarian culture», which was against the activities of A.V. Lunacharsky, the first Commissar of Education and a cousin of M.I. Rostovtzeff.

In addition to the newsletters of the Russian Liberation Committee, the weekly «The New Russia» was issued since January, 1919. V.D. Nabokov and P.N. Miliukov were the editors of the journal; M.I. Rostovtzeff and A.V. Tyrkova-Williams participated actively in the preparation of the publication, as well as Tyrkova's husband - a British journalist G. Williams. Similarly, as with newsletters, materials about the latest events in Russia were published on the regular basis. Also, the journal appeared to be an informational platform to eyewitnesses,

who arrived in London directly from Russia. The magazine published articles written by K.D. and V.D. Nabokov, M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Tyrkova-Williams; an editor and a prominent political activist P.N. Miliukov wrote editorials about the Russian culture. [3]

By early 1920, the financial difficulties significantly worsened activities of the Committee. In the letter from M.I. Rostovtzeff to A.V. Tyrkova-Williams in 1920, Rostovtzeff mentioned about the main obstructions for the organization, «The Committee's role has fatally been reduced by only «the New Russia» publishing. To do anything else - with the exception of ongoing work - is almost impossible». [1, L.76] After the defeat of Wrangel's army, P.N. Miliukov refused to sign a sympathetic telegram sent by the Liberation Committee to the general Wrangel, which was resulted in his leaving the post of the head editor of «The New Russia». Also, in 1920 M.I. Rostovtzeff being disappointed in the «White movement» left England for the USA. Though A.V. Tyrkova-Williams convinced the Council of Ambassadors in Paris to grant her with some money for a new journal of the Committee. [4]

Monthly «Russian Life» was first published in London in 1920, immediately after the closing of the magazine «New Russia», and it was its continuation. Articles on the economic situation in Russia, the Red Terror, prisons, violence and devastation were published in the journal. In addition, there was a separate section, devoted to the conditions of the «intelligentsia» in Russia in the journal. As this was one of the first magazines which published the news of the death of the poet's Alexander Blok (in August 1921), and the death of the poet N. Gumilev - (published in the September, 1921) [4].

Thus, during three years of the activity of the Russian Liberation Committee in London (1919-1921), it performed an important task of informing the British

about the actual events, which took place in Russia by publishing newsletters and journals in English language.

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