

On the Legend of "Trotskyism"

Dear Comrades!

After a long pause, Comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev and their closest friends are again beginning with the legend of "Trotskyism". For the last two years they went with us, together with us they worked out the most important documents of the Opposition, among them also the Platform. At that time there was no "Trotskyism". But when difficulties arose in the struggle to carry out the line of the Opposition under the assault of world reaction and attacks at home, comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev turned back to the bugbear of "Trotskyism". For this reason I would like to establish a few facts.

1. When the so-called "literary discussion" (in 1924) was kindled, a number of comrades close to our group declared that the publication of *The Lessons of October* was a tactical error because it gave the then majority of the Political Bureau the possibility to open up the "literary discussion". On my part, I maintained that the "literary discussion" would have come in any case, on one ground or another. The essence of the "literary discussion" consisted in hunting up as many facts and quotations as possible against me and—by outraging the perspectives and historical truth—to spread them among the uninformed Party masses. The "literary discussion" had no connection at all with *The Lessons of October*. Any one of my books and any of my speeches could have served as the occasion to begin the hunt against "Trotskyism" in the Party. That was my reply to those comrades who were inclined to view the publication of *The Lessons of October* as a tactical error.

After our bloc with the Leningrad Group had taken place, I put approximately the following question in a discussion with comrade Zinoviev: "Tell me, please, if I had not published *The Lessons of October* would the so-called 'literary discussion' against 'Trotskyism' have taken place in spite of that or not?"

Without hesitation, Zinoviev answered: "Naturally *The Lessons of October* was only a pretext; otherwise something else would have been the motive; the forms of the discussion would have become somewhat different, nothing more."

2. In the July declaration signed by Zinoviev and Kamenev, it says: "There can no longer be any doubt that, as the development of the present leading faction has shown, the Opposition of 1923 correctly warned against the dangers of the departure from the proletarian line and the menacing growth of the apparatus regime. Yet dozens and hundreds of leaders of the 1923 Opposition, among them many workers, old Bolsheviks, steered in the struggle and alien to careerism and servility, are kept away from all Party work despite their submission to all discipline."

3. At the joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of July 14 to July 23, 1926, Zinoviev said:

"I have made many mistakes. But I consider two mistakes as my most important ones. My first mistake of 1917 is known to all. . . . The second mistake I consider more dangerous, since the first one was made under Lenin, and was made good by us after a few days even if it was done with the help of Lenin, but my mistake of 1923 consisted in . . ."

Ordjonikidze: "That you wanted to make the Party believe something?"

Zinoviev: "We say, there can no longer be any doubts now that the kernel of the 1923 Opposition, as the development of the leading faction has shown, correctly warned against the departure from the proletarian line and against the menacing growth of the apparatus regime. . . . In the question of deterioration and in the question of bureaucracy, 'Trotskyism' was right in the end against you." (Stenogram, Volume IV, Page 33.)

In this manner Zinoviev admitted his mistake of 1923 in the struggle against Trotsky, and even characterized it as more dangerous than that of 1917.

4. This acknowledgment of comrade Zinoviev called forth astonishment among many Leningrad Oppositionists who had sincerely believed in the legend of "Trotskyism." Comrade Zinoviev told me repeatedly:

"In Leningrad we hammered it into the consciousness of the comrades more deeply than anywhere else and it is therefore more difficult to learn anew there."

Shortly before the departure of comrade Lashevitch to the Chinese Eastern Railway (I cannot re-

member the exact date) two members of the Opposition came from Leningrad to Moscow to exercise pressure on the 1923 Group in the question of "Trotskyism." They repeated all the stock phrases about the "permanent revolution", about the insufficient estimation of the peasantry and so forth.

Comrade Zinoviev asked me, together with the other leading comrades of the 1923 Group, to participate in a discussion that was to take place at comrade Kamenev's home. The discussion assumed a rather violent character, mainly between Zinoviev and Lashevitch on the one side and the comrades who had come from Leningrad on the other. I recall quite accurately the words that Lashevitch shouted out to the Leningraders:

"Don't stand the matter on its head. We invented 'Trotskyism' together with you in the struggle against Trotsky. Why won't you understand this? You are only helping Stalin!" And so forth. Comrade Zinoviev said:

"We must acknowledge what happened. It was a struggle for power. The trick was to combine the old differences of opinion with new questions. For this 'Trotskyism' was invented. . . ."

This conversation made a deep impression upon us, the members of the 1923 Group, even though we had already perceived the mechanics of the struggle against "Trotskyism" before. On the way back we exchanged impressions and repeated the crassest expressions of Lashevitch and Zinoviev. Besides that, I reported the discussion the same day to a few close comrades who had not participated in the conference. That is why many formulations of Zinoviev and Lashevitch have remained so well fixed in my memory.

Now that comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev are again trying to make use of the same "trick", that is, to combine old differences of opinion with entirely new questions of capitulation, I ask that you remember, what I or an other participant in these proceedings reported to you on the expressions of Lashevitch and Zinoviev. The exact establishment of these facts now has a great political significance and can be useful in summing up the results of "Lessons of December" (1927).

With Communist greetings,

L. Trotsky.

Letter from Preobrazhensky

I confirm everything brought out in this document. Only Lashevitch said: "We invented 'Trotskyism' without the words 'together with you.'" The two Leningrad comrades who are mentioned here were quite sincerely worried about "Trotskyism". The meeting took place at Comrade Kamenev's about the 16th of October 1926, perhaps a few days before or after—I cannot recall exactly.

December 29, 1927.

E. A. Preobrazhensky.

Letter from Piatakov

You ask me to inform you what I know about the speeches of Lashevitch and Zinoviev on the occasion of a discussion with Leningrad comrades on "Trotskyism" which took place in Kamenev's home. I no longer remember all that was said. But since I have always followed the question of so-called "Trotskyism" with the greatest attention, and since the position of the Opposition of 1923-26 was of the greatest political interest for me, I remember quite clearly what comrades Zinoviev and Lashevitch said. The sense of their words was the following: "Trotskyism" had been invented so as to replace the real differences of opinion with alleged differences, that is, to utilize historical differences of opinion that had no relation to the present, for definite purposes mentioned above. This was told the comrades from Leningrad who hesitated on the question of "Trotskyism" and they wanted to explain to them who had invented "Trotskyism" and to what end.

Moscow, January 2, 1928.

G. Piatakov.

Letter from Elzin

Dear Leo Davidovitch!

I remember very exactly an episode that occurred in Kamenev's home on the eve of the declaration of October 16th, during a debate on the "literary discussion" and *The Lessons of October*. On your question, as to whether the discussion on "Trotskyism" would have taken place even if The

Lessons of October had not appeared, Zinoviev then answered: "Certainly it would have taken place, for the plan to open up this discussion was already in existence and we only lay in wait for a pretext." None of the supporters of the 1923 Group who were present expressed any disagreement with this; everyone received this information of Zinoviev as a generally well known fact.

January 2, 1928.

E. Elzin.

Letter from Radek

I was not present at the first conversation but I heard about it after it took place from L. D. [Trotsky].

I was present at the conversation with comrade Kamenev when L. B. [Kamenev] said he would openly declare at the Plenum of the Central Committee how they, that is, Kamenev and Zinoviev, together with Stalin decided to utilize old differences of opinion between Trotsky and Lenin so as to keep Trotsky from the leadership of the Party after Lenin's death. Besides this I heard repeatedly from the mouth of Zinoviev and Kamenev how they invented "Trotskyism" as an actual slogan.

December 25, 1927.

Karl Radek

Radek here recalls a striking incident that is not mentioned in my letter. During the July Plenum in 1927, Zinoviev and Kamenev were driven into a hail of quotations out of their own writings against "Trotskyism". Since Kamenev hoped to get the floor again on the question of the Opposition, he wanted to take the bull by the horns and declare openly before the Plenum how and why the Trotskyist danger was invented. But the speakers list was closed and Kamenev did not get the floor again.

L. Trotsky.

War, Kellogg Pact and the Soviet Union

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not found the government of the United States among those governments who are carrying on intrigues against our Union. We do not forget that during our most difficult years, the famine years, the American people came to our aid with the generous efforts of the 'Ara' organization, headed at that time by the future president of the United States, Hoover. (Inprecor, ibid., page 1706.)

Is Hoover deceived by these suave words? Not for a moment! He remembers very well the American intervention in Siberia. He knows that it was through his "generous" American Relief Administration that the Hungarian Soviet republic was drowned in blood. He knows that the United States is financing the anti-Soviet activities of Poland and Rumania. But the workers who read the official pronouncements of Litvinov in the name of the Soviet Union will be deceived as to Hoover's counter-revolutionary role, and the Communist Party will be deprived of its weapons in fighting Hoover and American imperialism.

That is the practical result to the working class movement of the signing of the Kellogg Pact by the Soviet Union and the "diplomatic" speeches of the spokesmen of the Stalin regime. The reason for this anti-Leninist course is the pernicious theory of "socialism in one country". The theory that socialism can be completed in Russia alone if only military intervention is prevented, inevitably leads to opportunism before the world bourgeoisie. It entails an accommodating attitude to the world bourgeoisie, for if an isolated national socialist economy is to be built, then, according to Stalinism, military intervention must be kept off at any price. One of these prices is the Kellogg Pact and all that it involves. But even this payment does not "buy off" intervention because it undermines the revolutionary capacities of the proletariat in the imperialist countries, the strongest deterrent to war against Russia. Another price that revolutionary Russia must pay is the drive to exterminate the Leninist Opposition.

Trotsky, the living leader of world Bolshevism, is deported to Turkey. Stalin, together with Kellogg, Chamberlain, Briand and Stresemann, sign the "great" Kellogg "peace" pact. The one act supplements the other. Both are blows struck at the foundation of Lenin's work.

Epitaph for a Scoundrel

Pages from the Record of John Pepper

By Ladislav Rudas, President of the International Lenin School of Moscow

NOTE: In our Platform, published in the last issue of *The Militant*, we referred to the malodorous records of the present leaders of the Party who are expelling proletarian Communists wholesale. Many comrades have been astounded at the statements we made and wonder if it can be really true that such people control the Party.

Can it be possible, they ask, that people branded by their own past as Social Patriots, jailors of Communists, witnesses for the Government against Communists, craven-hearted cowards, Renegades "Anti-Red" crusaders, former enemies of the Russian Revolution, former agents of Hillquit and Berger in the fight against the Communists, etc., are parading as the "leaders" of Communism and expelling and defaming revolutionaries with honorable records behind them?

Yes, all the statements are true. Nobody dares to challenge a single one of them, for they can all be proven by documentary evidence.

John Pepper, (now in Moscow) whose record is set forth below, is one of the main leaders and is the Moscow wire-puller of the present Party regime. He is one of those scoundrels (there are many of them) who have taken the place in the Communist International of its founders—the Trotsky, the Radek, the Rakowsky—and whose principal occupation is the fight against "Trotskyism", the term which is being used nowadays to define Leninism.

Pepper is the author of many of the slanderous denunciations of the expelled Communists and one of those who incited to violence against us. He was selected by the C.E.C. at the last Plenum to deliver the report against us and to demand our expulsion as "counter-revolutionaries", "renegades", etc. The document printed below shows that he is well qualified by experience for this kind of a job.

We quote here a number of extracts from a book written by Ladislav Rudas, one of the leaders of the Hungarian Revolution, who knows Pepper well. The book, entitled "Adventurers and Liquidationism" ("Abenteuerer und Liquidationismus") was published in Vienna in 1922 for party circulation by the Voros Ujsag Verlag. Ladislav Rudas is now the head of the International Lenin School at Moscow.

Pepper before the War

TO conduct this sham battle against a sham danger, Pepper sought out in the sweat of his brow three passages out of a hundred articles. He tore these passages out of their context where, alone, they might be condemned. He tore these passages out of little notices where they were never intended as "slogans" but as agitation, and took the field against them with all the commonplaces of his Marxism. His Marxism however consists of patterns which he applies everywhere, whether they fit or not. He gave long discourses on Communism standing for the expropriation of the means of production, for large factories, etc., as though these were not ruins, already well known to us when Pepper was still editor-in-chief of the petty-bourgeois boulevard sheet *Friss Ujsag*, while I had for some time been editor of the central organ of the social democracy in Budapest (1905). It is a piece of knavery when such as he would teach me about anarchism and syndicalism, where it was I who left the social democracy for its corruption when Pepper—to make a career—joined it! (page 191-2).

Pepper During the War

Without investigation Bela Kun ordered the expulsion from the Party of this comrade (in charge of the Party's illegal work. Ed.) who had been active in the working class movement for twenty years, who suffered a heavy prison sentence for many months during the war for the anti-militarist propaganda conducted while an officer, who led peasants' revolts during the Karolyi revolution and during the entire period of the dictatorship fought courageously and honestly with the Communists despite the fact that he was a social democrat. He ordered this punishment—the severest that a Communist can suffer—carried out by the same Pepper who, as Royal and Imperial war correspondent drank toasts to Austrian Generals while this comrade risked his life in anti-militarist agitation! (Page 118).

Pepper the Social Democrat

On February 20, 1919, great masses moved demonstratively before the building of the social democratic organ *Nepszava*. Clashes took place with the police in which a number of them were killed. . . . The day after the demonstration the Communist leaders were arrested and brutally beaten in prison.

To characterize the conceptions of the social democracy another article by John Pepper, which appeared in *Nepszava* of February 21, 1919, should

be indicated here. Pepper, the most ambitious and conscienceless demagogue ever to be found in the social democracy, whose "Marxism" always consisted in covering with a theory the basest instincts of the dominant men in power in the Party to which he belonged; who in his writings always found a formula precisely for the commonest and most vulgar arguments—this Pepper strutted about as the leader of the soldiers' councils in the first days of the bourgeois revolution. . . . Even as the workers' councils were nothing but a pseudo-institution named by the party and trade union bureaucracy to hinder the creation of a real revolutionary institution of the proletariat, a pseudo-institution with no power at its command and with no will to exert influence,—just so was the soldiers' council seized by the social democratic party and served only to divert the proletarian revolution. The instrument of the social democracy was John Pepper, whom the soldiers' council served to satisfy his personal lust for power. He worked with full steam to become the war minister of the bourgeois republic. To show that he would maintain this post, not to the detriment, but to the benefit of the bourgeoisie, he stormed against the Communists whom he was the first to designate as "left counter-revolutionaries". His expressions best characterize therefore the counter-revolutionary nature of the social democracy, since he was always merely the empty-headed mouthpiece of the prevailing demagoguery. (Page 29-30).

Pepper and the Bolsheviks

While participating, at the beginning of December 1918, in a meeting of the Ministry for Military Affairs at which martial law against the Communists was considered, he (Pepper) declared:

"I consider the whole Bolshevik movement, whose leaders I know very well, to be harmless. It is led by a few immature persons who have returned from Russia." (Voros Ujsag, December 11, 1918).

But when this movement led by "immature persons" began to bear ripe fruit, Pepper coined the phrase "left-counter-revolutionaries" and was ready to use the most shameless methods against them. He ordered out machine guns and armored cars against the soldiers who demanded in a demonstration the dismissal of the at that time openly counter-revolutionary Minister of War Festetics (Voros Ujsag, January 11, 1919); he ordered the arrest of comrades Tibor and Ladislav Szamueli (Voros Ujsag, January 15, 1919); in numerous speeches he summoned the soldiers to pogroms against the Communists. At the same time, naturally, he sailed in the filthiest nationalist waters when he enjoined the soldiers: "Social democrat and Magyar mean the same thing." (Voros Ujsag, March 6, 1919. This remark was made by Pepper to incite the soldiers to the new imperialist war against the Czechs in the interests of the Hungarian bourgeoisie!) He had translated this passage directly from the Communist Manifesto into Hungarian (page 31).

Pepper Imprisons Bela Kun

On January 2, 1919, the Communist soldiers in one of the barracks demanded the resignation of the then reactionary War Minister. Pepper thereupon ordered the arrest of Bela Kun. Az Est of January 2, 1919, wrote as follows on the matter:

John Pepper, government commissar of the soldiers' council expressed himself to us about the demonstration of the Communist soldiers: "The entire Communist soldiers' demonstration only shows that the Communists cannot really influence the soldiers, that the soldier masses as a whole are supporters of the social democratic party, and are soldiers of the People's republic. Contrary to the artificial blatherskiting, the truth is that it is just the soldier masses who were the ones that arrested Bela Kun and his colleagues, and refused to give them the floor." (Page 31).

Pepper Turns Commissar!

"Yesterday still 'democrats' they (the social democrats) today became supporters of the proletarian dictatorship; yesterday still ministers of the bourgeois government, they today became without any transition 'People's Commissars' of the Soviet government. On March 19, Siegmund Kunfi still made a long speech at election meetings 'where I,' he writes, 'took a position everywhere against the dictatorship and for democratic socialism.' John Pepper, however, still said the same thing as Kunfi on March 19, 1919. And when a Com-

munist proposed at an election meeting to set free the imprisoned Communists, Pepper answered him as follows:

"I speak in the name of the Hungarian working class movement (He always talked tall!—L. R.); in the name of the social democratic party, and these will use mass terror against everyone who seeks to terrorize in any way the representatives of the Hungarian working class (namely: himself, John Pepper!—L. R.)" Pester Lloyd, March 20, 1919.

Two days later they became—Pepper even with "stormy enthusiasm" — "people's commissars" (Page 41-2).

The Communists Force Pepper's Resignation

The Communists were naturally embittered that the fate of the Party should be decided over their heads. . . . Mainly, however, did the Communists feel bitter over the naming of John Pepper as People's Commissar for Military Affairs, the same Pepper who, of all the social democrats, had acted most shamelessly and despicably towards the Communists, who coined the phrase of "left counter-revolutionaries" against them, who was prepared to assume the role of Noske and to order out machine guns against the revolutionary soldiers. The Communists did not allow even the threats of Kun to restrain them and moved en masse before the building of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs and forced Pepper to resign. On April 4, *Nepszava* published the report of his resignation. (Page 58).

Pepper Wants a Second Party

There were many who blamed Bela Kun entirely for the failure of the revolution.

Thus, for example, John Pepper openly proclaimed that Bela Kun was a traitor, that he must be eliminated from the movement, that a new party must be founded. We all wanted a new party, but Pepper immediately became a liquidator. He wanted to found a party on new principles; and that the new Communist Party should be a peasants' party. An open, legal peasants' party—since Hungary was an agrarian country! In this spirit he drew up a memorandum and sent it—to Michael Karolyi, the former president of the People's Republic, since he had chosen this gentleman as the leader of his "new" party! At any rate, it was rejected by Karolyi, for Karolyi, personally one of the most honest bourgeois politicians, would not for a single moment have anything to do with a Communist. Then, said he, the proletariat needs no party, since every proletarian in Hungary is a Communist, it is only necessary to put arms in his hands and the revolution is here again! At one and the same time he was—a right and a left liquidator! (Page 96-7).

Chicago Comrades Protest

"To the District Convention
Workers Communist Party
District No. 8.
Dear Comrades:

We request that you read the following to the District Convention:

1. We have witnessed recently a series of expulsions of leading and proletarian comrades, most of whom participated in the formation of our Party, and actively engaged in Party work. These expulsions took place because of their political views or protesting the expulsion policy.

2. The expulsion policy carries all the dangers of destroying our Party and is the path to split our Party.

3. In our opinion the expulsions are only an effort on the part of the CEC majority to conceal their right wing errors. It is an effort to hide the real danger facing our Party, the right danger exemplified by the Lovestone group. This has only the effect of perpetuating the right wing danger in our Party and the continuance of their bureaucratic control.

4. The expulsion took place on the basis that these comrades adopted the position of "Trotskyism" or protested the expulsion of Comrades Cannon, Abern and Shachtman. It must be stated that the discussion on Trotskyism was inadequate, and it is necessary to hold a free and open discussion of the Russian Opposition with the documents present.

5. We wish to emphatically protest against these expulsions and demand the reinstatement of these comrades to their former duties and Party posts.

Fraternally yours,

Jack Cohen, Dan Pollin, Fannie Minak, Rebecca Sacherow, H. P. Clausen, A. Bornstein, Elsie Meyers, H. Krenick, Osleroff, Leon Mussel, Lillian Borgeson.