

Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka¹

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Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin (1888-1938) remains one of the most puzzling figures of Soviet history. Although his rehabilitation took place in 1988 to this day not a single piece of historical evidence supporting this verdict has ever been published. All the documents published during the period of the “Bukharin Boom” of the 1990s in one way or another touch on the question of the accusations against him. But only in a single case — his letter to Joseph Stalin of December 10, 1937 — did Bukharin utter a determined “Not Guilty” to the crimes of which he was accused. All the remaining documents, including other letters of his, provide evidence supporting the opposite conclusion.

¹ Editor's note: This essay was originally written in Russian and published in the journal, *Klio* (St. Petersburg), No. 1 (36), 2007, pp. 38-52. The Russian version is available at the following: http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/furrnbobrov_klio0107.pdf. N. Bukharin's “Personal Confession,” translated by Grover Furr, appears immediately after the present essay (p. 19). Bukharin's original Russian version of the “Confession” may be accessed at the following: http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/bukhconfession_klio0107.pdf.

A significant number of primary sources related to the last period of Bukharin's life remain unavailable to historians.² In the present publication we offer to the reader's attention a document which relates precisely to this little-known and, in essence, little researched stage of Bukharin's life, that stage that still holds many secrets and unsolved mysteries. This is Bukharin's first statement of confession, written by him on June 2 1937, after he had been in the Lubyanka for three months. In our opinion this document permits us to view certain facts of Bukharin's life, thought to be well known, in a somewhat different light.

Part One: External Critique of the Document

What Is the "Volkogonov Archive"?

The archive of General-Colonel Dmitry A. Volkogonov (1928-1995), military historian, writer, Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and counselor to the President of the Russian Federation, was assembled during the time he was working on a series of biographical books concerning Soviet political figures. He made use of his privileged access to former Soviet archives and in the course of a lengthy period assembled a collection of photocopies of documents many of which remain little known to researchers to this day. Not long before his death Volkogonov managed to send photocopies from his collection to the Library of Congress, to which they were finally donated by members of his family in two stages, in 1996 and 2000.

At the present time the "Volkogonov Archive" (31 boxes with photocopies and 20 microfilms) is kept in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress³ and is open to researchers. The documents embrace the time period 1763-1995, but are mainly related to the Soviet period. They are arranged into sixteen series, of which thirteen correspond to the archival institutions from which they were at some time copied. Three more series comprise Volkogonov's personal papers, documents in large format, and other materials.

² See Stephen F. Cohen, "Bukharin na Lubyanke." *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 3 (2003), 59.

³ For a general description of the "Volkogonov Archive" see <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/text/volkogon.html>. More complete information about the archive was posted in July 1998 on the H-RUSSIA list: see <http://tinyurl.com/37pvo0>.

In the words of Patricia Grimsted access to the archive was limited until the year 2000. But even after its opening several inconvenient features remain. The researcher has to contend with the fact that to this day there is no detailed description of the documents in the archive. As previously stated the entire archive consists of photocopies and microfilms of photocopies, far from all of which were originally of the necessary quality. For this reason in many cases one has to deal with the illegibility of texts, especially in cases of marks on the documents, inscriptions, and handwritten additions.

Perhaps these conditions help to explain the fact that historians on both sides of the ocean rarely use the collection, although archival access to the originals of those same documents in the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service (TsA FSB) or the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (AP RF) is either limited or completely forbidden.

The document we present here was discovered in the course of a systematic study of the contents of specific sections of the archive among the documents concerning the “Bukharin *delo*” (case) in Box 21, Microfilms 13 and 14.

Evidence the Document Is Genuine

The structure of the Volkogonov Archive presupposes that all the photocopies in it have been made from documents whose originals remain in the archival collections of the Russian Federation. But is this so? This is no idle question. In recent years not a few “documents from nowhere” have appeared — sources of highly doubtful origins that are unquestionably false. One example is the well-known history of the exposure of forged “decrees of the Politburo of the ACP(b)” and photocopies of them in the Hoover Institution.⁴

Therefore, strictly speaking, any valid use of the Volkogonov copies must be preceded by a search for evidence that the document in question is genuine. In the case of some documents this could present a considerable problem.

⁴ V.P. Kozlov, *Obmanutaia, no torzhestvennaia Kliio. Podloga pis'mennykh istochnikov po rossiiskoi istorii v XX veke*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001, 49-81. O.V. Vishlev, “O podlinnosti ‘Postanovlenii Politburo VKP(b)’, khраниashchikhsia v zarubezhnykh arkhivakh.” *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriiia*, 6 (1993), 51-55; Mihai Reiman and Ingmar Sütterlin, “Sowjetische ‘Politbüro-Beschlüsse’ der Jahre 1931-1937 in staatlichen deutschen Archiven.” *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* (JfGO) 37 (1989), 196-216.

In our case it is simple enough to dispel any doubt. Bukharin's confession of June 2, 1937 is mentioned in the works of a number of researchers such as Stephen F. Cohen and Boris A. Starkov,⁵ in each case without any connection to the Volkogonov Archive.

It is true that Volkogonov did not mention Bukharin's June confession in his biography of Stalin. However, in this case there is no contradiction because according to Volkogonov himself work on his biography of Stalin was completed in 1985,⁶ when many of the primary sources were as yet unavailable to him and only came into his personal archive some years later.⁷

But the most convincing argument in support of its genuineness may be found in the transcript of the Trial of the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites published in 1938. There, on the one hand, Bukharin himself stated that "For three months I refused to say anything"⁸ and, on the other hand, A.IA. Vyshinsky, the State Prosecutor, twice quoted this same document. In both cases the quotation and the present text agree word for word. Additionally, in one of these two instances the quotation from Bukharin's confession is cited without any reference at all to its source. If someone had wanted to forge the document he would have had no reason to include in the text a quotation of unknown origin.

We propose these arguments are irrefutable proof of the genuineness of the document in question here.⁹

⁵ B.A. Starkov. "Delo Riutina." *Oni ne molchali*. Ed. A.V. Afanas'ev. Moscow: Politizdat, 1991, p.175; Stephen F. Cohen, "To Be Preserved Forever." *The Nation*. November 27, 1995, 673. We must point out that both of these articles were published before the Volkogonov Archive had been turned over to the Library of Congress. J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov refer to information about the document that concerns us here from Starkov's article; see Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, 447.

⁶ Dmitri A. Volkogonov, *Stalin. Politicheskii portret. V 2 kn.* Moscow: Novosti, 1992. Kn. See the section "Vместo zakliucheniia. Verdikt istorii." http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov_dv/index.html.

⁷ The archives used by Volkogonov are discussed in Patricia K. Grimsted, "Archives of Russia Seven Years After: 'Purveyors of Sensation' or 'Shadows cast to the Past'?" Washington, DC: Cold War International History Project. 1998 Working Paper No. 20, n. 12, p. 22. At <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ACF518.pdf> and <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ACF51B.pdf>.

⁸ "Moe poslednee slovo na suda, veroiatno, budet moim poslednim slovom voobshche." Kto i kak pravil rech' N.I. Bukharina." *Istochnik* 4, 1996, 89. For this statement in the official English translation see *The great purge trial*. Edited, and with notes, by Robert C. Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen. With an introd. by Robert C. Tucker. NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965, p. 666.

⁹ In the same archival folder with Bukharin's confession are also to be found Bukharin's appeals for clemency, the texts of which have been published (*Izvestiia*, Sept. 2, 1992, 3).

Part Two: Internal Critique of the Document

Bukharin's Confession in the Light of the Rehabilitation Commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU of 1988

The question of evaluating Bukharin's confession of guilt cannot be viewed in isolation from the materials related to his rehabilitation in 1988. For a discussion of all the aspects of this matter we refer the interested reader to the fuller treatment in Marc Junge's monograph. Here we will simply note that, in the opinion of the German scholar, "Rehabilitation in the Soviet Union remains an act of political and administrative caprice determined, above all, by political expediency and not by juridical and legal correctness."¹⁰ This observation is also true for the rehabilitations of the period of Gorbachev's "perestroika" and "glasnost."

In reality the decision concerning the juridical and Party rehabilitation of Bukharin were the direct result of the new course and of the political decisions formulated by General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Mikhail S. Gorbachev at the October 1987 Plenum of the CC CPSU and in the speech he gave on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the October revolution, long before any study of any historical or juridical-criminal materials.¹¹ From the transcript of the sessions of the Commission of the Politburo of the CC CPSU for the additional study of the materials related to the repressions of the 30s-40s and the beginning of the 1950s, chaired by M.S. Solomentsev, it may be seen that its members meticulously adhered not only to the spirit,

¹⁰ Marc Junge. *Strakh pered proshlym. Reabilitatsia N.I. Bukharina ot Khrushcheva do Gorbacheva*. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2003, 269. Cf. the German language original: Marc Junge, *Bucharins Rehabilitierung. Historisches Gedächtnis in der Sowjetunion 1953-1991*. Berlin: BasisDruck Vlg, 1999, 266: "In Übereinstimmung zu von Goudoever kann abschließend festgestellt wurden, daß Rehabilitierung in der Sowjetunion ein politisch-administrativer Willkürakt blieb, der vor allem von der politischen Zweckmäßigkeit der Maßnahmen bestimmt wurde, nicht aber von der strafrechtlichen Korrektheit."

¹¹ *Reabilitatsia: kak eto bylo. Dokumenty Politbiuro TsK KPSS, stenogrammy zasedanii Komis. Politbiuro TsK KPSS pod op. izuch. Materialov, sviazan. s repressiiami, imevshimi mesto v period 30-40 I nachalo 50-kh gg. i drugie materialy*. T. III, Seredina 80-kh gg. Moscow: MFD, 2004, 17-27 (hereafter RKEB).

but to the letter of these reports, even consulting Gorbachev's personal opinion on this question.¹²

Despite the lack of objectivity and the preconceived nature of their decisions the Rehabilitation Commission in its work confronted, in essence, the same complex of questions that are of import for us — namely, how should we evaluate the trustworthiness of Bukharin's confession of guilt? A major reason for our interest in the materials of the Commission is related to the fact that the document we publish below — Bukharin's confession of June 2, 1937 — was also considered by them.

It is not without interest that *inter alia* the question of the authenticity of this document was also addressed by the Commission because “when this material was reviewed in 1961 it turned out that this first confession was not in the file. Later it was located and inserted into the file.” The Commission also laid attention on the fact that “his [Bukharin's] first confession was written in his own handwriting. He denied everything. Later he began to confess. And from the moment he began to confess we have typed material.”¹³ But in view of the fact that every typed page of Bukharin's confession was certified by his own signature,¹⁴ the rehabilitation Commission dropped the question of authorship. The fact that, judging from the documentation, the genuineness of the confessions did not elicit any doubt in 1961 may have played a role here.

For one reason or another Solomentsev considered it essential to pay detailed attention to the contents of Bukharin's first confession. About it he said:

In it he [Bukharin] begins to expose himself fully. He outlines the history of the origin of his deviation from a Leninist course, when that happened, why it happened. And he continues to the period when they began to make a bloc with the Trotskyites. How does he explain this? At one time the situation in the country was very difficult. Many persons in the ranks of the Party were

¹² *RKEB* 31-34, 36, 39, 54, 55, 57.

¹³ *RKEB* 55.

¹⁴ According to Solomentsev every page was certified not only by Bukharin but by the NKVD investigator (*ibid.*). This is obviously an error since only Bukharin's signature is on the photocopies of the confession. As he was chairing the session of the Commission Solomentsev probably did not have the document in front of him and was citing it from memory.

dissatisfied. And then they believed that they could change the leadership by resolving this question at a plenum by democratic means or by some other means without recourse to terror. Then after a certain time they saw that the situation in the country was improving, Stalin's position was becoming more solid, the majority in the Party, among the people, supported him. He was winning authority. Now they said that they could not deal with him through such methods. The only method was terror. In this connection they began at that time to seek contacts with the Trotskyites. The main person conducting this business was Tomsky. Then both Bukharin and Rykov participated in these meetings, though to a lesser extent. Then they began to negotiate about this form of struggle and at some stage proceeded to contacts.¹⁵

Unfortunately the interpretation offered by Solomentsev does not accurately reflect the contents of the document, since in addition to his confession about the evolution of his views Bukharin made a series of other very important confessions. Specifically he confirmed the existence of an underground network or secret oppositional "bloc" of highly-placed conspirators against the Soviet government, their ties with Trotsky in exile, and with high-level military commanders including Marshal Tukhachevsky, and the existence of contacts between Trotsky and the military group with Nazi Germany. Bukharin also testified that as a political program the bloc accepted the "Riutin platform" and worked out a plan for a "palace coup" with the goal of removing Stalin and his closest associates from power, and not hesitating before such extreme measures of political struggle as murder (*terror*).

Despite Solomentsev's distorted exposition of this material it is very indicative that Bukharin's evolution from a proponent of Bolshevik democracy to a politician that supported the most extreme methods of struggle with Stalin, prepared for the sake of this struggle to enter into an alliance with political forces such as the Trotskyites, appeared logical and justified to such an experienced political apparatchik. We should note that even in the language of "glasnost" this last signified an alliance with dedicated antagonists of the ACP(b) and with enemies of the USSR.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

We also wish to point out that in the present case Solomentsev retreated from the viewpoint that had remained unchallenged since the time of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" (1956), according to which no forces or tendencies within the ACP(b) oppositional to Stalin existed. Obviously in confirming the contrary position Solomentsev did not proceed from official theories but from the experience of his own Party-apparatus work in the CC CPSU, among which was his own role as witness and one of the passive participants in the coup against Khrushchev in 1964.

The next question that attracted the attention of members of the Commission was connected with Bukharin's confessions of his guilt during the various stages of the preliminary investigation and at the trial.

If we consider the historical materials available today it is easy to see how Bukharin admitted his guilt first at the preliminary investigation by the NKVD, then during interrogation by the Prosecutor of the USSR Vyshinsky, and then — three more times at a minimum — during the course of the trial sessions. Each of these three occasions were cited by Bukharin in his closing speech at the trial (which has recently been published without editorial excisions in the journal *Istochnik*).¹⁶ In the absence of any doubts to the contrary — and that is the situation we face with this document — a confession made by a suspect in the course of the investigation and repeated at trial is considered valid in juridical practice anywhere in the world. Consequently the crimes to which the accused has confessed and which he has repeatedly confirmed, including at trial, are considered to have been actually committed by him.

It is important to note that the list of accusations leveled against Bukharin at trial and the list of those to which he confessed guilt do not correspond. Vyshinsky tried to get Bukharin to confess to a far larger number of accusations. But Bukharin remained constantly active, arguing with the State prosecutor, time and again striving to deny many of these accusations as unjust or simply unproven.

This gets to the heart of the matter. In some cases Bukharin firmly and decisively asserted his innocence, while in other cases he did not make even the most timid attempts to refute anything. The question remains: Why?

¹⁶ See *Istochnik* 4 (1996), 78-92.

According to one very popular explanation Bukharin's confession should be viewed as a veiled attempt to reject the accusations leveled against him by means of "Aesopian language."¹⁷ But those charges to which he actually confessed were more than sufficient to justify a death sentence. In addition a comparison of, for example, Bukharin's very first confessions of guilt with those that he wrote down or orally stated during subsequent stages of the investigation and at trial, shows a consistency in the sense of his assertions, their close correspondence to one another.

Specifically this is the case with Bukharin's confession to his membership in an underground anti-Soviet organization of "Rights," "in the preparation of a conspiracy for a 'palace coup,' in the preparation of a *coup d'etat*" and in plans to murder Stalin.¹⁸ Minor inconsistencies in the confession and the lack therein of certain details can be explained most probably not by any internal contradictions, but by the fact that the investigation was still at a preliminary stage. As we have already stated, Bukharin's confession of guilt of June 2, 1937 was the very first since his arrest on February 27 of the same year.

The impression is unmistakable that Bukharin really wished to reject and deny only those crimes which he had not committed but that he felt compelled to confess when he felt responsible for what he had in fact done.

It must be said that the rehabilitation commission did not scrutinize in any depth the nuances of meaning in Bukharin's confession. Instead it proposed a clever way out of this ticklish situation: to declare the transcript of the trial "unreliable and inaccurate" and the investigative and trial materials falsified, "lacking in juridical and moral force."¹⁹

¹⁷ S. Koen [Cohen]. *Bukharin. Politicheskaia biografiia. 1888-1938*. Moscow: Progress, 1988, pp. 444-449. For the corresponding pages in the original English-language edition, Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 375-80. Roy A. Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme*. Moscow: Progress, 1990, 334-5. Cf. George Katkov, *The Trial of Bukharin*. NY: Stein & Day, 1969, 107, 129, 160, 163, 166.

¹⁸ The text in quotation marks is from Bukharin's statement to Ezhov. Volkogonov Archive, Box 21, Microfilm 13-14.

¹⁹ From the conversation of M.S. Solomentsev with correspondents of *Pravda*, August 19, 1988, in *RKEB* 110-111. For the sake of the Party rehabilitation of Bukharin the Commission also found it necessary to "deny the February-March 1937 Plenum and its truthfulness." *RKEB* 88.

Bukharin's Confessions: Other Arguments "Against"

Juridical and investigative materials are among the most complicated of historical sources. Their use in scientific research always runs the risk of committing the error of accepting as truthful information whose truthfulness still remains to be proven or, on the contrary, of excluding certain facts that have already been established as true simply on the basis that they have been taken from juridical or investigative materials.

In our present case the problem of authenticity has another significant aspect: whether this confession was really written by Bukharin. To put it another way: are there any traces of evidence that force was used to compel Bukharin to write (or even just to confirm with his signature) the "necessary" admissions of guilt?

In contemporary historiography the arguments most commonly brought forward to impugn the genuineness of a person's confession are: (1) torture or other forms of physical compulsion; (2) threats against the accused's family; (3) "cooperation" obtained from a defendant who hopes thereby to save his life. We will consider below some documentary evidence concerning Bukharin's period of imprisonment at the Lubyanka, with the help of which we may be able to evaluate these deductions. In addition we have to touch on the question of any efforts at "staging" through which the NKVD investigators may have prepared Bukharin for the trial of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites.

While reporting that the torture of prisoners was deeply rooted in the practice of the NKVD Stephen Cohen, Roi Medvedev, and even Robert Conquest note almost unanimously that no means of physical pressure were applied to Bukharin in the Lubyanka.²⁰ Likewise in 1988 when the same question was raised by the rehabilitation commission, the KGB confirmed that no materials had been found in the state security archives that could be considered as evidence that impermissible methods of investigation had been used against Bukharin. In addition the chairman of the

²⁰ Koen, Bukharin 444. Zhores A. Medvedev and Roi A. Medvedev, *Neizvestnyi Stalin*. Moscow: Folio, 2004, 374-5. Until the beginning of the 1990s Robert Conquest, like other authors, relying on an interview of Anastas Mikoian with Louis Fisher, believed Bukharin had not been tortured. But in the last edition of *The Great Terror* Conquest writes that his previous opinion had been mistaken, for "recent Soviet articles have made it clear that this is not true." However, Conquest does not indicate what publications he has in mind. Cf. Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1990, 364.

commission himself expressed doubts that any investigator of lesser intellect would have been able to manipulate a person like Bukharin.

In reality, what we know about the months that Bukharin spent in prison corresponds very poorly to the stories about “the bloody dungeons of the NKVD.” It is no secret that in the Lubyanka Bukharin worked long and productively on scientific and literary projects. The overall volume of materials that he wrote in his prison cell comprises more than one thousand typed pages and includes the theoretical works “Philosophical Arabesques” and “Socialism and Culture,” the first part of his autobiographical novel “Times,” a book of poetry, and a number of other works of lesser significance.

So there is no evidence, either direct or indirect, to sustain any theory that Bukharin may have been tortured. Instead, both Cohen and Medvedev suggest the hypothesis that Bukharin was forced to confess from fear for what might happen to his wife, young son, and other relatives.

We must point out that this theory originally came from the pen of the refugee Alexander Orlov in 1953,²¹ and that all contemporary authors seized upon it in hopes that some day the requisite evidence would be uncovered. But to date none of the known sources, including Bukharin’s prison letters and the memoirs of his wife Anna Larina, confirm this story. As for Orlov, all his “information” was gleaned from corridor rumors he heard from a few of his colleagues in the NKVD during his short visits to Moscow from war-torn Spain, where Orlov almost continuously spent the years of the “great purges.”²²

Strictly speaking, we could halt this investigation at this point since, aside from Orlov’s, there are no other accounts confirming the truth of his story. However the present authors think it is of interest to see what other known facts either confirm or disprove “Orlov’s theory.”

After the publication of Orlov’s book the theory that gained the most common acceptance was that his wife and child were the main leverage by means of which the

²¹ See the chapter “Nikolai Bukharin” in Alexander Orlov, *Tainaia istoriia stalinskikh prestuplenii*. SPb: Vsemir. Slovo, 1991.

²² J. Arch Getty, *The Origins of the ‘Great Purges’*. *The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 211-2.

NKVD investigators succeeded in extracting from Bukharin a confession to crimes against the state — in other words, that the “necessary” confessions were obtained from Bukharin only under a guarantee that his relatives would remain unharmed.

According to published information Bukharin’s expulsion from the Party and arrest did in fact have a negative impact on the fate of his family. But none of them was subject to persecution until the death sentence had been carried out on their famous relative in March 1938.²³

The first among them to be arrested was Bukharin’s first wife, N.M. Lukina. This occurred on April 30, 1938, a month and a half after the execution of her former husband. Of all Bukharin’s relatives she alone was sentenced to be executed in 1940. Bukharin’s younger brother Vladimir was taken into custody in November 1939, and his second wife, E.I. Gurvich, and daughter Svetlana were arrested in 1949. His father Ivan Gavrilovich was not arrested, but was refused a pension shortly after the February-March (1937) CC plenum. He died of natural causes in 1940.

Bukharin’s last wife, Anna Larina, suffered more than the others. However, as late as three months after her husband’s arrest she still retained her apartment in the Kremlin, where she dwelt as a close relative of one of the representatives of the Party elite. Only after Bukharin’s first confession of guilt in June 1937 was she at last required to leave Moscow and move to one of five cities in the Soviet Union (she chose Astrakhan’). In December 1937 Larina arrived in a camp in Tomsk and there found out about her husband’s fate. Nine months later she appeared in an NKVD investigative room in the Lubyanka.²⁴ Larina spent many years in camps and in exile, but lived into old age and even survived to witness her husband’s posthumous rehabilitation.

It turns out that the more Bukharin confessed, the harsher the repressive measures taken with respect to his relatives. While knowing nothing about the fate of those close

²³ Junge, 89-91. Cf. also Koen (Cohen), “Bukharin na Lubyanka”, 61; W. Hedeler, “Ezhov’s scenario for the Great Terror and the Falsified Record of the Third Moscow Show Trial.” In Barry McLoughlin and Kevin McDermott, eds., *Stalin’s Terror. High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 50.

²⁴ Lavrentii P. Beria believed that Bukharin was unconditionally guilty (A.M. Larina, *Nezabyvaemoe*. Moscow: Izd-vo APN, 1989, 181), but he concluded that Larina was not implicated in the conspiratorial activities of her husband. In Larina’s opinion it was Beria who saved her life; without his intervention she would have received a more severe sentence. Be that as it may, it was Beria who sent fruit and money for the prison store to Larina’s room (*ibid.*, 191 ff.).

to him it seems that Bukharin himself was one of the causes of their moral and physical suffering. The greater the crimes to which he confessed, the greater the torment and misfortune befell his family — and not vice versa. There is no indication that as Bukharin progressively confessed to more and more crimes, these confessions were wrung from him in hopes of saving members of his family from repression.

In short our attempt to check “Orlov’s version” instead confirms what we already know: it is without foundation in every respect. There remains only to say that the rumor set forth in Orlov’s book represents one variety of the “history” of a more general nature, according to which Bukharin supposedly engaged in desperate attempts to “trade” something with Stalin and the NKVD. The different versions of this story come down to the objects of the supposed “trade.” In one case it was, supposedly, the safety of members of Bukharin’s family if, of course, the investigation received the “necessary” confessions. In the other, it was the sparing of his own life provided that Bukharin play his role in the trial as required.

In reality the documents Bukharin wrote immediately preceding his death, while permeated with a touching hope that his life will be spared, contain not even a breath of a hint that he, Bukharin, had acted as had been required of him and therefore was supposedly counting on being spared.²⁵ This includes, for example, evidence such as his last letter to his wife (“I am writing you on the eve of the trial. . . .”) and his official appeal, or request for leniency. These documents give no reason to think that any of the Lubyanka confessions were obtained from Bukharin as a result of “trading” or any such unequal “agreement.”

(For the same reasons Arthur Koestler’s account in his novel *Darkness at Noon* which is cited from time to time in order to explain the motives for Bukharin’s behavior at trial, must be recognized as mistaken. Aside from the question of the inappropriateness of using a work of literary artistry in historical research we note that in this case the author’s conjecture is contradicted by documents stemming directly from Bukharin himself.)

²⁵ In the confession of Mikhail P. Frinovsky, the former first vice-commissar of the NKVD, we read something quite different: “Ezhov talked with Bukharin and Rykov several times and in order to calm them assured them that they would not be shot under any circumstances.” *Lubyanka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKR “Smersh”. 1939-mart 1946*. Moscow: MFD, 2006, 47.

Finally, a few words about the supposed “staging” of the Bukharin-Rykov trial. In the historical literature it is common to read that the idea of a show trial of Bukharin was born in the fall of 1936 or even earlier.²⁶ But in light of documents that have recently become accessible to historians these statements demand substantive correction.

As we know from materials published by the “Memorial” society, in June 1937 two-thirds of the future defendants at the March 1938 trial, including such key figures as Grin’ko, Rozengol’ts, Sharangovich, Ikramov, and Khodzhaev, were still at liberty.²⁷ It is especially curious that the names of fifteen of the accused (out of a total of twenty-one),²⁸ including Bukharin and Rykov, are mentioned in the so-called “Stalin shooting lists” which were compiled for reviewing cases in a secret and accelerated manner.²⁹ The greater part of the future defendants in the case of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites were entered in the list of “former members and candidate members of the CC ACP(b)” of November 1, 1937 and were struck from it by the hand of some unknown editor. A few of them figure in various lists twice (like Rakovsky) or three times (like Zubarev), or twice in one and the same list (like Sharangovich).

All this speaks to the conclusion that no such “staging” of the future trial had been prepared in 1935-36, or even by November 1, 1937 when the long list of former Party and state workers was transmitted to Molotov, Stalin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, and Zhdanov for confirmation as “subject to trial by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR.” It follows that when Bukharin was giving his confession in June 1937 the NKVD had no “setup plan” for a trial prepared in advance. Consequently there was no intention to obtain confessions from him that might correspond to the supposed “stage-managing” of a legal proceeding.

Setting aside any consideration of the conditions which might demand a somewhat different view of the preparation of the last of the large Moscow show trials,

²⁶ Oleg V. Khlevniuk. *Politbiuro. Mekhanizmy politicheskoi vlasti v 30-e gody*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1996, 205-6; Hedeler, 35.

²⁷ According to the information on the compact disk *Zhertvy politicheskogo terrora v SSSR. Na 2-kh diskakh. Disk 2. Baza dannykh o zhertvakh politicheskogo terrora v SSSR*. Moscow: Zven’ia, 2004. The same information is available on the Internet at the site of the International “Memorial” Society: <http://www.memo.ru/memory/spiski.htm>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, “Stalinskie rasstrel’nye spiski.” See also <http://stalin.memo.ru/images/intro.htm>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, note 11.

we can say with a very high degree of certainty that everything Bukharin wrote in his confession of guilt originated with him alone.

Bukharin's Letter to Stalin of December 10, 1937

Until the present publication Bukharin's pretrial confessions of guilt had not attracted the attention of the scholarly community and were not available in print in the historical literature. But at the beginning of 1993 two Russian historical journals published, at about the same time, the "sensational" letter of December 10, 1937 to Stalin in which Bukharin firmly insisted on the falsehood of the accusations leveled against him. Bukharin unsparingly and directly cast into doubt everything he had confessed to earlier: "Standing on the edge of a precipice, from which there is no return, I tell you on my word of honor, as I await my death, that I am innocent of those crimes which I admitted at the investigation."

Since this letter of December 10, 1937 is the only evidence that supports Bukharin's absolute innocence, we must consider it more closely. The fact is that, regardless of the categorical nature of this letter, Bukharin did not only recant all his previous confessions but, unable to restrain himself, confessed to several other old "sins." He'd have done better to have restrained himself.

As Getty and Naumov have noted, in this letter of December 10, 1937 Bukharin strayed somewhat beyond the limits of what he had already admitted at the February-March 1937 Plenum of the CC ACP(b). Thus at the beginning of page two of the letter he says that at the Plenum he had indeed failed to tell his comrades about some things, and ends the same page with the words: "Thus at the plenum I spoke *the pure truth*, but no one believed me." (Bukharin's emphasis — GF, VB). In other words Bukharin was trying to say that, although he had not told the whole truth at Plenum, he was saying it only now. But in the opinion of Getty and Naumov this tactic would have simply strengthened any suspicion that Bukharin was continuing to be insincere, and would have destroyed the last remnants of trust in him, if any had still remained.³⁰

³⁰ Getty & Naumov, 563.

We can also find traces of similar insincerity in other parts of the letter. Thus on page seven of his “touching” missive Bukharin writes: “I know that N[atasha] S[ergeevna Allilueva] would never believe that I had plotted anything evil against you. . . .” Read literally, this has to be considered the truth, for Bukharin was not saying that he had not taken part in the preparation to kill Stalin. He was only writing that Stalin’s wife (dead by this time) *would not have believed* he was a part of any such plot! The difference in meaning between these two statements is obvious.

(In general Bukharin was very evasive by nature and constantly engaged in wordplay. This manner of behavior struck Vyshinsky. And not him alone: many of those who spoke up at the February-March Plenum noted Bukharin’s lack of sincerity, his “slipperiness” in his dealings with his colleagues on the Central Committee.)

In the letter to Stalin Bukharin wrote of his innocence with respect to those crimes to the commission of which he had confessed during the investigation. But exactly which confessions did Bukharin “confirm” earlier?

The phrase is unambiguous: it implies that some of Bukharin’s confessions were pressed onto him by the investigators. But even Solomentsev, who headed the rehabilitation commission that, in the last analysis, did issue a verdict of innocence in Bukharin’s case, noted that during the course of three months “he denied everything, even in his personal handwriting,” “after each face-to-face confrontation with those who accused him he would say: no matter what they did to him, he would never agree to confess to the false accusations that had been hurled at him by these liars, these scoundrels.”³¹

But then there came a sudden change, and without any protest (and in his own handwriting, as Solomentsev stated) Bukharin wrote a statement to Ezhov in which he admits that he had been, as he put it, “a participant in the organization of the Rights up to the present, that he was a member of the center of the organization together with Rykov and Tomsky, that this organization had set as its goal the forcible overthrow of Soviet power (uprising, *coup d’etat*, terror), that it had entered into a bloc with the Trotskyite-Zinovievite organization.” In other words in his very first statement to Ezhov Bukharin

³¹ *RKEB* 54. See also Koen, “Bukharin na Lubianke,” 60.

confessed to precisely those crimes which he confirmed at the close of the investigation, and then again at trial.

Cohen and Hedeler note that a possible cause of Bukharin's confession might have been the arrests of Marshal Tukhachevsky and other prominent military commanders.³² If it were a coincidence, it would be a very strange one, for Bukharin in his very first confession named Tukhachevsky, Kork, and Primakov as participants in the group of conspirators within the Red Army. As we have shown above, no methods of physical compulsion were applied to Bukharin. Consequently, we may presume that it was Tukhachevsky's arrest that became the main cause of the great shock that Bukharin experienced in connection with the collapse of his last hope at rescue.³³

A final point: Bukharin's letter of December 10, 1937 cannot be considered truthful because at least one of its assertions is unquestionably false. This is Bukharin's assurance that he had never participated in any plans to murder Stalin. But we now know that Bukharin had in fact acted precisely to the contrary of what he wrote in the December 10, 1937 letter. We know this from the memoirs, published in 1971, of one of Bukharin's closest colleagues — the Swiss communist and member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, Jules Humbert-Droz.³⁴

³² Koen, "Bukharin na Lubianke," 60. Hedeler also points out the connection between the "Tukhachevsky Affair" and Bukharin's confession, but adds Rykov here, who also at first refused to confess but then began to do so after the military men had been arrested (Hedeler, 41). See also "Pokazaniia Tukhachevskogo M.N. ot 1 iunია 1937 g." *Molodaia gvardiia* 9 (1994), 135.

³³ In confirmation of this proposition we recall the words of Matusov, who during the investigation in 1939 once stated to Larina: "You thought that Iakir and Tukhachevsky would save your Bukharin. But we work well. That's why they didn't succeed!" (Larina, *Nezabyvaemoe*, 27). For the plans for an armed seizure of the Kremlin we have the testimony of KGB veteran I.M Orlov who asserts that a special force, in which he was assigned to serve, had been prepared especially to arrest Stalin (see A.T. Rybin, *Stalin predvidel: (Zapiski telokhranitelia)*. Moscow, 1992; on the web at http://vlastitel.com.ru/stalin/itog/st_predv.html#10 See also Rybin, *Riadom so Stalinym: Zapiski telokhranitelia*. Moscow: Veteran, 1992, Chapter 14, n.23; available at <http://stalinism.ru/books/rybin.zip>.

³⁴ Jules Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline. Dix ans au service de l'Internationale communiste 1921-1931*. Neuchâtel: A la Baconnière, 1971, 379-80. Humbert-Droz wrote without any pressure from the NKVD. He was Bukharin's friend and hated Stalin. He had no reason to lie or to exaggerate what he knew. And these are not "rumors," since Humbert-Droz wrote that he heard of the plans to murder Stalin from Bukharin's own lips.

Conclusion

We have tried to demonstrate that Bukharin's confession of June 2, 1937 is an unquestionably genuine and authentic document (that is, that it was in fact written by the author), and that we may consider the information it contains to be truthful with a very high degree of probability.

Personal Confession of N. Bukharin (Translated by Grover Furr)

In the present confession I wish to give the historical development of the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights, beginning with its embryonic forms and including in the analysis its intellectual (*ideinye*) and organizational sources and premises

1 My general theoretical anti-Leninist views

I first of all wish to concentrate on my own theoretical anti-Leninist and anti-Marxist errors, in order to give a clear, general theoretical basis for the following exposition and in order not to repeat myself in my consideration of individual questions.

1. Lack of understanding of dialectics and substitution of Marxist dialects with the so-called theory of equilibrium. It is well known that Lenin's "Testament" points out that I did not understand dialectics and had not studied it seriously. This was completely true. In the purely philosophical area I proceeded from the study of so-called "latest positivism" and was under the influence of A. BOGDANOV, whom I wished to interpret only in a materialist way, which unavoidably led to a peculiar eclecticism, simply put, theoretical confusion, where mechanical materialism united with empty schemas and abstractions. Abstract schematism pursues "final generalizations", wrenching them from the multi-formedness of rapidly-flowing life, and in this dead approach to the processes of history and of historical life lies the root of my immense political errors, which grew under definite conditions into political crimes. I could give many examples of this side of the matter. When at the VI Congress of the Party I underestimated the role of the peasantry, and still earlier of the national question, that signified a failure to understand the concrete historical situation and concrete stages of development; when at the time of the Brest treaty I struggled against Lenin, I did not understand the most concrete of concrete questions about "the peasant" and that the question was precisely to give the masses a "breathing space", and substituted for the living demands of the moment some general literary considerations about the fact that the proletarian fatherland must be defended; when in the trade union discussion I occupied an anti-Leninist position and joined with Trotsky, I did not understand that through the trade union question the question of NEP in one of its concrete aspects was also decided; and on the contrary, much later that same anti-dialectical position led to Rightist errors; when the period of sharpened class struggle was already beginning, out of the general schema of movement to a classless society I drew a deduction about the impossibility in that given stage of the sharpening of class struggle, etc. etc.

The substitution of dialectical flexibility and of the greatest degree of concreteness by abstract schemas of a renovated "theory of equilibrium", with all assurances of mobile equilibrium, in reality meant a fixation on dead abstraction and stasis that hindered me

from seeing the concrete changes in all of their multifarious and complex interweaving of appearances.

2. Theory of the state and theory of proletarian dictatorship. It's well known that V.I. Lenin accused me of concentrating all my attention on the destruction of the bourgeois state on one side, and on classless society on the other, without giving enough attention to the transitional period of proletarian dictatorship. This completely accurate remark of Lenin's seemed to me to be a flagrant injustice because, I believed, I did not at all suffer from this sin. However it is perfectly obvious that one of the roots of the much later ideology of the Rights lay precisely here. In fact at the origins of our ideology lies an underestimation of the organizational possibilities of the proletarian dictatorship, and overestimate of the market element and its characteristic "economic laws": all our views on the market, price formation, forms of state intervention, proportions of the national economy, relations between industry and agriculture, the question of the individual peasant household, etc. etc. – all rested theoretically on this very question, the question of the organizational possibilities of changing "the economic laws" by the application of proletarian dictatorship. That which was appropriate in the first phases of NEP we carried over in an antidialectical manner to other conditions, and this transfer rested on an underestimate of the power of the state apparatus of the mature and strengthened dictatorship of the proletariat.

3. Theory of class struggle under conditions of proletarian dictatorship. Here I ~~made~~ committed the following fundamental error: from a general conception of the movement to a classless society I drew the deduction that after the landowners and capitalists had been crushed would come the stage of "equilibrium" between the proletariat and the peasantry, a "two-class society", in which the class struggle would gradually die down. I relied here on the anti-dialectical and anti-Leninist interpretation of all those passages in Lenin when he speaks of the peaceful and reformist, cultural character of our work generally and in the countryside in particular and especially. I therefore "overlooked" both the growing resistance of the kulaks and the wavering, inevitable under such conditions, of a part of the middle peasantry, that is, the situation of the developing dialectical contradictions of NEP, and the fact that the development of socialism, ever narrowing the base of its class enemies, leads to the sharpening of the methods of their struggle against socialism. This objective and inevitable development I laid to the fault of the Party leadership, when the problem was really to overcome this opposition by all means. The essence and theoretical basis of my views in this area was the notion of peaceful evolution with the extinction of class struggle. This, in connection with my position of overestimating the market element that I elaborated above, led to an anti-Leninist treatment of the Leninist "plan of cooperation" that played a large role in the later ideology of the Rights. According to this notion the main road, the highway to the development of socialism in the countryside lay not through the productive unification of peasant households, but through a process of management, through attracting them by the market, by cooperation in trade, credit, the banking system, etc., during which the "kulak nests" would peacefully grow into socialism. In this way the most important question of the relationship between the proletariat and the peasantry was treated by me in a fundamentally incorrect manner. Instead of state activity, drift; instead of the sharpening

of class struggle – its extinction; instead of the theoretical base for cooperation in production, the market; instead of the crushing of the kulak class, the perspective of its peaceful transformation and the slogan “Enrich yourselves.” Here were combined the preconditions of my most recent direct struggle with the Party and of my counterrevolutionary deductions in both the ideological and the practical-political sphere.

4. The theory of organized capitalism.

A somewhat special case (but an outgrowth of the same anti-dialecticalism of thought and abstract scholasticism) is the so-called theory of organized capitalism. According to this theory capitalism within its own framework overcomes the anarchy of production and of market relationships. The fact that capitalist monopoly exists side by side with free competition and makes all relationships more entangled; the fact that even within the capitalist monopolies themselves a fierce competitive struggle is going on; finally, the fact that state-capitalist forms can never completely cover over all the productive relationships of capitalism – all this fell beyond the field of vision of my theory of organized capitalism, which coincides with the theoretical views of the theorists of social-democracy.

II. The origins of the “Bukharin School”

The origins of the so-called “Bukharin School” go back to 1919-1920. I was then giving a course of lectures (together with individual lectures) at the Sverdlovsk University and among my listeners a circle gradually formed itself with which I led seminar work. At this time I also formed close personal relations with a number of the participants in these seminars. I would drop into their apartments (for example, in the dormitory of the Strastny monastery, where A. SLEPKOV and others lived), helped them when they were in need, etc.

Among the persons closest to me at that time I can name A. SLEPKOV, D. MARETSKII, and D. ROSIT.

In these studies and also in conversations at home, which then bore an ordinary theoretical character, I developed to them my anti-Leninist views, proceeding fundamentally along the lines of problems of philosophy, the theory of historical materialism, and economics.

In those years (I think in 1919 or 1920) I was writing a large book with the title “Theory of Historical Materialism” and I used to read each of the chapters as I wrote it in my circle, where these chapters were hotly discussed. Here was both developed and fully formulated the anti-Marxist theory of equilibrium that I mentioned above, in which the dialectical triad was interpreted as equilibrium, its destruction, and its reconstitution; all social processes were viewed from that same point of view.

Here also was developed the anti-dialectical conception of mechanical materialism, which reduced all processes of nature and society to a mechanical movement of matter.

But since these fundamentally false theoretical arrangements were accompanied by the drawing into the discussion and exposition of a large quantity of literature, including foreign literature, the listeners were impressed by my “erudition”, and I was delighted at having found such grateful “students.” Thus was created the exaltation of my person, the well-known closed nature of the circle as “mine”, on the basis of anti-Leninist and anti-Marxist theoretical arrangements, and the discussion of all theoretical questions in this, as we called it at the time, “laboratory of thought” developed in this way on the basis of anti-Leninist views.

Ties among the persons grew, and so did a special loyalty to the circle. Of course the matter was not limited to the book mentioned above; the discussion of different theoretical questions proceeded on a wide front and little by little began to interweave itself with the discussion of questions of the politics of the day.

In 1921-1923 a nucleus of the participants in the circle entered the IRP [Institute of the Red Professoriate – G.F.], where I continued to visit them at home (in the dormitory of the IRP).

The composition of the group was at that time approximately this: A. SLEPKOV, D. MARETSKII, G. MARETSKII, D. ROZIT, I. KRAVAL’, A. TROITSKII, A. GUSEV, F. BOGDANOV, A. ZAITSEV, N. STREMOUKHOV; near them stood MONOSOV and RADIN. I don’t remember when A. STETSKII, P. PETROVSKII, K. ROZENTAL’, T. LEVIN, V. MEZHLAUK, and then IA. STEN appeared.

It is necessary to note that at about this time a group of IRPists had already turned into an organized fraction and had entered elections to organizations of the IRP, nominating their candidates and supporting them at the elections.

III. Transition of the “Bukharin School” to political activity

From the above it may be understood that the group would sooner or later make the transition to political activity and become a special fraction of “ideologists” within the party. That is what occurred. I personally considered that one of the reasons for my previous defeats in the struggle against Lenin was the lack of cadres who agreed with and were devoted to me, and therefore out of this “school” I recruited for myself cadres who by their education would guarantee such devotion.

At the outset of the struggle with Trotskyism I wrote a so called “memorandum” that was read out loud to a small part of the group (this memorandum was not given to the Politburo of the CC of the ACP(b) [CC = Central Committee; ACP(b) = All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), the formal name of the Party, changed in October 1952 to Communist Party of the Soviet Union]. I must stop to deal with it since it contained a series of completely anti-Party and anti-Leninist arrangements.

Its basic ideas, if my memory does not fail me, boil down to the following.

In the “memorandum” the following questions were posed: After Lenin’s death a crisis in the leadership of the Party would begin and a well-known part of the leadership would be cut off. This would bring about a further deepening of the crisis and a new cutting off. The result would be a group in the leadership itself where each leader would have his people, like the staffs of the White army, in which there was no unity. Is it not imaginable that we could have in our system of proletarian dictatorship two parties replacing one another like the Republicans and Democrats in the USA where they, remaining parties in essence of one class, periodically change places? Or, is it not imaginable that we could have an ACP(b) organization along the lines of the “Workers’ Party” (or “Party of Labor”) with a broad base?

I wrote this memorandum when Trotsky, after Lenin’s death, came out against the CC of the ACP(b).

The sense of the memorandum thus consisted in this: that we must carry out the struggle with Trotskyism in such a way as not to cut Trotsky off from the leadership, *and this* found its expression in a definite phrase in the memorandum that related to Trotsky: we must “get along with each other while we fight.”

I acted accordingly.

In the struggle that developed with Trotsky my group took part, but the struggle was carried out in relaxed (“gentlemanly”) forms and had special arrangements as its basis.

To put it briefly, we carried out the struggle with Trotskyism as a fraction within the ACP(b), acting – if I can put it this way – in a bloc with the Party. At about this time my group added to its numbers. Into it came: AIKHENVAL’D, E. GOL’DENBERG, A. ALEKSANDROV, V. KUZ’MIN, P. SAPOZHNIKOV (TSETLIN appeared, I think, only in 1926).

Thus I was already beginning to create for myself cadres for the following struggle with the Party leadership headed by Stalin. In place were special ideological formulations, people, and their consolidation. The sense of closedness, fractional loyalty, conceitedness, anti-Party talks about Stalin’s supposedly low theoretical level, petty criticism, gossip and anecdotes about the leadership of the Party were made more serious by the fact that I, in a criminal manner, initiated the nucleus of this fraction to all the most intimate affairs of the Party leadership, acquainted this nucleus with secret Party documents of the CC, Politburo, Executive Committee and Presidium of the Comintern; I praised these young people and thereby corrupted them politically, sowed the seeds that would bring their own criminal fruit.

I pretended to the role of a leader of the Party under Lenin, actively struggled in the Party against Lenin and was defeated. Lenin’s death untied my hands and I began to prepare the cadre who were devoted to me and on whom I could rely in a struggle to seize the leadership in the Party. The participants in the fraction, the “school” I had founded, were precisely those cadres who had already achieved a certain influence in the Party.

Afterwards they became activists in the anti-Party and anti-Soviet struggle against the leadership of the Party, against Stalin.

IV. Formation of the counterrevolutionary Right organization

Approximately around 1928 in the land of proletarian dictatorship there appeared well-known elements of crisis in the relationship between the proletariat and peasantry and the leadership of the Party, with J.V. Stalin at its head, began to lay out the road to overcoming these elements on the basis of the further victorious movement forward towards socialism.

I was in opposition to a series of measures proposed by J.V. Stalin, and this anti-Party arrangement quickly transformed in the given historical situation, given the ever sharpening class struggle – into an anti-Soviet and, in essence, a counterrevolutionary arrangement.

It is superfluous to repeat here that the anti-Leninist theoretical views I have outlined above played a significant role in the formulation of the ideology of the Rights.

In 1928 I, together with E.V. TSETLIN, at that time for all practical purposes my secretary, I visited IAGODA in his office in the OGPU. I began to ask him about the mood among the peasantry. IAGODA called the corresponding employee (I seem to remember it was ALEKSEEV) who gave me a detailed report, with figures and facts, laying emphasis on the kulak rebellions in a series of regions, on terrorist acts against Soviet workers in the countryside. I asked IAGODA: “Why do you not report about all this in the Politburo?” At which point he then replied: “That is your job, N.I. – you do the reporting, and I will always help you with materials.” I remember that after that I went to the Revvoensoviet [= Revolutionary Military Council, the organ of supreme military power from 1918 to 1934] to K.E. Voroshilov, where Bubnov was present at the time (I think he was then the head of the PUR [Political Directorate of the former body]) and emotionally began to recount what I had just heard.

Voroshilov cursed me out, saying that I was falling into a panic and hysterics, and then, as later became obvious to me, reported my views to Stalin.

After that I got into ever sharper conflicts with the leadership of the Party, that is, I took more and more anti-Party paths, paths of active struggle with the Party. Thence too the gradual rapprochement with RYKOV and TOMSKY, from whose statements at closed sessions of the Politburo I saw that they too held, more or less, the same views that I did, though without any clear theoretical formulation.

At the same time I systematically kept my group current with all the intimate business of the Politburo, told them about all the conflicts and in this way educated them on anti-Party arrangements.

At about this same time there began the illegal meetings of a number of the members of the CC, among those I have mentioned RYKOV, TOMSKY and myself. If I am not mistaken, the first such meeting was at TOMSKY'S dacha, where I presented theses in which I had formulated my own views. Present were myself, TOMSKY, I cannot recall whether RYKOV was there, a few members of the CC who were trade unionists (I remember UGAROV), I think SMIRNOV ("Foma") was also present, V. POLONSKI, N. ANTIPOV, DOGADOV, and possibly UGLANOV (V. POLONSKI soon left).

These meetings continued, usually concentrated chronologically before the plenums of the CC or any important party meetings, and had as their immediate goal the organization of fractional presentations at these plenums. An important role in these meetings was played by the so-called "Muscovites": UGLANOV, KOTOV, KULIKOV, V. MIKHAILOV, RIUTIN, IAKOVLEV (the former secretary of the Khamovnicheskii raion in Moscow city).

At these meetings there were many so-called Rykovite "learned secretaries" (S. RADIN, NESTEROV, <illegible>) and my supporters: SLEPKOV, MARETSKII, E. TSETLIN and others, where they played the role of an auxiliary apparatus (in gathering materials for speeches, in the formulation of these or those positions, etc.). These meetings usually took place in the Kremlin, in TOMSKY'S, RYKOV'S, or my own apartment.

Along with these meetings I must mention the almost two-day vigil of trade unionists at TOMSKY'S during the well-known congress of trade unions, to which I also went. Here there was a great crowd of people, but I cannot remember which ones with full certainty: UGAROV, DOGADOV, UDAROV, V. SHMIDT, MEL'NICHANSKY, IAGLOM (one of the most important figures of the Right trade unionists), I think, KOZELEV, FIGATNER. In general, among the personnel who formed the basis of the Right organization as it was put together, the following basic forces must be noted:

1. M.I. TOMSKY and a group of trade unionists;
2. A.I. RYKOV, his secretaries and connections with the people of the Soviet apparatus;
3. N.I. BUKHARIN and his pupils;
4. The "Muscovites" with UGLANOV at their head (mentioned above, plus the group in the Promakademiia [Industrial Academy], plus the group of youth with MATVEEV at their head).

In general at that time the organization of Rights that was in the process of formation was more or less that which the Germans in old times called a "lose Organisation", but little by little a characteristic, though not formally fixed, organizational hierarchy formed itself:

1. Opposition members of the CC.
2. Above them a de facto leadership of the "troika" (BUKHARIN, RYKOV, TOMSKY), one that stood out both thanks to its specific gravity and thanks to its position, which became the Rightist center. Nearest to it stood N.A. UGLANOV who, having earlier been secretary of the Moscow Committee, had the "Muscovites" behind him.

For a full picture I must say a few words about the Comintern. Naturally the so-called “Russian question” had its reflection here as well. Of the Russian workers of the Communist International the viewpoint of the Rights was shared by E. TSETLIN, GROL’MAN, IDEL’SON, SLEPKOV (A.), who had ties, above all, with the so called German “conciliators” (the group of Ewert-Gerhardt); a part of the Americans sympathized with it (Lovestone & Co.), a part of the Swedes (Chilbum [Bukharin means Karl Kilbom]) and a few others.

The most prominent figure at that time of these circles was EWERT, with whom I also met personally, at which meetings the conversation had a clear “anti-Stalin,” that is, anti-Party orientation.

Such was the formation of the counterrevolutionary Right organization.

Its ideological formation developed in step with speeches above all at Plenums of the CC, discussed beforehand at the illegal meetings cited above, where the plan of speeches, arrangement of speakers, and order of speeches, was worked out.

The specially sharp and counterrevolutionary <illegible> in these speeches found its expression in the thesis of the military-feudal exploitation of the peasantry, that in the political situation then existing generalized the anti-Soviet opposition of the capitalist classes. These speeches are generally known, and it’s not worthwhile to discuss them now. It is, however, essential to note the fact that I wrote a large and detailed platform of the Rights, which was discussed at a meeting of the Rightist members of the CC plus a few from my “school”: here a sharp and anti-Soviet critic of the political line of the party and government was given across the front of all questions of a general political nature, from economics to the politics of the Comintern, from inner-party politics to the problems of Party leadership.

I must especially note the vicious criticism of the so-called “Party regime”. I think it’s not necessary to discuss this topic further because I am aware that the text itself of the platform is in the possession of the investigators.

V. Search for a bloc with KAMENEV-ZINOVIEV

Since we, the Rights, in our struggle against the Party did not rest our hopes on our own forces alone, we began to seek allies among other anti-Soviet groups and organizations and, first of all, with the group of Kamenev-Zinoviev, behind whom there had been at one time a fairly significant number of adherents in the Leningrad organization.

Among the facts relevant here are the following:

1. My meeting with Kamenev at KAMENEV’S apartment.
2. My meeting with PIATAKOV in the Kremlin hospital, where KAMENEV was also present.

3. My and TOMSKY'S meeting with KAMENEV at V. SHMIDT'S dacha.

For the investigation, of course, the various “psychological experiences” which these meetings elicited, are of no interest, but what is important is the political sense and meaning of these facts, as attempts even at that time to establish a political bloc between the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights and the counterrevolutionary group of KAMENEV-ZINOVIEV, and also with the Trotskyites through PIATAKOV.

The meeting at KAMENEV'S apartment was the most significant, it seems to me. The factual side of this case is as follows: SOKOL'NIKOV whom I knew as a Rightist among the Zinovievites dropped in on me and accompanied me to KAMENEV, from whom he quickly withdrew. I was in a very excited condition and in extremely sharp phrases I criticized the politics of the Party, the politics of Stalin, characterizing it as the politics of civil war, the politics of the organization of famine, the politics of the removal of the old activists of the Party, etc.

KAMENEV waited expectantly, let me “talk myself out” and restricted himself to brief replies, as they say, “twisted his moustache” over my anti-Party outbursts. As is well known he later gave a memorandum of the conversation to the Trotskyites, and they issued a corresponding proclamation. Although this meeting did not lead at that time to any direct political results, it was the first attempt at the establishment of political contact between the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights as represented by myself and the counterrevolutionary organization of the Zinoviev-Kamenev kind.

The second meeting was the meeting in the Kremlin hospital, where PIATAKOV lay (before that I used to drop in on him in his apartment in the Nirnze building [the ‘dom Nirenze’ was a tall fashionable building built in 1912 according to the design of the engineer E.N. Nirnsee], but those were ‘household’ conversations and PIATAKOV even sent his daughter to accompany me: “See Kolya out.”).

I arrived at the hospital with the platform of the Rights, which I mentioned above. In the hospital with PIATAKOV was KAMENEV, I read aloud the economic part of the platform and asked those present their opinions about the corresponding positions of the platform. On this occasion too both of them were careful and did not say anything of substance, although they listened to the document I read out to them with obvious attentiveness.

At last, the third meeting was the meeting at SHMIDT's dacha (near TOMSKY'S dacha). SHMIDT himself was not present. The initiative for this meeting was TOMSKY'S (here I'd like to state that I do not remember the chronology of the two last meetings).

I went there together with E. TSETLIN. Thus there were present KAMENEV, TOMSKY, I myself, and TSETLIN. That was before one of the plenums of the CC and, as I seem to remember, KAMENEV'S efforts (rather leisurely, it is true) were aimed at finding out whether we, i.e. the Rights, would speak up at the CC Plenum and to ward off the possibility that we would not speak out.

VI. Transition to dishonest tactics

Towards 1930-31 the political situation in the country became extremely sharp because of the desperate opposition by the kulaks and their allies in the cities (a part of the old bourgeois intelligentsia et al.). Difficulties grew, and a part of the Rights began political speculation on these difficulties.

We gathered all possible information about the opposition to collectivization, about the various manifestations of peasant dissatisfaction, about the slaughter of farm animals, about the lack of bread, about the growth of price inflation, about various economic paradoxes (this was called “the economy rearing up”), we carefully gathered together facts such as that wagon-drivers were feeding their horses with baked bread because that was cheaper, etc. without end. The fact that we were counting on the use of these difficulties became the main theme of the corresponding conversations and discussions among the members of the Right counterrevolutionary organization at RYKOV’S, my own, and TOMSKY’S apartments in conversation with the members of the Rightist group at the apartments of SLEPKOV, of ASTROV, and others.

But here I must first say a few words about the so-called “capitulation” of the Rights that took place in several ways.

It was completely obvious to us that the further continuation of open struggle would lead to the full defeat of the whole cadre staff of the organization, to the loss of all the authority of its leaders, to a series of repressive measures, etc. We, the Rights, in open speeches – at the plenums of the CC and at a few meetings of party organizations – were beaten in ideas: there was no chance at all of any winning over of a majority. In the trade unions where, it would seem, TOMSKY’S authority would have been undeniable, in the Moscow organization (even earlier) which had been ruled by UGLANOV, in the Soviet apparatus where RYKOV had connections, even in the Comintern, where I worked – everywhere the Party was victorious, and our supporters were isolated clusters. At this point we arrived at the idea of the necessity of “capitulation” and about the transition to the tactics of deception.

At this point it is interesting to note that even earlier than this the <illegible> of our (Rightist) milieu of the so-called “non-fractional fraction” <illegible> such methods of spreading our views, methods which would at the same time prevent the Rights from defeat (and this was our deduction from the experience of the struggle of the Trotskyites and Zinovievites against the Party) – [and] serve as the basis for the formulation of our tactics of deception.

This was the transition to “keeping two sets of books,” that is, to disguising, i.e. illegality as a principle of work, that is the violation not only of Party, but of Soviet, constitutional, state legality generally.

This transition to illegal methods of struggle inevitably led, with the force of the logic of continuing the struggle, to extremely serious consequences and to all the escalating harmfulness of the organization of the Rights. Above all, the “troika”, which had formally capitulated, was turned now into the illegal center of the Right opposition.

Near to this center also stood A.S. ENUKIDZE. ENUKIDZE was well known as a man of a liberal-philistine kind and at the same time as a man who had sympathized with the Rights. TOMSKY often talked with him and reported to him <illegible> of the corresponding attitudes in relation to economic policy and in relation to questions of the “inner Party regime.” I also had meetings with ENUKIDZE, during which he expressed a lively sympathy towards me, RYKOV and TOMSKY, as persons who had been “insulted.” TOMSKY recommended him as “his” man who could prove helpful by virtue of his position, contacts and possibilities. In this way ENUKIDZE was drawn into the orbit of attention of the Right center and through TOMSKY came into close relations with it.

Further. Around this time during the course of Party repression many participants of the organization were dispersed around various cities: in Voronezh, Samara, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, etc. etc. In preparation, before their departures a discussion of this matter occurred among the members of the center of the Rights and we decided that “there is no evil without some good”, and the fact that these people were sent around to those places could be used for various purposes, in the first place, along the lines of collecting information about the situation in those places (because we already did not believe the official statistical data at all), and then – and this is the main point – to gather new cadres in the periphery, to recruit new supporters with the aim of continuing the struggle with the party and widening < illegible > of the cadres of the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights.

So this work was carried out in the local areas. In addition from time to time people visited Moscow, reported about the mood in their local area, about local workers, about their “successes” in the matter of selection of cadres for the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights. Usually this information was transmitted not at the meetings of the center but in other ways; these people would arrive and drop in on me or on TOMSKY or RYKOV and would report about the situation and the person who received this information, when he met with the others, would tell about them in turn. I personally continued to visit the apartments of SLEPKOV, MARETSKY, and ASTROV and sometimes received information that way too. I can’t remember whether there was a meeting of all of the “troika” with a report by anyone of those who had arrived, but I can’t exclude that possibility. In our turn we, that is the members of the Rightist center, wholly approved of this activity, gave advice, recommended redoubled carefulness and a meticulous selection of people, warned against failures, spoke about the collection of information of special interest to us, gave new impetus to the continuation of anti-Soviet work in the local areas.

The recruitment of people went on without interruption in this way. Among the questions that had especial significance I must mention RYKOV’S information about IAGODA.

RYKOV, who was in his time connected to IAGODA (or rather, the other way around) once reported that IAGODA had declared that he was a supporter of ours but that he, IAGODA, wanted to maintain himself in an especially conspiratorial position due to the nature of his job, and that it was necessary to protect this specially conspiratorial position in the most careful way.

VII Transition to the tactic of forcible overthrow of the leadership

At the beginning of 1932 the question of the platform of the Rights was raised again. The platform of 1929 was outdated: since then much had already changed in the country, and this required a political stock-taking.

At a meeting of the center of the Rights at, if I am not mistaken, TOMSKY'S dacha it was decided to begin work on a new platform. In addition we agreed that for this new platform those parts of the 1929 platform could be used that were not outdated and had retained their force. There the criticism of the Party regime, "Stalin's dictatorship", the transition to methods of forcible overthrow of the leadership became the order of the day.

At this meeting of the troika, which UGLANOV also attended, it was decided that UGLANOV'S "boys" would work out the platform. UGLANOV accepted this commission, and after a little while the platform was worked out. At its basis lay the arrangements I indicated above. It became known under the name of the Riutin platform, however it was the platform of the whole Rightist counterrevolutionary organization taken together, its ideological foundation – the critique of the economic policy of the Party and government, the critique of the inner-Party regime, etc. Its theoretical premises, -- <illegible> this presented only a further historical development of our views.

The Riutin group was supposed to conceal the fact that the platform was the platform of the whole Rightist organization taken together: this was a pseudonym under which the organization of the Rights presented itself, a pseudonym that protected the center and the organization as a whole from attack.

This platform was issued under the leadership of UGLANOV. The technical side of this job is not known to me, and I did not have the chance to get acquainted with it in its final form, since around the moment it was issued I went on leave, but I was aware of the main issues in it, as can be seen from the preceding exposition.

I went away on vacation after I had given my agreement to the calling of a meeting of workers of the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights in the outlying areas. Initiative for the calling of the meeting belonged, if I'm not mistaken, to A. SLEPKOV who had arrived in Moscow from Samara in the summer of 1932 and who was the main organizational force of my so-called "school."

This conference did take place at the end of the summer of 1932 in my absence, and contact between it and the center of the Rights was maintained through M.P. TOMSKY, who was connected with SLEPKOV and others through one of SLEPKOV'S closest

friends, ZHIROV, who worked in OGIZ [Association of State Journal and Book Publishers], which was headed by TOMSKY.

At this same time the Riutin platform was discussed at a meeting at TOMSKY'S where, as TOMSKY or RYKOV told me afterwards, TOMSKY himself, RYKOV, UGLANOV and, I think, V. SHMIDT were present. The Riutin platform was discussed as the platform of all the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights as a whole. Here it received in this way its official sanction in the name of the leadership of the Rights. The center also confirmed the decisions of the conference where, aside from reports from the local areas and information, the Riutin platform was also discussed with all that it implied, namely the course towards a "palace coup", terror, and a bloc with the Trotskyite-Zinovievite organization.

When I arrived back from my vacation the majority of the participants of the conference had already been arrested.

Here it is appropriate to pause with more detail on several questions connected with the conference. Above all, on the idea of a "palace coup." This thought had also flared up much earlier, at first from TOMSKY, who was connected with ENUKIDZE and, obviously had stumbled onto the idea of the possibility of using this person's position, as in his hands were concentrated the Kremlin guard, including the school of students of the TsIK [Central Executive Committee, the legislative branch of the Soviet government]. In addition while RYKOV was chairman of the Sovnarkom [Council of People's Commissars, the executive branch of the Soviet government, we could discuss the use of his position too.

At first this idea bore a rather theoretical character. I can't remember who, when and where spoke about the palace coup then, but I do not exclude the possibility that I myself had such conversations with someone of the participants of my group.

However the logic of struggle, the closing off of the ways for legally obtaining a majority in the Party, our complete defeat in open struggle, the transition to the tactics of duplicity and to illegal methods of struggle, did their work, and this idea was already been seriously considered. The connection of TOMSKY to ENUKIDZE and the connection of RYKOV to IAGODA, about which I have spoken above, served as the practical basis for the corresponding practical conclusions.

TOMSKY once told me, after I had already arrived, that ENUKIDZE had agreed to head this coup, that IAGODA would also take part in it, and that ENUKIDZE had even recruited for this matter the commandant of the Kremlin, PETERSON, who had earlier been, as is well known, the commander of the so-called train of TROTSKY. Thus the plan for the coup d'état ripened.

Further. The preliminary attempts to establish a bloc with other counterrevolutionary organizations (the Zinovievites and Trotskyites) had not ceased. From the information reported to us by local area workers of the counterrevolutionary organization of the

Rights I, like other members of the center, knew that in the local areas there was a strong pull to establish contact between the Rights, Trotskyites, and Zinovievites. SLEPKOV was saying this about Samara, MARETSKY – about Leningrad, AIKHENVAL'D was saying this about Moscow, etc. In addition, if I am not mistaken, they were talking mainly about the youth. Also, everyone knew about the so-called “Right-Leftist bloc” of SYRISOV-LOMINADZE, a bloc that had shown essentially the same tendency.

In this manner the search for allies on the part of the Rights in the local areas served to a certain extent as a new base for the search for contacts and agreements at the top.

In the course of these agreements, ties and contacts in the local areas at that time the tendency was almost evident that the Zinovievites, and especially the Trotskyites, were oriented towards terror and saw in it the Alpha and Omega of tactics, while the participants in the Right counterrevolutionary organization, while recognizing terror as a method of struggle with the Party, nevertheless saw the center of gravity in mass actions, (peasant uprisings), in serious political demonstrations. The very idea of a coup d'état at first did not have any mass dissemination for understandable reasons and was discussed in the center of the organization and in circles close to it.

This connection of the counterrevolutionary groupings in the local areas served as an additional stimulus of a very strong kind for agreement among the leaderships as well. It, this agreement, took place not in the guise of any single, formal document, but in the form of a series of contact conversations between representatives of various counterrevolutionary groupings.

I spoke with PIATAKOV and TOMSKY and RYKOV spoke with SOKOL'NIKOV and KAMENEV. With PIATAKOV I had a conversation in the PCHI [People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry] (approximately in the summer of 1932). It began with an exchange of opinions about the general situation in the country. PIATAKOV reported to me about his meeting in Berlin with SEDOV concerning the fact that TROTSKY was insisting on the transition to terrorist methods of struggle against the Stalin leadership and about the necessity of consolidating all the anti-Soviet forces in the struggle for the overthrow of the “Stalinist bureaucracy.” I told PIATAKOV that consolidation is all very well, but that a general basis for such unity was necessary. PIATAKOV emphasized terror but my attitude towards this method of struggle was very skeptical since I considered it to be a specific product of Trotskyite fury and antagonism that made little political sense. But in general and on the whole we agreed that coordination of activities was essential, assuming that disagreements would be overcome one way or the other in the process of cooperative struggle and as the “old cadres” became closer.

TOMSKY and RYKOV were reaching an agreement with KAMENEV and SOKOL'NIKOV, I don't recall any more in which combinations and who with whom; only the names have stuck in my memory. I recall that TOMSKY defended the idea of a bloc with especial energy, spoke out even more decisively for the necessity of overthrowing Soviet power and was trying to prove the necessity of that bloc, arguing, among other things, that in order to accomplish the coup d'état a concentration of all

serious forces was necessary. In this context he once again cited the roles of ENUKIDZE and IAGODA, of which RYKOV also spoke.

In this way we were discussing the overthrow of the government and the creation of our own government, the makeup of which at that time was not further defined.

Therefore, towards the end of 1932 a bloc between the counterrevolutionary organizations of the Rights, the Zinovievites, and the Trotskyites generally was put together on the basis of the so-called Riutin platform, with all its arrangements that ran along the lines of terror, uprising, coup d'état.

Among the participants of the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights at about that time (1932) there were terrorist attitudes: they broke out both in the "school" (KUZ'MIN, SAPOZHNIKOV) and in the group of MATVEEV (the Uglanovists), and among the supporters of RYKOV (RADIN, NESTEROV), and among the trade unionists (KOZELEV). These attitudes received their formulation on the basis of the so-called Riutin platform. It seems to me that the organization of the Rights ought not to be imagined as terrorist in the strict sense of the word, because the center of gravity of the counterrevolutionary tactics of the Rights did not lie here. But within the organization there grew up terrorist groups that laid a firm base in the basic arrangements of the "Riutin platform", which had been sanctioned by the center of the Rights.

To this period of time we must also attribute the creation of another group of conspirators in the Red Army. I know about this from two sources: from TOMSKY and ENUKIDZE, who told me that in the Red Army at the head of the command staff a union between Trotskyite-Zinovievite elements with the Rights had taken place. Among the persons who were named by them I remember TUKHACHEVSKY, KORK, PRIMAKOV, and PUTNA.

The contact of the military organization with our center took place through ENUKIDZE.

Among the most important facts of the counterrevolutionary and conspiratorial activity towards the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933 we must pause at the creation of a general center comprised of the Rights TOMSKY and RYKOV, the Zinovievites KAMENEV and SOKOL'NIKOV, the Trotskyite PIATAKOV, the military TUKHACHEVSKY, and KORK, and IAGODA. Concerning the formation of such a center TOMSKY informed me at one time. He was very closely connected to ENUKIDZE and knew more about all the corresponding circles than I did.

With great internal hesitation I agreed that the Rights should send their representatives to it. I don't concretely remember the circumstances under which the corresponding decision of the center of the Rights took place and I can't say whether this unified center ever actually met: the members of this center spoke separately with one another and contact between them was sporadic. This center set as its task the unification of all the anti-Soviet forces in the country for the overthrow of the government. With these goals

the group of ENUKIDZE in the Kremlin was created, and the military organization with the participation of the Trotskyites and the Rights.

Before the 17th Party Congress in the center of the Rights stood, on TOMSKY'S initiative, the question of the possibility of the arrest of Stalin and the scheduling of the coup d'état for that moment. I determinedly protested against that. The question was not brought for discussion to the general center and, as TOMSKY told me, the Trotskyites and Zinovievites protested this. Here we must pause on the relations with the Mensheviks and the SRs [Socialist-Revolutionaries]. First of all I must note that RYKOV had age-old connections with the Mensheviks through NIKOLAEVSKY, a prominent Russian Menshevik whose brother V. NIKOLAEVSKY was married to A.I. Rykov's sister. Through NIKOLAEVSKY RYKOV maintained contact with the Mensheviks abroad and kept them informed about Soviet affairs generally and about the counterrevolutionary activity of the organization of Rights specifically and especially. In my last trip abroad (the spring of 1936) I managed to meet and spend a long time with NIKOLAEVSKY, with whom I and V.V. ADORATSKY (in whose service on the business of the Institute of Marx and Engels NIKOLAEVSKY was active) were traveling from Paris to Holland and Denmark. In addition in Copenhagen we all lived in the same hotel. Here I, on Rykov's instruction before his contact with NIKOLAEVSKY, told the latter about the "Riutin" platform and the bloc with the Trotskyites and Zinovievites, at which time it turned out that NIKOLAEVSKY already knew about this, and that the Mensheviks agreed to be in contact on the specified basis with the unified counterrevolutionary groupings.

Much earlier, before the summer of 1932 I had tried to establish contact with the SRs in the USSR through SEMENOV, an SR with whom I had established good relations. At that time we – the Rights – assumed that in the event of kulak movements it would be essential to make use of the contacts that the SRs undoubtedly had among this group, that the bloc with the SRs was permissible as it had been permissible at the time the Party had entered a bloc with the Left SRs on the basis of the peasant question.

Therefore to SEMENOV were given by me instructions on setting up contact with the important SRs and SR groups in the local areas.

I must also note that contacts with the SRs were also maintained by Foma SMIRNOV, who had them, these ties, among the workers of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture.

At last I must confess that in May 1934 S. B. CHLENOV dropped in on me. I knew him from very old times (1905-1906-1907), and then in my work at the Sverdlovsk University where he gave lectures. In recent times I had rarely met him, since in addition he was almost always working abroad. At the end of our talk I told him about the unification of anti-Soviet forces, and then began to ask him whether he might ever manage to bump into the leaders of the parties, Mensheviks and SRs, and whether he could feel out their attitude on the subject of setting up contact with their organizations.

CHLENOV promised to carry out this work. But at his next arrival he only managed to vaguely say that the SRs demanded some kind of formalities, but in principle did not object to contact.

After the murder of S.M. Kirov, in connection with the fact that the CC turned serious attention to the work of the NKVD, there appeared the danger of the general defeat of all counterrevolutionary organizations. However IAGODA even so managed to direct the blow only against the Trotskyites and Zinovievites (although not thoroughly), and sheltered the organization of the Rights. ENUKIDZE'S fall (1935) transferred his role in the preparation of the coup in the Kremlin to IAGODA himself, in whose hands the direct security of the Kremlin then fell.

During the past few years (1934-1935) TOMSKY had maintained direct contact with PIATAKOV and SOKOL'NIKOV, as members of the parallel center, with whom M. TOMSKY found himself in contact, while I had been in touch with K. RADEK.

I had numerous meetings with RADEK. These meetings were easily explained by our work together on the editorial staff of "Izvestiia" and in view of the fact that we were neighbors at our dachas.

In the summer of 1934 I was at RADEK'S apartment when RADEK informed me about TROTSKY'S external political arrangements. RADEK said that Trotsky, stressing terror, all the same considered the main chance for the arrival in power of the bloc to be the defeat of the USSR in war with Germany and Japan, and in connection to this was promoting the idea of an agreement with Germany and Japan at the cost of territorial concessions (Ukraine to the Germans, the Far East to the Japanese). I did not object to the idea of an agreement with Germany and Japan, but I did not agree with Trotsky on the question of the extent and nature of the concessions.

I said that in the most extreme case we might talk about concessions in territory or trade agreements, but that there could be no question of territorial concessions. I asserted that Trotsky's impulsive nature might lead to complete compromise of his organization and also of all the Trotskyite allies, including the Rights, since he does not understand the massive growth of patriotism of the peoples of the USSR.

I don't remember in which month in 1934 I dropped in on RADEK at his apartment to read to him an article I had written. There I unexpectedly found a man who RADEK said was MRACHKOVSKY. MRACHKOVSKY, who knew about my role in the bloc, immediately raised the question of terror and started to try to find out what was being done in that regard by the Rights, but I declined this conversation in its concrete aspects and only told him that he knew about the so-called Riutin platform and, consequently, about the general arrangements of the Rights. Soon after that I left.

In the summer of 1935 I was sitting on the veranda of RADEK'S dacha when suddenly three Germans drove up to him in a car. RADEK introduced them to me as German Fascist professors. For my part the conversation consisted in attacks on the so-called

“race theory”, and RADEK made a very sharp attack on Hitler, soon after which I left. Afterwards RADEK told me that one of the Germans was BAUM, that he had had business with him earlier, on behalf of Trotsky, that he, RADEK, had informed BAUM about the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc and about the Rights, but that he did not want to converse with BAUM in the presence of other persons and that therefore, he said, he had broken off the conversation with his attack against Hitler, letting the other know by this means that under such conditions he did not want to have any conversation at all.

Then at my place with RADEK there was a large conversation at Skhodnia (at the dacha) [Skhodnia is a town northwest of Moscow] on questions of international politics, where I said that many in the USSR, frightened by the theory of organized capitalism, do not see the real measures, in the first place, of an economic character, that went along the lines of state capitalism (In Italy and Germany above all), and that these measures should not be underestimated. The political conclusion I was making here consisted in this, to set a course very decisively towards the satisfaction of the needs of the masses [i.e. consumer goods] and I again repeated that there could be no question of any territorial concessions, but it was possible to speak of trade concessions, and that the possibility of concessions in the area of raw materials were not to be excluded.

I remember yet another important conversation in which RADEK vaguely related that some kind of new directives on both internal and external politics had been received from Trotsky. I remember that I was angered by this way of generally treating any commands by Trotsky, to which the Trotskyites related as almost to the military commands of a unitary command center. RADEK hinted to me that this was a question of some sort of new negotiations of Trotsky’s with Germany or with England, but limited himself to this, having told me about Trotsky’s directive concerning sabotage.

After my arrival from abroad I also had a number of meetings with RADEK. I told RADEK that I had seen “that Dan”, and also about my conversations with NIKOLAEVSKY, about which I confessed earlier. RADEK declared that he fully approved of contact with the Mensheviks and that this could also come in handy in the case of any failures. I informed him at this that NIKOLAEVSKY had said about corresponding company abroad in the case of our failure.

Soon after the plenum of the CC where IAGODA make the report about the arrests of Trotskyites and Zinovievites, I informed RADEK in detail about the Plenum and IAGODA’S report and also said that a number of persons – including BUSYGIN and KOSHELEV – had never, as far as I knew, been Trotskyites, but had been Rightists.

I also mentioned that in IAGODA’S report not a word had been said about the Rights, from which I concluded that this time IAGODA had managed to ward off any blow against our organization, i.e. the Rights.

Aside from these, as it were, concentrated conversations, we had shorter and more chance meetings, where short exchanges of opinion took place. From these conversations the most substantive moments, as far as I remember, were the following:

1. RADEK informed me that TROTSKY was always urging the use of terror;
2. RADEK said that he had contact with the military men (PRIMAKOV and PUTNA, as far as I remember);
3. RADEK said that from PIATAKOV and SOKOL'NIKOV he knew about the existence of the unified center and of the military organization;
4. RADEK also told me about his trips to Tula and Gor'kii, where he had connections with the local Trotskyite circles, and that reports on the international situation served as his ostensible reason for these trips. In particular RADEK used to travel to Gor'kii to meet with SHMIT, a participant in a Trotskyite organization who worked, if I am not mistaken, as the *kul'tprop* [division of culture and propaganda, a Party organization] of the Obkom [Party city committee].

The present confession gives a general picture of the development of the counterrevolutionary activity of the Rights and their allies, and ~~also if it is necessary these confessions may be given more detail and the more precise confessions will~~ ~~detailed, made more precise and filled out~~ ~~<illegible>~~ ~~<...>~~.

N.I. BUKHARIN

(signature)
2 June 1937