

The Broken Pines
for the martyred and fallen
of the 1905 revolution

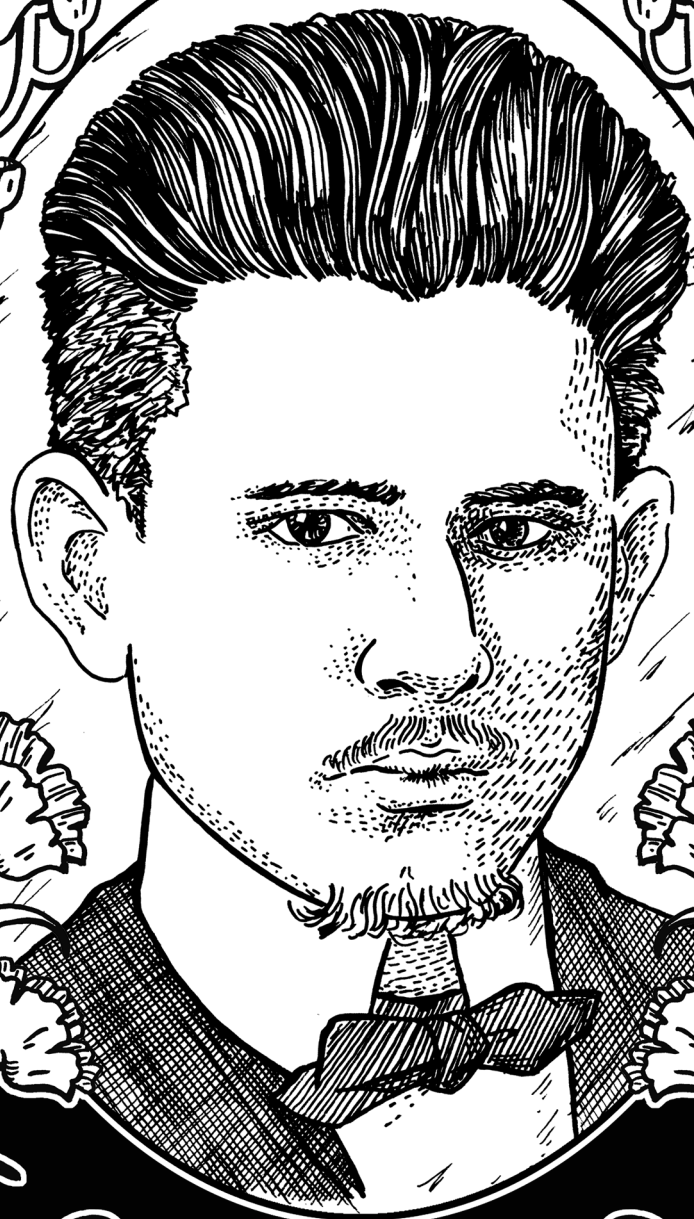
The towering pines near sea shore sands
The wind has broken with ruthless hands.
They see the bright future they long to defend
Refusing concealment and scorning to bend:

“Although you have broken us, tyrant power
The fight is not done in this dying hour.
Our very last moan hurls a challenge to fate
Each bough his sing at you, incessant in hate.”

The towering pines after breaking
Will come up from the deep
Like great ships and still
Against all storms thrust a fearless breast
Against all storms ever onward they press;
“Now hurl on your billows you dark storm pride
We’ll yet win the future where happiness bides.
For split us you may and break us you might
But we’ll win the future where dawn blazes
Bright!”

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JĀNIS ŽĀKLIS



PETER THE PAINTER

A short biography on the life of Jānis Žāklis, the infamous Peter the Painter, from the work and research of Philip Ruff's *A Towering Flame*.



Not a garland but a zine for MayDay 2023

As this is merely a small zine, footnotes and citations have not been included in the text. This is simply a cliff notes reading of the life of Jānis Žāklis, Peter the Painter, and some of the Latvian anarchists directly taken from Philip Ruff's *A Towering Flame*. None of this biographical work would have been possible to glean if not for the truly phenomenal historical work of Philip Ruff who uncovered the true identity of one of Latvia's most infamous anarchists from the world of myth, secrecy, and falsehood in what is itself, a compelling story.

Philip Ruff's *A Towering Flame* is one of the most spectacular works on the history of anarchism in Latvia and its brutal suppression by both the Czar and the Bolsheviks after him. It can not be recommended enough. So many names, acquaintances, and stories have been left out of this briefest of zines. Including theories on the trajectory of Jānis after the events at Sidney Street. Deep appreciations for Philip's generosity in all the historical work he has contributed to the running black thread of anarchist history that connects us.

The last official sighting of Jānis Žāklis was 1912 in Germany.

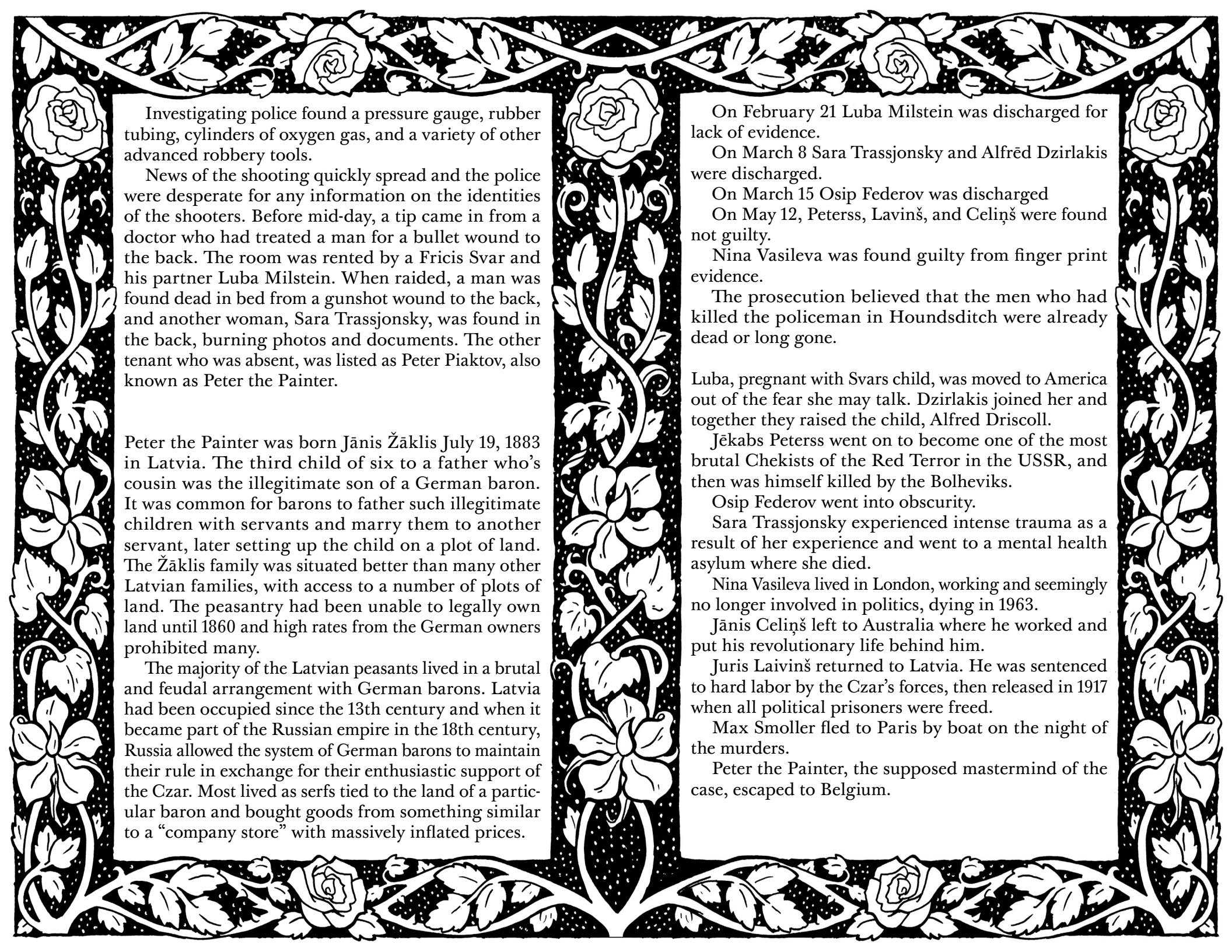


In 1910, Latvian anarchists were spread across the world, fleeing brutal repression after a failed revolution against the Czar. Their publications rapidly appeared in places like Paris, Philadelphia, New York, and London, and this often coincided with daring expropriations to support political prisoners or fund smuggling weapons, ammunition, and literature back home.

Of significant note was a failed robbery of a jeweler's safe in Houndsditch that brought together anarchist robbers, the police, the national guard, Winston Churchill, and thousands of onlookers in what become The Siege of Sidney Street; an event that resonated in British history as one of the largest slaughters of police and elevated its participants into folklore.

On Friday the 16th, December 1910, police out on a patrol stopped to investigate sounds of knocking and drilling they heard coming from the vicinity of a jeweler's shop. They knocked on the doors of surrounding flats in the Exchange Building and demanded entry. A shadowed figure led in one cop and took him into the back where he was ambushed by gunfire. Two men with pistols began firing at the police, then a third man exited the house, firing into the street to clear an escape route. As an officer tussled with one of the shooters, a fourth emerged firing, accidentally hitting his comrade in the back. The group disappeared, supporting their injured comrade and followed by a woman.

In total they had shot five policeman. Three died and two were seriously wounded, the gravest attack on police in British history.



Investigating police found a pressure gauge, rubber tubing, cylinders of oxygen gas, and a variety of other advanced robbery tools.

News of the shooting quickly spread and the police were desperate for any information on the identities of the shooters. Before mid-day, a tip came in from a doctor who had treated a man for a bullet wound to the back. The room was rented by a Fricis Svar and his partner Luba Milstein. When raided, a man was found dead in bed from a gunshot wound to the back, and another woman, Sara Trassjonsky, was found in the back, burning photos and documents. The other tenant who was absent, was listed as Peter Piaktov, also known as Peter the Painter.

Peter the Painter was born Jānis Žāklis July 19, 1883 in Latvia. The third child of six to a father who's cousin was the illegitimate son of a German baron. It was common for barons to father such illegitimate children with servants and marry them to another servant, later setting up the child on a plot of land. The Žāklis family was situated better than many other Latvian families, with access to a number of plots of land. The peasantry had been unable to legally own land until 1860 and high rates from the German owners prohibited many.

The majority of the Latvian peasants lived in a brutal and feudal arrangement with German barons. Latvia had been occupied since the 13th century and when it became part of the Russian empire in the 18th century, Russia allowed the system of German barons to maintain their rule in exchange for their enthusiastic support of the Czar. Most lived as serfs tied to the land of a particular baron and bought goods from something similar to a "company store" with massively inflated prices.

On February 21 Luba Milstein was discharged for lack of evidence.

On March 8 Sara Trassjonsky and Alfrēd Dzirlakis were discharged.

On March 15 Osip Federov was discharged

On May 12, Peterss, Lavinš, and Celiņš were found not guilty.

Nina Vasileva was found guilty from finger print evidence.

The prosecution believed that the men who had killed the policeman in Houndsditch were already dead or long gone.

Luba, pregnant with Svars child, was moved to America out of the fear she may talk. Dzirlakis joined her and together they raised the child, Alfred Driscoll.

Jēkabs Peterss went on to become one of the most brutal Chekists of the Red Terror in the USSR, and then was himself killed by the Bolheviks.

Osip Federov went into obscurity.

Sara Trassjonsky experienced intense trauma as a result of her experience and went to a mental health asylum where she died.

Nina Vasileva lived in London, working and seemingly no longer involved in politics, dying in 1963.

Jānis Celiņš left to Australia where he worked and put his revolutionary life behind him.

Juris Laivins returned to Latvia. He was sentenced to hard labor by the Czar's forces, then released in 1917 when all political prisoners were freed.

Max Smoller fled to Paris by boat on the night of the murders.

Peter the Painter, the supposed mastermind of the case, escaped to Belgium.

escape the net the police had erected around the city. Around 750 police surrounded the apartment in the early morning of January 3. They lured Betty Gorshon downstairs and waited for a confrontation. But the men inside stayed still. Growing frustrated from a lack of reaction inside, they threw pebbles at the window. Then a brick.

The brick was met with a hail of bullets. This began a multi-hour siege with the two inside successfully keeping the obscene amount of police outside at bay with the use of gunfire. After an hour, the police contacted Winston Churchill and both he and an armed detachment of the Scots guard arrived on scene. Just before 1pm a fire broke out in the upper levels. Winston Churchill gave the command to stand back and let it burn. As the fire raged Svars and Solokov continued to move around the house firing. By 2pm the roof and building were collapsing and the gunshots from within had stopped. The charred corpses of Svars and Solokov were later recovered.

Their informer and former landlord, Charles Perelman, was paid 166 pounds for his information.

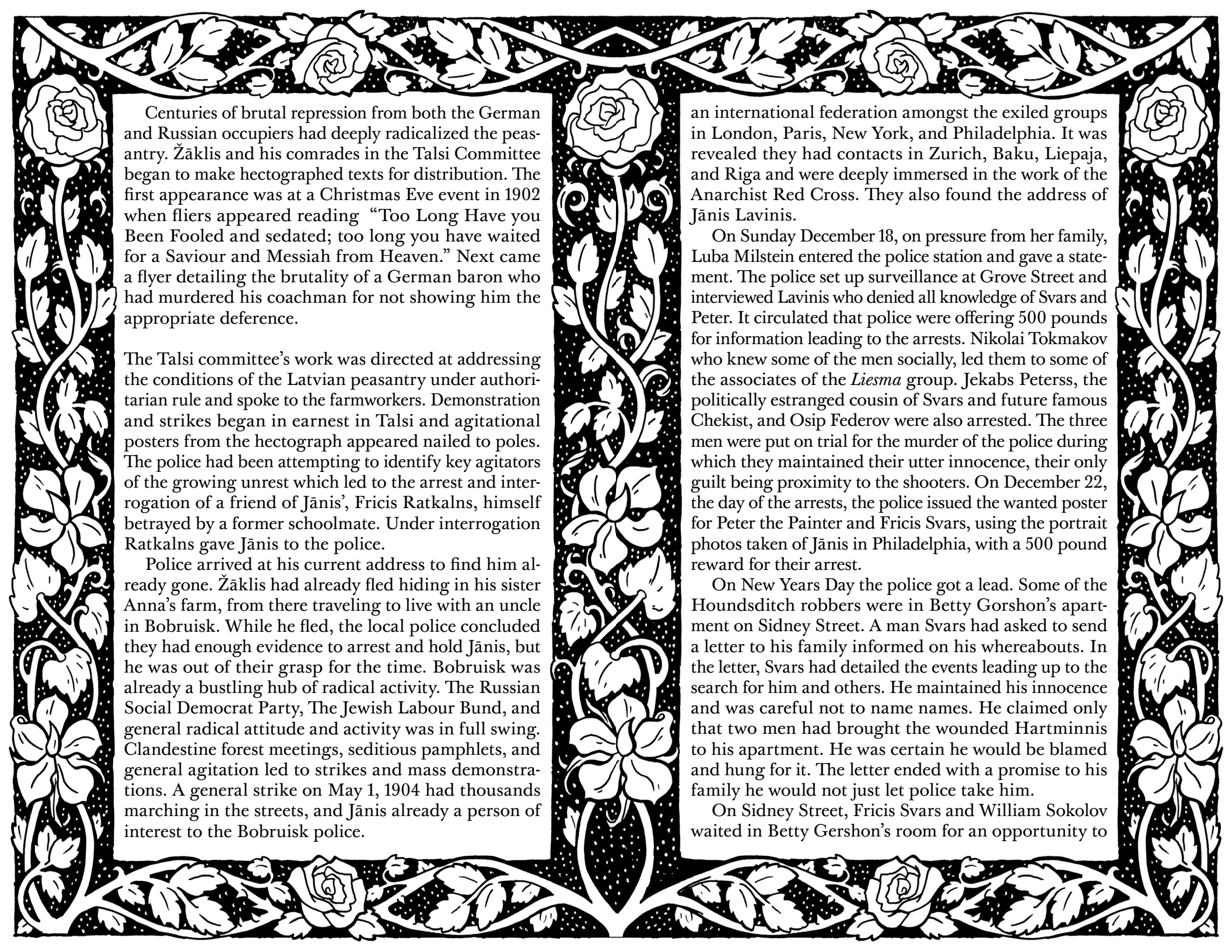
Police continued their investigation. Malatesta was questioned on his relationship with Hartmannis, who had been using his shop for the last twelve months and had even bought the gas cylinder used in the Houndsditch robbery through intermediaries. Jānis Celiņš was next to be questioned and after pressure gave the name of Nina Vasileva and Alfrēds Dzirkalis. During a raid the two were found in a flat in possession of a coat and jacket containing a fake passport for Svars. Dzirkalis remained tight lipped and defiant with police, refusing to speak in anything other than denials.

In total charges were brought against eight.

Jānis began attending school in 1891 at age 8 and left in 1901 at age 18, his interest in revolutionary socialism already sparked. He helped to organize four small groups among the local farmers as an affiliated section of the Baltic Latvian Social Democratic Workers Organization under the direction of the small Talsi Committee.



SARA TRASSJONSKY



Centuries of brutal repression from both the German and Russian occupiers had deeply radicalized the peasantry. Žāklis and his comrades in the Talsi Committee began to make hectographed texts for distribution. The first appearance was at a Christmas Eve event in 1902 when fliers appeared reading “Too Long Have you Been Fooled and sedated; too long you have waited for a Saviour and Messiah from Heaven.” Next came a flyer detailing the brutality of a German baron who had murdered his coachman for not showing him the appropriate deference.

The Talsi committee’s work was directed at addressing the conditions of the Latvian peasantry under authoritarian rule and spoke to the farmworkers. Demonstration and strikes began in earnest in Talsi and agitational posters from the hectograph appeared nailed to poles. The police had been attempting to identify key agitators of the growing unrest which led to the arrest and interrogation of a friend of Jānis’, Fricis Ratkalns, himself betrayed by a former schoolmate. Under interrogation Ratkalns gave Jānis to the police.

Police arrived at his current address to find him already gone. Žāklis had already fled hiding in his sister Anna’s farm, from there traveling to live with an uncle in Bobruisk. While he fled, the local police concluded they had enough evidence to arrest and hold Jānis, but he was out of their grasp for the time. Bobruisk was already a bustling hub of radical activity. The Russian Social Democrat Party, The Jewish Labour Bund, and general radical attitude and activity was in full swing. Clandestine forest meetings, seditious pamphlets, and general agitation led to strikes and mass demonstrations. A general strike on May 1, 1904 had thousands marching in the streets, and Jānis already a person of interest to the Bobruisk police.

an international federation amongst the exiled groups in London, Paris, New York, and Philadelphia. It was revealed they had contacts in Zurich, Baku, Liepaja, and Riga and were deeply immersed in the work of the Anarchist Red Cross. They also found the address of Jānis Lavinis.

On Sunday December 18, on pressure from her family, Luba Milstein entered the police station and gave a statement. The police set up surveillance at Grove Street and interviewed Lavinis who denied all knowledge of Svars and Peter. It circulated that police were offering 500 pounds for information leading to the arrests. Nikolai Tokmakov who knew some of the men socially, led them to some of the associates of the *Liesma* group. Jekabs Peterss, the politically estranged cousin of Svars and future famous Chekist, and Osip Federov were also arrested. The three men were put on trial for the murder of the police during which they maintained their utter innocence, their only guilt being proximity to the shooters. On December 22, the day of the arrests, the police issued the wanted poster for Peter the Painter and Fricis Svars, using the portrait photos taken of Jānis in Philadelphia, with a 500 pound reward for their arrest.

On New Years Day the police got a lead. Some of the Houndsditch robbers were in Betty Gorshon’s apartment on Sidney Street. A man Svars had asked to send a letter to his family informed on his whereabouts. In the letter, Svars had detailed the events leading up to the search for him and others. He maintained his innocence and was careful not to name names. He claimed only that two men had brought the wounded Hartminnis to his apartment. He was certain he would be blamed and hung for it. The letter ended with a promise to his family he would not just let police take him.

On Sidney Street, Fricis Svars and William Sokolov waited in Betty Gershon’s room for an opportunity to

larger lodgings, Peter took a room with them. One of Peter's goals in London was to help lead expropriations for funding publications to be used in the resistance to the Russian empire. Many anarchists at the time saw London as a base from which they could organize larger federations to further their revolutionary goals.

December 16 saw the anarchists of the *Liesma* gathered in Svars, Lubstein, and Peter's apartment at 59 Grove Street enjoying time together with friends and comrades. By five o'clock all had left except for Peter who stayed home to paint. Some, left to the Exchange Building number 9 and 11 to tunnel into the jewelry shop. Luba and her friend Sara Trassjonsky left for the theater.

Luba and Trassjonsky returned from the theater around 10pm and heard Peter the Painter playing the violin in the main front room. At midnight, they heard the men entering with Hartminnis but were told not to come in yet. In the confusion they saw Smoller, Fritz, Svars, and Sokolov. Smoller left quickly with a pistol and disappeared from history. The rest of the men left telling Lubstein and Trassjonsky to tend to the wounded Hartmannis and to destroy all papers. Milstein left shortly after being unable to stay with the dying Hartminnis, and went in search of Svars. She found him at a safe house with Peter, Fritz, and Sokolov all making plans to escape.

Trassjonsky called a doctor to the Grove street apartment to tend to Hartmannis. Staying with him as he died and then working to destroy all evidence of the anarchists' activities. After the doctor tipped off the police, they found her in a back room by the fireplace.

With three policeman dead and two grievously wounded, the police tore through the apartment looking for any lead on the identities. They found communication between multiple Latvian anarchist groups and letters which gave them a glimpse into the goals of the Latvians in exile. The anarchists had been in the midst of forming

He was arrested May 28 for possession of illegal socialist literature. An investigation and report on him was forwarded to the Courland Gendarme who took it as proof enough he was guilty of the charges leveled against him in Talsi. Months later both he and his friend Ratkalns were found guilty of the charges,



ĻAKIS AT AGE 18

and sentenced to a fine of 300 rubles, and placed under strict supervision and house arrest. Ratkalns at the first opportunity, fled to England before standing trial. Jānis told police he was experiencing poor health and petitioned to be allowed to stay at a farm his father rented. While there he made some small amount of income as a sign painter and continued to exaggerate his health problems to the police.

During his time in Bobruisk the BDSCWO had grown to 150 members and strengthened its relationship with organizations in other cities. The police investigation against Jānis continued, but with Ratkalns having escaped, they had little evidence with which to convict Jānis. On December 23, 1904 his charges were dropped in full. Zanis moved to Riga and became Comrade Mērnīeks.

On Sunday January 9 the revolutionary situation across the Russian Empire escalated dramatically when Imperial Guards of the Czar opened fire on an unarmed march led by a priest to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg.

In Riga, people staged a solidarity demonstration. On January 13, 1905, 60,000 workers took to the street marching in a snowstorm and were met with Russian troops. The troops opened fire when a snowball was launched at them. Seventy-three people were murdered and another 200 were wounded, the youngest dead, a 14-year-old boy. The funerals of the January martyrs turned into militant demonstrations of up to 20,000 in the streets.

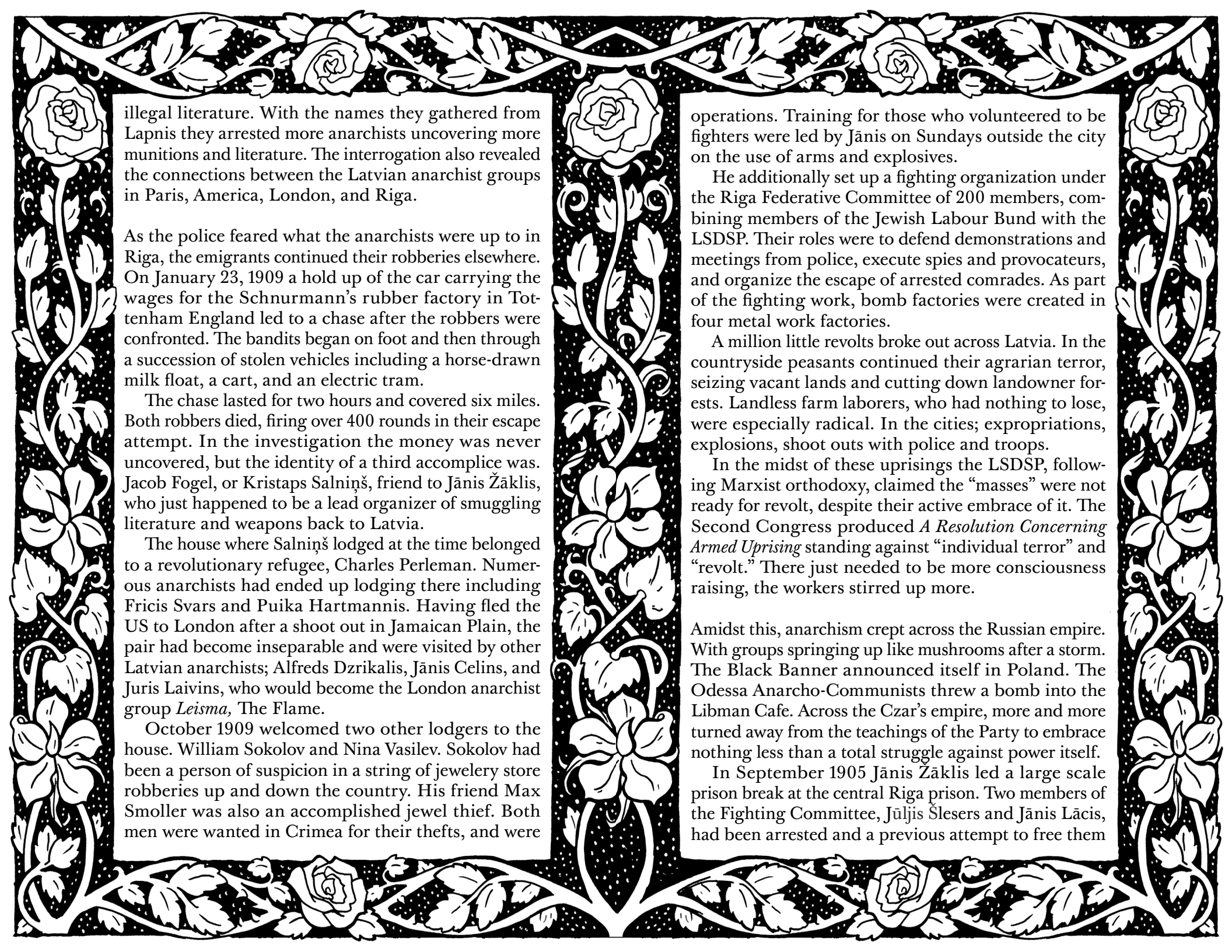
The rising social upheaval found Jānis elected to chair the Technical Commission of the Latvian Social Democrat Worker's Party (LSDSP). His committee's goal was the organizing of safe houses, military training, and the organizing and coordinating of all military

able to bring a professional skill and local intelligence into the mix of Latvian anarchists.

In October 1910 Jānis Žaklis moved to London. Reunited with Frīcis Svārs who was now living with his partner Luba Milstein to whom he introduced his friend as Peter Piaktov. When the couple moved into



ALFREDS DZIRLAKIS



illegal literature. With the names they gathered from Lapnis they arrested more anarchists uncovering more munitions and literature. The interrogation also revealed the connections between the Latvian anarchist groups in Paris, America, London, and Riga.

As the police feared what the anarchists were up to in Riga, the emigrants continued their robberies elsewhere. On January 23, 1909 a hold up of the car carrying the wages for the Schnurmann's rubber factory in Tottenham England led to a chase after the robbers were confronted. The bandits began on foot and then through a succession of stolen vehicles including a horse-drawn milk float, a cart, and an electric tram.

The chase lasted for two hours and covered six miles. Both robbers died, firing over 400 rounds in their escape attempt. In the investigation the money was never uncovered, but the identity of a third accomplice was. Jacob Fogel, or Kristaps Salniņš, friend to Jānis Žāklis, who just happened to be a lead organizer of smuggling literature and weapons back to Latvia.

The house where Salniņš lodged at the time belonged to a revolutionary refugee, Charles Perleman. Numerous anarchists had ended up lodging there including Fricis Svārs and Puika Hartmannis. Having fled the US to London after a shoot out in Jamaican Plain, the pair had become inseparable and were visited by other Latvian anarchists; Alfreds Dzrikālis, Jānis Celins, and Juris Laivins, who would become the London anarchist group *Leisma*, The Flame.

October 1909 welcomed two other lodgers to the house. William Sokolov and Nina Vasilev. Sokolov had been a person of suspicion in a string of jewelry store robberies up and down the country. His friend Max Smoller was also an accomplished jewel thief. Both men were wanted in Crimea for their thefts, and were

operations. Training for those who volunteered to be fighters were led by Jānis on Sundays outside the city on the use of arms and explosives.

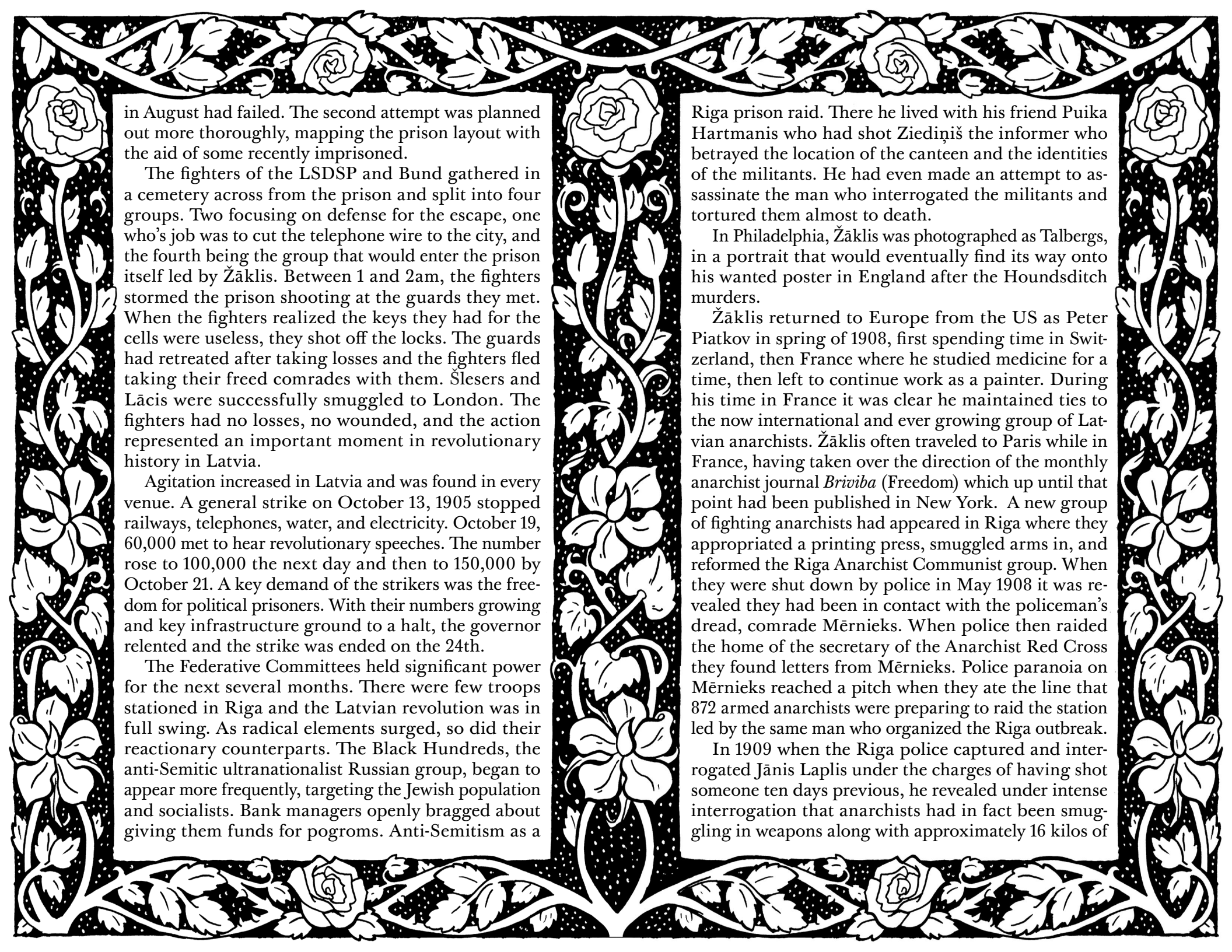
He additionally set up a fighting organization under the Riga Federative Committee of 200 members, combining members of the Jewish Labour Bund with the LSDSP. Their roles were to defend demonstrations and meetings from police, execute spies and provocateurs, and organize the escape of arrested comrades. As part of the fighting work, bomb factories were created in four metal work factories.

A million little revolts broke out across Latvia. In the countryside peasants continued their agrarian terror, seizing vacant lands and cutting down landowner forests. Landless farm laborers, who had nothing to lose, were especially radical. In the cities; expropriations, explosions, shoot outs with police and troops.

In the midst of these uprisings the LSDSP, following Marxist orthodoxy, claimed the "masses" were not ready for revolt, despite their active embrace of it. The Second Congress produced *A Resolution Concerning Armed Uprising* standing against "individual terror" and "revolt." There just needed to be more consciousness raising, the workers stirred up more.

Amidst this, anarchism crept across the Russian empire. With groups springing up like mushrooms after a storm. The Black Banner announced itself in Poland. The Odessa Anarcho-Communists threw a bomb into the Libman Cafe. Across the Czar's empire, more and more turned away from the teachings of the Party to embrace nothing less than a total struggle against power itself.

In September 1905 Jānis Žāklis led a large scale prison break at the central Riga prison. Two members of the Fighting Committee, Jūljis Šlesers and Jānis Lācis, had been arrested and a previous attempt to free them



in August had failed. The second attempt was planned out more thoroughly, mapping the prison layout with the aid of some recently imprisoned.

The fighters of the LSDSP and Bund gathered in a cemetery across from the prison and split into four groups. Two focusing on defense for the escape, one who's job was to cut the telephone wire to the city, and the fourth being the group that would enter the prison itself led by Žāklis. Between 1 and 2am, the fighters stormed the prison shooting at the guards they met. When the fighters realized the keys they had for the cells were useless, they shot off the locks. The guards had retreated after taking losses and the fighters fled taking their freed comrades with them. Šlesers and Lācis were successfully smuggled to London. The fighters had no losses, no wounded, and the action represented an important moment in revolutionary history in Latvia.

Agitation increased in Latvia and was found in every venue. A general strike on October 13, 1905 stopped railways, telephones, water, and electricity. October 19, 60,000 met to hear revolutionary speeches. The number rose to 100,000 the next day and then to 150,000 by October 21. A key demand of the strikers was the freedom for political prisoners. With their numbers growing and key infrastructure ground to a halt, the governor relented and the strike was ended on the 24th.

The Federative Committees held significant power for the next several months. There were few troops stationed in Riga and the Latvian revolution was in full swing. As radical elements surged, so did their reactionary counterparts. The Black Hundreds, the anti-Semitic ultranationalist Russian group, began to appear more frequently, targeting the Jewish population and socialists. Bank managers openly bragged about giving them funds for pogroms. Anti-Semitism as a

Riga prison raid. There he lived with his friend Puika Hartmanis who had shot Ziediņš the informer who betrayed the location of the canteen and the identities of the militants. He had even made an attempt to assassinate the man who interrogated the militants and tortured them almost to death.

In Philadelphia, Žāklis was photographed as Talbergs, in a portrait that would eventually find its way onto his wanted poster in England after the Houndsditch murders.

Žāklis returned to Europe from the US as Peter Piatkov in spring of 1908, first spending time in Switzerland, then France where he studied medicine for a time, then left to continue work as a painter. During his time in France it was clear he maintained ties to the now international and ever growing group of Latvian anarchists. Žāklis often traveled to Paris while in France, having taken over the direction of the monthly anarchist journal *Brīvība* (Freedom) which up until that point had been published in New York. A new group of fighting anarchists had appeared in Riga where they appropriated a printing press, smuggled arms in, and reformed the Riga Anarchist Communist group. When they were shut down by police in May 1908 it was revealed they had been in contact with the policeman's dread, comrade Mērnīeks. When police then raided the home of the secretary of the Anarchist Red Cross they found letters from Mērnīeks. Police paranoia on Mērnīeks reached a pitch when they ate the line that 872 armed anarchists were preparing to raid the station led by the same man who organized the Riga outbreak.

In 1909 when the Riga police captured and interrogated Jānis Laplis under the charges of having shot someone ten days previous, he revealed under intense interrogation that anarchists had in fact been smuggling in weapons along with approximately 16 kilos of

“Of all the money we expropriated from the proprietors for the holy cause of anarchy, I did not allow myself to spend (anything) on trousers. I’m dying in old pants given to me by my brother, a student, because I went around like a ragamuffin. I considered this money sacred, and I used it only for a holy purpose. I find that I am not dying a sinner, but a fighter for all mankind - in the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed from the oppressive modern order.”

Petrov claimed, “I have not sinned—I have only done my duty.” Then all three exclaimed before their death: “LONG LIVE THE FREED EARTH!”

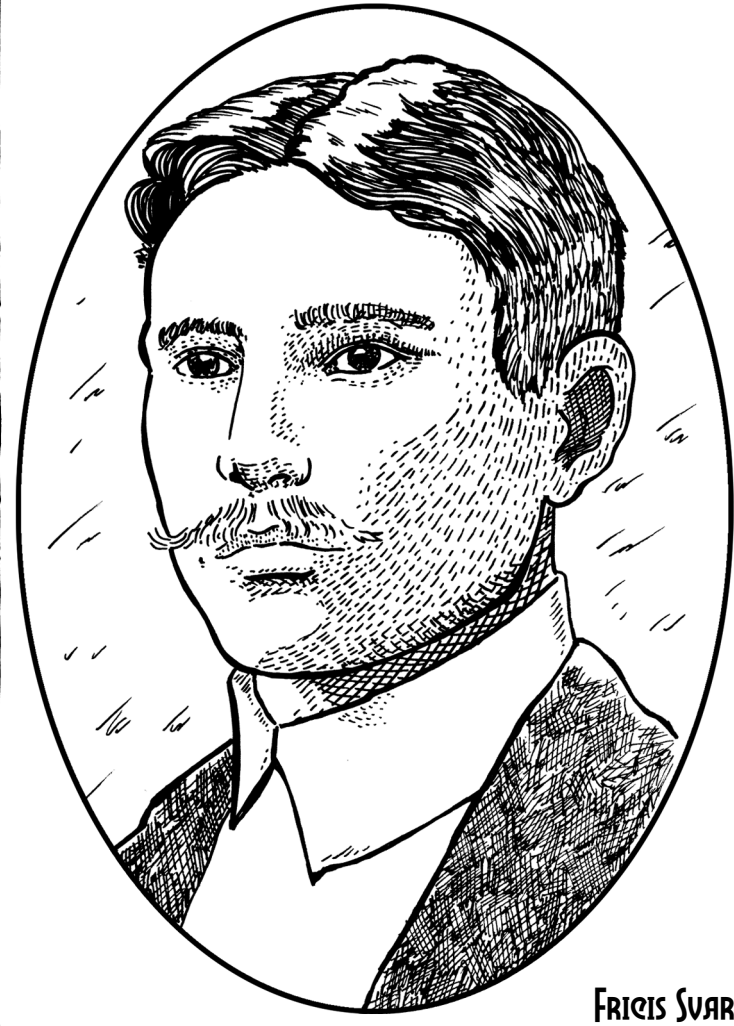
In December, police successfully captured a young anarchist alive and tortured four addresses from him. Sieges and murders commenced at all four addresses and police recovered ammunition, weapons, bombs, and extensive anarchist literature. Members of Word and Deed were being killed and their friends, associates, and families were being arrested and tortured under suspicion.

The revolution and its most courageous participants were systematically being culled by a wave of repression and murder. Many of the remaining Latvian radicals fled the country. An estimated 5000 emigrated overseas. For some, their purpose was to help reignite the flames of revolt in Latvia and collect weapons and ammunitions for the militants through expropriations. Armed expropriations by Latvian radicals became commonplace. In April 1908 in Boston, three Latvians had a shootout with police after a series of robberies, along with a raid on the Royal Bank in Glasgow.

Jānis Žaklis fled to Philadelphia where he re-connected with Fricis Svars who he last saw during the

whole rose in Latvia which had up till that point had no history of pogroms. The Black Hundreds collaborated with the local police across Russia committing terror against the Jewish population and attacking the struggling workers.

On October 22, Black Hundreds members descended into the Moscow district of Riga looting and smashing



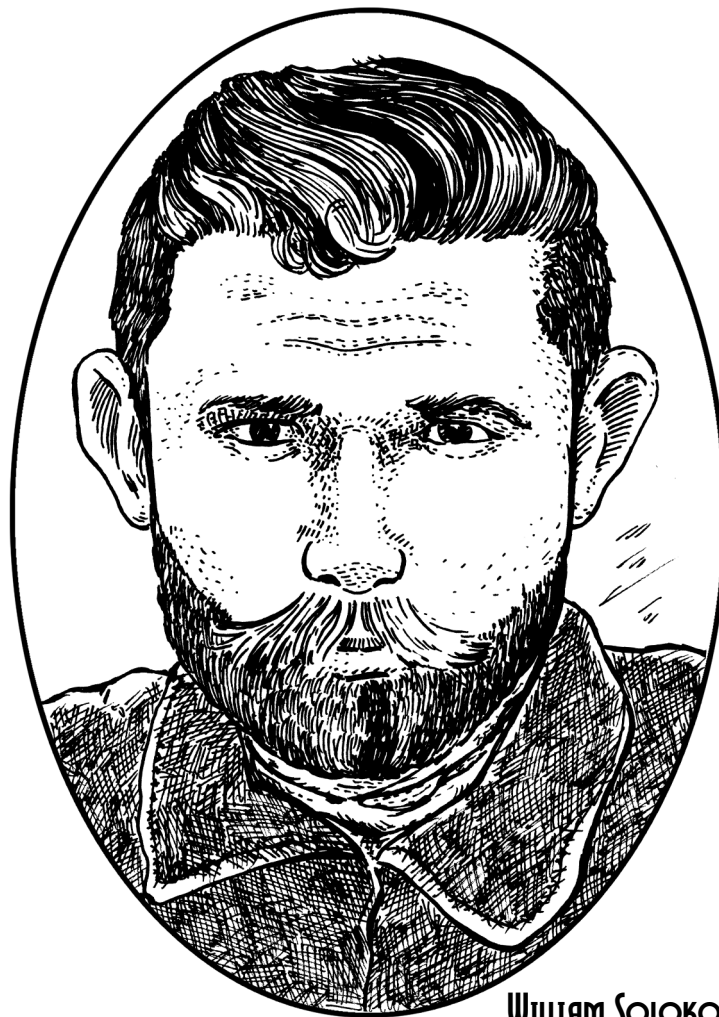
Jewish shops and attacking passers by. A field headquarters was set up at the Riga theater where volunteer fighters and defense committees were dispatched. The attack was successfully stopped when shots were fired at the Black Hundreds, but they had left seven dead and thirty wounded.

Street fighting and attacks sprawled out through the city. The Riga theater was a bustling central hub for the Latvian resistance. When two volunteer fighters brought a man who had fired his revolver at them in for questioning, he was revealed to be a member of the secret police. Cossack guards showed up the following day and the fighters had to flee, escaping over a wall.

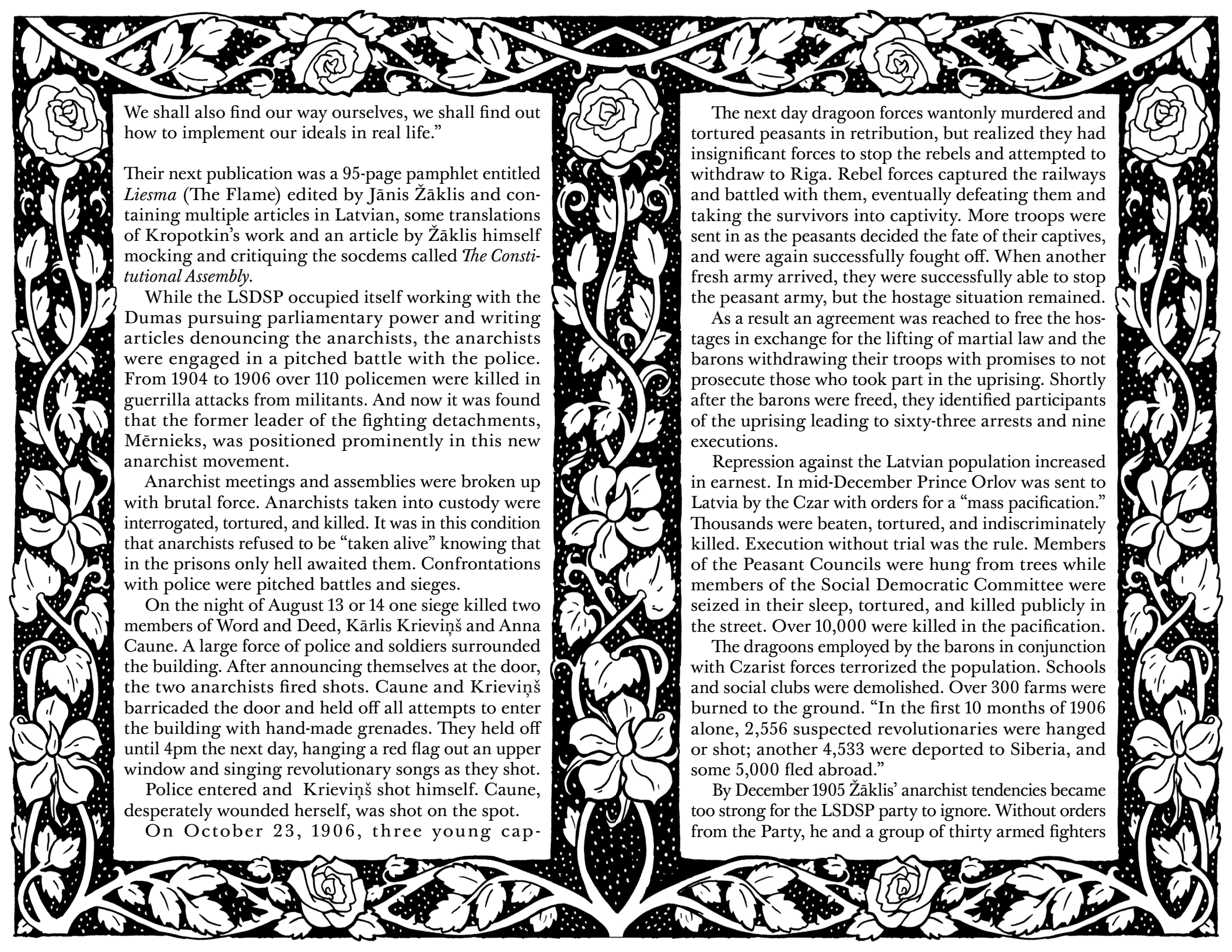
On October 23 the Black Hundreds killed two workers. Elsewhere a mob waving photos of the Czar stormed a church, then went to a Jewish refuge and murdered two. Across town another two were murdered. In response, Žāklis organized attacks on their meeting spaces. Martial law was declared. Seven LSDSP fighters were killed but the Black Hundreds lost thirty. Over the course of a few days the Black Hundreds were liquidated and their weapons, the majority of which had been supplied by police and loyalists to the Czar, were stripped from them.

In December martial law spread across the whole of Latvia. In the cities the workers launched a four day general strike. The countryside was in complete revolt. The illegal Congress of Baltic Peasants' Delegates called for revolutionary councils to capture every institution. Telephones and telegraphs were captured, peasant militias were formed, and the estates of the German barons were occupied. City rebels joined with country rebels in capturing the estates and fighting against the barons. Žāklis commanded the siege and execution of the particularly brutal Baron August Von Henning in Kiveri.

tured anarchists were sentenced to death. Silin Shafron, Osip Levin, and a youth who only gave his name as Petrov. Before their execution, a Rabbi offered to hear their confessions for their sins. The anarchists answered as one, that they had nothing to repent of. Oip offered:



WILLIAM SOLOKOV



We shall also find our way ourselves, we shall find out how to implement our ideals in real life.”

Their next publication was a 95-page pamphlet entitled *Liesma* (The Flame) edited by Jānis Žāklis and containing multiple articles in Latvian, some translations of Kropotkin’s work and an article by Žāklis himself mocking and critiquing the socdems called *The Constitutional Assembly*.

While the LSDSP occupied itself working with the Dumas pursuing parliamentary power and writing articles denouncing the anarchists, the anarchists were engaged in a pitched battle with the police. From 1904 to 1906 over 110 policemen were killed in guerrilla attacks from militants. And now it was found that the former leader of the fighting detachments, Mērnīeks, was positioned prominently in this new anarchist movement.

Anarchist meetings and assemblies were broken up with brutal force. Anarchists taken into custody were interrogated, tortured, and killed. It was in this condition that anarchists refused to be “taken alive” knowing that in the prisons only hell awaited them. Confrontations with police were pitched battles and sieges.

On the night of August 13 or 14 one siege killed two members of Word and Deed, Kārlis Krieviņš and Anna Caune. A large force of police and soldiers surrounded the building. After announcing themselves at the door, the two anarchists fired shots. Caune and Krieviņš barricaded the door and held off all attempts to enter the building with hand-made grenades. They held off until 4pm the next day, hanging a red flag out an upper window and singing revolutionary songs as they shot.

Police entered and Krieviņš shot himself. Caune, desperately wounded herself, was shot on the spot.

On October 23, 1906, three young cap-

The next day dragoon forces wantonly murdered and tortured peasants in retribution, but realized they had insignificant forces to stop the rebels and attempted to withdraw to Riga. Rebel forces captured the railways and battled with them, eventually defeating them and taking the survivors into captivity. More troops were sent in as the peasants decided the fate of their captives, and were again successfully fought off. When another fresh army arrived, they were successfully able to stop the peasant army, but the hostage situation remained.

As a result an agreement was reached to free the hostages in exchange for the lifting of martial law and the barons withdrawing their troops with promises to not prosecute those who took part in the uprising. Shortly after the barons were freed, they identified participants of the uprising leading to sixty-three arrests and nine executions.

Repression against the Latvian population increased in earnest. In mid-December Prince Orlov was sent to Latvia by the Czar with orders for a “mass pacification.” Thousands were beaten, tortured, and indiscriminately killed. Execution without trial was the rule. Members of the Peasant Councils were hung from trees while members of the Social Democratic Committee were seized in their sleep, tortured, and killed publicly in the street. Over 10,000 were killed in the pacification.

The dragoons employed by the barons in conjunction with Czarist forces terrorized the population. Schools and social clubs were demolished. Over 300 farms were burned to the ground. “In the first 10 months of 1906 alone, 2,556 suspected revolutionaries were hanged or shot; another 4,533 were deported to Siberia, and some 5,000 fled abroad.”

By December 1905 Žāklis’ anarchist tendencies became too strong for the LSDSP party to ignore. Without orders from the Party, he and a group of thirty armed fighters

attacked a Russian dragoon stationed at the factory Provodnik. The dragoons were stationed at the factory to control the workers through brutal methods. At 6:30 in the morning on December 20, fighters posing as workers "clocked in." They stationed themselves until the telephone lines were cut and attacked. Seventeen dragoons were



ANNA CAUNE

Berlin, they occupied themselves with buying stunning amounts of ammunition and arms for the militants of the revolution.

It was in his time outside of the Russian empire that Žāklis fully embraced anarchism. He returned to Riga in April 1906 to form one of the earliest anarchist groups in Latvia, *Pats-vārds un darbs* (The Same-in Word and Deed). His defection and discontent with the socdems was loud. His position as a respected revolutionary leader and people's own experiences with the insurgent activity and shortcomings of the party during the 1905 revolution led to mass defections. Anarchist groups sprang up around Latvia. The LSDSP, following the lead of the Russian SDSP, was making moves to attempt more parliamentary means to "revolution" while the anarchists stockpiled arms.

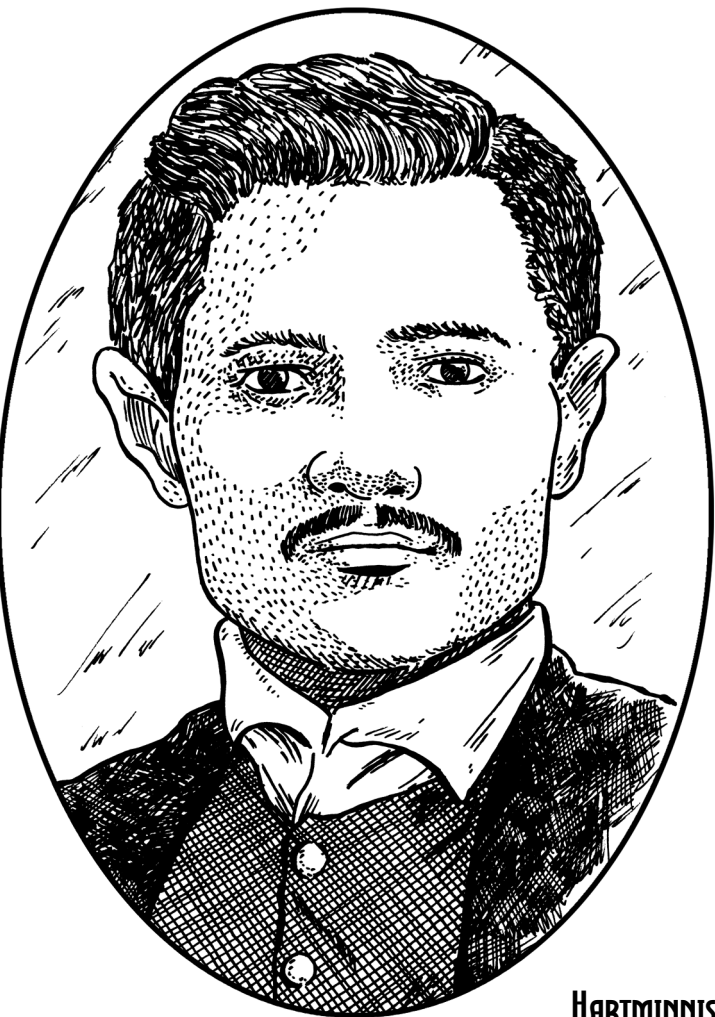
There was legitimate concern at the time of the LSDSP of what the anarchist defection could mean. Especially as Žāklis quipped, "If I like, I will expropriate all the party businesses and will leave the party with empty pockets" The LSDSP did not take this as an empty threat and believing the anarchists were plotting to expropriate a party press, began moving it from location to location.

August 15 saw the first proclamation of In Word and Deed in which they stated their ideas and positioned themselves as a completely separate organization from the social democrats. One that was resolutely, anarchist.

"We do what we ourselves consider right. We do not acknowledge the obligatory directives and rules set out by the Central Committee...*Pats-vārds un darbs* means that we have no commanders. We ourselves do what we say. We are not divided into committees that make decisions and organized comrades who carry them out.

attempts to take him for three and half hours. He only surrendered when he ran out of ammunition. The captured were sentenced to hard labor and Čoke died after four years. Eliass was arrested July 1906, released a year later, but unable to recover from the torture.

Many of those who did not die in the shootout with police, escaped to Berlin by way of Sweden. In



HARTMINNIS

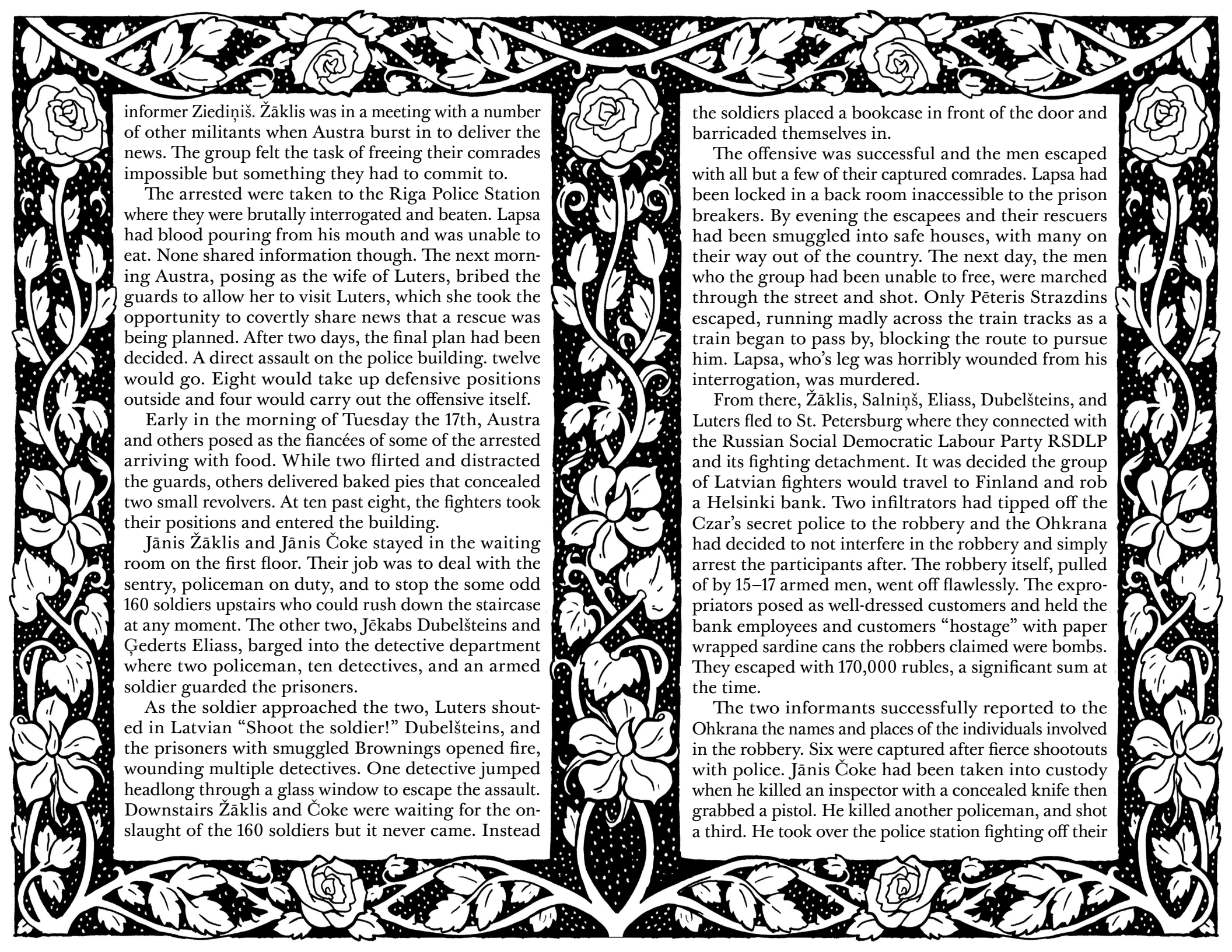
killed, twenty wounded, and sixty of their rifles confiscated. It was over within three to four minutes.

When a military unit arrived an hour later to interrogate the workers, none could name the assailants as they had been totally unaware of the attack. The commander bombarded them with machine gun fire leaving five dead and multiple wounded.

Though the attack was seen as a success for the guerrilla fighters, Jānis was removed as the Chairman of the Fighting Organization and replaced with Jānis Luters. Despite the LSDSP's aversion to expropriation and terror, Žāklis and other fighting units continued their activities. Participants of the raid on dragoon forces were placed in safe flats and many continued their activities.

Repression increased in January 1906 and widespread arrests became commonplace. Despite the militants efforts to hide, a number were arrested and interrogated. One of these was Ans Ziediņš who became a police informant. He had been in hiding along with Frīcis Svārs and Grīnvalds from an expropriation. Svārs himself had only recently escaped a prison, sawing through the bars, where he was held on suspicion of a policeman's murder. On December 31, 1905, Svārs, Grīnvalds, and Ziediņš were taken into custody where Ziediņš talked. He gave numerous names along with the locations of underground social centers. One of those centers was the Canteen Austra, run by the 19-year-old Austra Dreifogele and her sisters. A friend to the fighting organization, the canteen hid fighters weapons, propaganda, and functioned as a secure meeting place.

On Friday the 13th, January, 1906, police raided and arrested a number of people. Four were high ranking members of the fighting committee or personal comrades of Žāklis, including his assistant, Pēteris Lapsa, and Jānis Luters. Luters being personally identified by



informer Ziediņš. Žāklis was in a meeting with a number of other militants when Austra burst in to deliver the news. The group felt the task of freeing their comrades impossible but something they had to commit to.

The arrested were taken to the Riga Police Station where they were brutally interrogated and beaten. Lapsa had blood pouring from his mouth and was unable to eat. None shared information though. The next morning Austra, posing as the wife of Luters, bribed the guards to allow her to visit Luters, which she took the opportunity to covertly share news that a rescue was being planned. After two days, the final plan had been decided. A direct assault on the police building. twelve would go. Eight would take up defensive positions outside and four would carry out the offensive itself.

Early in the morning of Tuesday the 17th, Austra and others posed as the fiancées of some of the arrested arriving with food. While two flirted and distracted the guards, others delivered baked pies that concealed two small revolvers. At ten past eight, the fighters took their positions and entered the building.

Jānis Žāklis and Jānis Čoke stayed in the waiting room on the first floor. Their job was to deal with the sentry, policeman on duty, and to stop the some odd 160 soldiers upstairs who could rush down the staircase at any moment. The other two, Jēkabs Dubelšteins and Ģederts Eliass, barged into the detective department where two policeman, ten detectives, and an armed soldier guarded the prisoners.

As the soldier approached the two, Luters shouted in Latvian "Shoot the soldier!" Dubelšteins, and the prisoners with smuggled Brownings opened fire, wounding multiple detectives. One detective jumped headlong through a glass window to escape the assault. Downstairs Žāklis and Čoke were waiting for the onslaught of the 160 soldiers but it never came. Instead

the soldiers placed a bookcase in front of the door and barricaded themselves in.

The offensive was successful and the men escaped with all but a few of their captured comrades. Lapsa had been locked in a back room inaccessible to the prison breakers. By evening the escapees and their rescuers had been smuggled into safe houses, with many on their way out of the country. The next day, the men who the group had been unable to free, were marched through the street and shot. Only Pēteris Strazdins escaped, running madly across the train tracks as a train began to pass by, blocking the route to pursue him. Lapsa, who's leg was horribly wounded from his interrogation, was murdered.

From there, Žāklis, Salniņš, Eliass, Dubelšteins, and Luters fled to St. Petersburg where they connected with the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party RSDLP and its fighting detachment. It was decided the group of Latvian fighters would travel to Finland and rob a Helsinki bank. Two infiltrators had tipped off the Czar's secret police to the robbery and the Ohkrana had decided to not interfere in the robbery and simply arrest the participants after. The robbery itself, pulled off by 15–17 armed men, went off flawlessly. The expropriators posed as well-dressed customers and held the bank employees and customers "hostage" with paper wrapped sardine cans the robbers claimed were bombs. They escaped with 170,000 rubles, a significant sum at the time.

The two informants successfully reported to the Ohkrana the names and places of the individuals involved in the robbery. Six were captured after fierce shootouts with police. Jānis Čoke had been taken into custody when he killed an inspector with a concealed knife then grabbed a pistol. He killed another policeman, and shot a third. He took over the police station fighting off their