

THE MARXIST-LENINIST RESEARCH BUREAU Report No. 10

THE RYUTIN CASE (1930-37)

The Ryutin Platform (1930)

In August 1930 Opposition circles circulated

" . . . a 200-page treatise that reflected the Right's anti-Stalin position and became known in Party circles as the 'Ryutin Platform'" (Robert C. Tucker: 'Stalin in Power: The Revolution from above: 1928-1941'; London; 1990; p. 211).

Although the document bore the name of Martemyan Ryutin*, who was at the time

" . . . Secretary of the Krasnaya Presnya district Party committee in Moscow, a member of the editorial board of 'Krasnaya Zvezda' (Red Star) and a candidate member of the Central Committee", (Dmitry Volkogonov: 'Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy'; London; 1991; p. 205).

defendants in the 1938 Moscow treason trial admitted that this was a device to conceal its real authorship by the leadership of the Opposition:

"RYKOV: The platform was called after Ryutin, because it was published by supporters of the Rights, the Ryutin group, from Uglanov's* Moscow organisation.

During the investigation instituted in connection with this platform, this group took the whole responsibility upon itself. This had been decided beforehand, so that we should not be called to account for the platform. We managed to do this thanks to the fact that Yagoda* was at the head of the OGPU".

(Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'; Moscow; 1938; (hereafter listed as 'Report: 1938'); p. 163).

"BUKHARIN: It was called the 'Ryutin Platform' for reasons of secrecy. . . in order to conceal the Right centre and its top leadership. . .

The Ryutin platform, . . . the platform of the Right counter-revolutionary organisation, was perhaps already a common platform of the other groups, including the Kamenev*, Zinoviev* and Trotskyite groupings".

(Report (1938): op. cit.; p. 388, 389).

The Ryutin Platform declared:

"The Right wing has proved correct in the economic field and Trotsky in his criticism of the system in the Party".

(Martemyan Ryutin: The Ryutin Platform, in: Anton Ciliga: 'The Russian Enigma'; London; 1940; p. 279).

It

" . . . urged the immediate readmission (to the Party -- Ed.) of all those expelled, including Trotsky".

(Martemyan Ryutin: The Ryutin Platform, in: Robert Conquest: 'The Great Terror: A Re-assessment'; London; 1990 (hereafter listed as 'Robert

Conquest (1990)'; p. 24).

and it described Stalin as

" . . . the evil genius of the Revolution who, motivated by a personal desire for power and revenge, brought the Revolution to the verge of ruin".

(Martemyan Ryutin: The Ryutin Platform. in: Boris I. Nikolaevsky: 'Power and the Soviet Elite: "The Letter of an Old Bolshevik" and Other Essays'; New York; 1965; p. 11).

In December 1930,

" . . . the Presidium of the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) . . . expelled Ryutin from the Party for 'double-dealing' and 'discrediting the Party leadership'".

(Arkady Vaksberg: 'The Prosecutor and the Prey: Vyshinsky and the 1930s Moscow Show Trials'; London; 1990; p. 56).

The First Arrest of Ryutin (1930-31)

In January 1931,

" . . . Ryutin . . . was arrested",
(Robert Conquest (1990): op. cit.; p. 24).

and charged with

" . . . organising a counter-revolutionary group and anti-Soviet agitation".

(Arkady Vaksberg: op. cit.; p. 57).

but

" . . . by a resolution of the OGPU board of 17 January 1931, Ryutin was acquitted 'on account of insufficient proof of the charge brought against him'".

(Arkady Vaksberg: op. cit.; p. 56-57).

and was

" . . . even readmitted to the Party with a warning".

(Robert Conquest: 'Stalin: Breaker of Nations'; London; 1991 (hereafter listed as 'Robert Conquest (1991)'; p. 161).

The Ryutin Manifesto (1932)

In June 1932,

" . . . Ryutin and a group of minor officials wrote an 'Appeal to All Members of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)' in the name of an All-Union Conference of the Union of Marxist-Leninists'"

(Robert Conquest: (1990): op. cit.; p. 24).

This 14-page document, known as

" . . . Ryutin's 'Manifesto'"
(Arkady Vaksberg: op. cit.; p. 332).

alleged that

" . . . lawlessness, arbitrary rule and violence, constant threats are hanging over the head of every worker and peasant. . . . Science , literature, art, have been reduced to the status of lowly maidservants and props of Stalin's leadership. The struggle against opportunism has been debased, caricatured and used as a weapon of slander and terror against independent-minded Party members. The rights of the Party laid down by the Statutes have been usurped by a tiny bunch of unprincipled intriguers"
(Martemyan Ryutin, in: Arkady Vaksberg: p. 56).

It declared that

" . . . it is disgraceful and ignominious for proletarian revolutionaries to tolerate Stalin's yoke, arbitrary rule and the mockery of the Party and the working masses any longer. . . .
Stalin and his clique are destroying the cause of Communism, and an end must be put to Stalin's leadership as soon as possible".
(Martemyan Ryutin, in: Arkady Vaksberg: p. 58).

Thus, the Ryutin Manifesto was

" . . . essentially a proclamation calling for the overthrow of Stalin and his clique",
(Arkady Vaksberg: op. cit.; p. 332).

It declared that

" . . . Stalin and his clique will not and cannot voluntarily give up their positions, so they must be removed by force . . . as soon as possible".
(Martemyan Ryutin: The Ryutin Manifesto, in: Robert Conquest (1990): op. cit.; p. 24).

Not unnaturally,

" . . . Stalin interpreted the Appeal as a call for his assassination".
(Robert Conquest (1990): op. cit.; p. 24).

and defendants in the 1938 Moscow treason trial admitted that the Ryutin Manifesto marked the transition on the part of the Opposition to the tactics of violent counter-revolution and terrorism. According to Aleksey Rykov*, the Ryutin Manifesto

" . . . recognised . . . methods of violence in changing the leadership of the Party and of the country -- terrorism and uprisings",
(Aleksey Rykov: Testimony at 1938 Moscow Treason Trial, in: 'Report' (1938); op. cit.; p. 163).

while Nikolay Bukharin* testified that the Ryutin Manifesto

" . . . registered the transition to the tactics of overthrowing the

Soviet power by force".
(Nikolay Bukharin: *ibid.*; p. 390).

and that its the essential points

" . . . were a 'palace coup', terrorism".
(Nikolay Bukharin: *ibid.*; p. 390).

The Second Arrest of Ryutin (1932)

At a joint meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU in September/October 1932. the Ryutin group (including Uglanov)

" . . . was expelled from the Party"
(Robert C. Tucker: *op. cit.*; p. 211).

" . . . as degenerates who have become enemies of Communism and the Soviet regime, as traitors to the Party and the working class who, under the flag of a spurious 'Marxism-Leninism', have attempted to create a bourgeois-kulak organisation for the restoration of capitalism, and particularly kulakism, in the USSR".
(Resolution of Joint Meeting of CC and CCC of CPSU, (September/October 1932), in: Robert Conquest (1990): *op. cit.*; p. 26).

The members of the Ryutin group were then arrested and charged with

" . . . trying to form a 'counter-revolutionary bourgeois-kulak organisation', whose purpose was to restore capitalism in the USSR".
(Mikhail Heller & Aleksandr Nekrich: 'Utopia in Power: The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present'; London; 1986; p. 246).

All the defendants in the Ryutin case were found guilty and

" . . . were . . . given prison terms".
(Adam B. Ulam: 'Stalin: The Man and His Era'; London; 1989; p. 349).

Ryutin himself

" . . . got off with a ten-year term".
(Robert C. Tucker: *op. cit.*; p. 212).

"Ryutin got ten years".
(Dmitri Volkogonov: *op. cit.*; p. 206).

Ryutin's Third Trial (1937)

In January 1937, in the light of new evidence, Ryutin -- still serving his sentence -- was retried before the Military Tribunal of the USSR Supreme Soviet, this time on the more serious charge of treason.
(Arkady Vaksberg: *op. cit.*; p. 333).

Ryutin refused to plead or to speak in his defence:

"According to the records of the proceedings: 'The accused declared that he did not wish to reply to the question of whether he pleaded guilty and in general refused to give any evidence on the charges brought

against him. The accused was given the final word in which he said nothing".
(Arkady Vaksberg: *ibid.*; p. 333).

He was found guilty, and this time sentenced to death and

" . . . executed".
(Robert C. Tucker: *op. cit.*; p. 212).

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- BUKHARIN, Nikolay I., Soviet revisionist journalist and politician (1888-1938); editor, 'Pravda' (1918-29); editor, 'Bolshevik' (1924-29); member, Political Bureau, CPSU (1924-29); President, Communist International (1926-29); expelled from Party (1929); readmitted to Party (1934); editor, 'Izvestia' (1934-37); arrested (1937); tried for, and found guilty of, treason, and executed (1938).
- KAMENEV, Lev B., Soviet revisionist politician (1883-1936); Chairman, Moscow Soviet, and simultaneously member, Political Bureau, RCP/CPSU (1919-25); USSR Ambassador to Italy (1926-27); expelled from Party (1927); readmitted to Party (1928); re-expelled from Party (1932); arrested (1935); tried for and found guilty of 'moral complicity' in murder of Sergey Kirov and sentenced to imprisonment (1935); tried for and found guilty of actual complicity in murder of Sergey Kirov, and treason, sentenced to death and executed (1936).
- RYKOV, Aleksey I., Soviet revisionist politician (1881-1938); Chairman, Supreme Council of National Economy (1918-27); member, Political Bureau, CPSU (1922-30); USSR Premier (1924-29); USSR People's Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs (1931-36); expelled from Party and arrested (1937); tried for and found guilty of treason, sentenced to death and executed (1938).
- RYUTIN, Martemyan, Soviet revisionist economist (1898-1937); District Party Secretary, Irkutsk (1920-26); District Party Secretary, Krasnaya Presnya, Moscow and editor, 'Krasnaya Zvezda' (1926-30); expelled from Party (1930); acquitted of counter-revolutionary activity and re-admitted to Party (1931); and imprisoned (1931); published 'Ryutin Manifesto' for Opposition (1932); re-expelled from Party (1932); arrested, tried for and found guilty of counter-revolutionary activity, sentenced to imprisonment (1932); re-tried for, and found guilty of, treason, sentenced to death and executed (1937).
- UGLANOV, Nikolay A., Soviet revisionist politician (1886-1940); secretary, Nizhny Novgorod Party Committee (1922-24); secretary, Moscow Party Committee (1924-28); USSR People's Commissar of Labour (1928-30); expelled from Party for involvement in Ryutin Case (1932); re-admitted to Party (1934); re-expelled from Party, tried for and found guilty of counter-revolutionary activity, and sentenced to imprisonment (1936); died in imprisonment (1940).
- YAGODA, Genrikh G., Soviet revisionist politician (1891-1936); USSR People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (1934-36); arrested (1937); tried for and found guilty of treason, sentenced to death and executed (1938).
- ZINOVIEV, Grigory E., Soviet revisionist politician (1883-1936); President, Communist International (1919-26); member, Political Bureau, RCP/CPSU (1921-26); expelled from Party (1927); re-admitted to Party (1928); re-expelled (1932); re-admitted (1933); re-expelled (1934); arrested (1935); tried for and found guilty of 'moral complicity' in murder of Sergey Kirov, and imprisoned (1935); tried for and found guilty of actual complicity in murder of Kirov, and treason, sentenced to death and executed (1938),