

NICOLAI IVANOVICH BUKHARIN 1888—1938*

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1978 marks a macabre anniversary. Forty years ago, in March 1938, there took place in Moscow the last of the great show Trials.¹ Previously there had already been two earlier public trials of former Bolshevik leaders, mowing down among others, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Piatakov and Radek.² A closed court-martial involving foremost Red Army commanders like Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Kork had also preceded this last trial,³ which was to involve Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinsky, Yagoda, Rakovsky and sixteen others.

The third great trial was in one sense the keystone in a horrendous arch: all the charges which were brought in its forerunners were calculated to prove that Trotsky, from exile, was organizing with a selection of foreign powers to bring about the downfall of the Soviet Government, and that the internal opposition was not only disloyal, but criminally implicated in a vast terrorist conspiracy. By extending the web of this plot to implicate Bukharin and Rykov, a final amalgamation was thus charged against former oppositions of both Right and Left, and the effect was to establish that henceforth no "loyal" opposition was in fact possible. The Soviet political structure still manifestly suffers the ill-effects of this tragic decision, which would have been baleful even if the absurdly implausible charges in the trials had all been true, and was simply paralyzing in the actual event, that they were all deliberately fabricated.

Rylov was, after all, a former prime minister, and Bukharin had been not only editor of *Izvestia*, and long-standing politbureau member, but, from 1926 onwards, chairman of the Communist International. His popular exposition (co-authored with Preobrazhensky) on *The ABC of Communism* was the primer of the world-wide communist movement during the 'twenties, while his scholarly works on imperialism and on the doctrines of marginalism were certainly among the most creative works of the marxist school of his time. Yet his distinctive political contribution had been his unrelenting support of the continuation of the New Economic Policy throughout the 1920s, in pursuit of which he had formed his alliance with Stalin during the crucial days in which the various

*A booklet on *The Cave of Nikolai Bukharin* (Spokesman Books, 1978) argues this case at greater length than is possible in a short article.

oppositionists of the left were defeated. Without this alliance, Stalin could not have prevailed. All the more shattering, then, was the decision to "arrest, try, shoot" the man upon whose support Stalin had at one time so evidently depended.

Of course, the deaths of Bukharin and Rykov were completely unremarkable in the given context. Most other leading veterans of the October Revolution also perished, whether in trials or not. So, too, did vast numbers of lesser known communists: in the wake of each trial in turn there were vast numbers of arrests and summary executions, deportations and imprisonments.⁴ The veritable bloodstain among Soviet communists had been initiated after the assassination of S.M. Kirov in 1934, but it was not the first crop of purge trials: before the destruction of the cadre of old Bolsheviks there had been a major show trial involving Menshevik leaders in 1930.⁵

Much light has been thrown on these terrible events in the literature of samizdat, the "self-published" circulation of essays, memoirs and interviews by critics of the present Soviet government, which has burgeoned since the fall of Khrushchev and the partial restoration of Stalin's badly damaged political image.⁶ In fact, since Khrushchev's famous "secret speech" of 1956, it has been more than obvious to any critical student of the verbatim records of the widely publicised major trials, that these were all complete travesties of justice. We shall briefly consider the evidence on this matter in due course, but it is sufficient at this point to say that when, in 1957, the year after the XX Congress, Khrushchev posthumously rehabilitated the military leaders who perished with Tukhachevsky, and when the leading Polish communists who were executed without trial at about the same time were proclaimed to have been innocent, so seriously punctured were the official charges against Bukharin and many of his colleagues that in any normal democracy there would have been an instant move to re-examine the proceedings which had brought about their deaths.

Khrushchev himself was thoroughly aware of the significance of his own remarks at the XX Congress, and of his further onslaught at the XXII Congress a few years later, in 1961.

"Just before the Twentieth Party Congress I summoned the State Prosecutor, Comrade Rudenko, who has been involved in many of the cases during the purges of the thirties. I asked him, 'Comrade Rudenko, I'm interested in the open trials. Tell me, how much basis in actual fact was there for the accusations made against Bukharin, Rykov, Syrtsov, Lominadze, Krestlinsky, and many, many other people well known to the Central Committee, to the Orgbureau, and to the Politbureau'?

Comrade Rudenko answered that from the standpoint of judicial norms, there was no evidence whatsoever for condemning or even trying those men. The case for prosecuting them had been based on personal confessions beaten out of them under physical and psychological torture, and confessions extracted by such means are unacceptable as a legitimate basis for bringing someone to trial.

Nevertheless, we decided not to say anything about the open trials in my speech to the Twentieth Party Congress. There was a certain ambiguity in our conduct here. The reason for our decision was that there had been representatives of the fraternal Communist parties present when Rykov, Bukharin, and other leaders of the people were tried and sentenced. These representatives had then gone home and testified in their own countries to the justice of the sentences. We didn't want to discredit the fraternal Party representatives who had attended the open trials, so we indefinitely postponed the rehabilitation of Bukharin, Zinoviev, Rykov, and the rest. I can see now that our decision was a mistake. It would have been better to tell everything. Murder will always out. You can't keep things like that a secret for long."

This is a most interesting explanation. Khrushchev was right, of course. Foreign communists (and non-communists) had played a major role in whitewashing the Trials. Writing within hours of Bukharin's execution, Harry Pollitt said:

"The trial of the 21 political and moral degenerates in Moscow is a mighty demonstration to the world of the power and strength of the Soviet Union. . .

All the groups within the Soviet Union who doubted the capacity of the Government to construct Socialism, groups who lost faith and could go no further in the hard fight to overcome difficulties, groups defeated in political struggles as to which policy should be followed by the Soviet Government all tended to draw together, and by their infamous activities conspired to hinder or destroy the great structure that millions were devoting their lives to build.

When fascism rose to power in Germany, and the militarist fascist regime in Japan gained strength—these two countries were assisted by Britain to develop into 'bulwarks against Bolshevism in the East and West.'

And then, inevitably, the wreckers inside the Soviet Union made a common front with Germany and Japan. The gigantic conspiracy is being unfolded in the present trial. The threads of the previous trials are being drawn together. No need here to amplify or explain the evidence—it speaks for itself.

The roots of the cancer are being ruthlessly plucked out. We must, however, appreciate one point **clearly**—there is a **lot of** talk about '**confessions**'—it is not a question of confessions which bring to light the deeds of these criminals. These people have been forced to admissions when faced with the facts produced by the judicial authorities. They can no longer hide the truth.

You will remember how Zinoviev and Kamenev grovelled when faced with the death sentence and cried out that they had revealed everything. The facts show they had told nothing in comparison with what they were still hiding. The evidence of Yagoda is conclusive on this point. The full facts only come to light now through the patient and painstaking work of the Soviet authorities."

Of course, any careful reading of the trial script would have shown that Bukharin made very few tangible specific "admissions" at all, and was confronted with no material evidence outside the "confessions" of **others**.⁹ Indeed, at one point in his final plea, he insisted that "confessions are a medieval principle of **jurisprudence**."¹⁰ What Bukharin did plead was his "guilt" in some overall moral-political sense, detached from any particular

criminal action. It is nowadays widely believed that this abstract plea was the price of the lives of his young wife, Larina, and their baby son. But Pollitt had scarcely had time to familiarise himself with the trial record, since his copy had to be in *Inprecor* which actually appeared on the 19th March, only days after the conclusion of the event upon which he was commenting. Such was Pollitt's faith in the Soviet Government at that time that one might easily believe that no conceivable villainy on its part would call forth a protest from him. Indeed, in the same article, he speaks enthusiastically of "the Stalins, Molotovs, Kaganovitchs, Yezhovs, these are the men of steel. . ." ¹¹

By contrast, Khrushchev tells us:

"Beria didn't create Stalin. Stalin created Beria. And before him, Stalin created Yezhov. 'The Blackberry' and 'the Mailed Fist'—these were Stalin's nicknames for Yezhov. And before Yezhov, there was Yagoda. Stalin created Yagoda, too. One by one they made their entrances and exits. The rapid turnover among the main characters created by Stalin was very much part of Stalin's logic. He used henchmen to destroy honest men who he knew perfectly well were guiltless in the eyes of the Party and the people. Then Stalin stood above it all while the terror consumed its own executors. When one band of thugs got too embroiled in the terror, he simply replaced it with another. That's how the three echelons came about: first Yagoda, then Yezhov, then Beria. . ." ¹²

To do him justice, Pollitt never contested the downfall of any of these monsters, after it had been accomplished. But until it became an accomplished fact, each in turn was "a man of steel."

Englishmen should not believe that Pollitt was exceptionally gullible or corrupt. Hardly any major Comintern leader escaped the relentless pressure to endorse these trials in similar terms. Dimitrov, considering the **Zinoviev** trial, had set the framework of the official communist reaction:

"The trial of the terrorists, who are agents of Fascism, is an integral part of the struggle of the international working class against ~~fascism~~." ¹³

That Dimitrov himself was the hero of the Reichstag Trial in Hitler's Germany was, for any in Western Europe who were not agnostic, a material guarantee of the soundness of this judgement. Writing in the journal *Communist International*, Togliatti spoke of "bandits" plotting "sacrilegious crimes", and identified the 1936 opening trial as "a touchstone of our class vigilance." ¹⁴ Years later, in an interview given on 16th June 1956, Togliatti still hankered after some foundation in fact for all the Trials, if rather more tentatively than had been his earlier wont:

"It is still not clear to us whether the current denunciations of the violation of legality and application of illegitimate and morally repugnant prosecuting

methods extend to the entire period of the trials, or only to a given period, more recent than that to which I have referred. . .

I repeat, with respect to the initial trials—which we were able to consider, the later trials for the most part not being public—my opinion today is that there existed simultaneously two elements: the conspiratorial attempts of the opponents against the regime to commit terrorist acts; and the application of illegal prosecuting methods, censurable on a moral basis. The first, naturally, does not minimize the gravity of the **second.**"¹⁵

To give him his due, Togliatti apparently assumed that some effort would be made, following Khrushchev's revelations, to determine the extent to which such a mixture had really existed, and to reassess the verdicts of at any rate the "later" trials. No such limited concern for justice can be found in the memoirs of D.N. Pritt, who was one of the most prominent fellow travellers to justify the first trial, in a veritable rash of articles and pamphlets, and to dignify a Left Book Club account of the second trial with an approving **foreword.**¹⁶ At the end of a boastful account of his attendance at the **1936** Trial, he appends a short note about contemporary Soviet attitudes:

"What their views of the case now are, after the revelations made at the Twentieth Congress. . . of the tragic abuses of the Stalin period, I do not know. I have thought it best to leave unchanged my account of the trial. . ."¹⁷

Curiosity was not a consuming passion of Mr. Pritt, nor for a whole number of more distinguished commentators on the same themes.

No-one should think that uncritical acceptance of the official view in the USSR was confined to communists: not only **Churchill**¹⁸ and Ambassador **Davies**¹⁹ of the United States tended to accept that "wreckers" had indeed been at work, but far more plausible socialist voices lent support to the conspiracy theory. Notably, the Webbs swallowed the package whole, and were widely quoted in support of the necessity of **repression.**²⁰ By contrast, since 1956, some prominent Western communists have already made clear and sometimes moving statements repudiating their witness of the 'thirties. Foremost among these is perhaps **Ernst Fischer**, the Austrian **marxist** writer, who wrote a heart-breakingly honest account of his unwitting complicity in what he later came to regard as judicial murder." The British Communist review, **Marxism Today**, published a favourable appreciation of the life and work of Bukharin early in 1978. More weighty action is to be taken by the Italian Communist publishing house, which has commissioned a work by Roy Medvedev on this subject.

For all that, the communist and socialist movements outside the Soviet Union can still do a great deal more to help set straight the record on this painful matter. It is vain to plead that this is an internal Soviet affair,

because at the time that the victims were being shot, it was regarded as no such thing. Enormous publicity was given to the prosecution's fabrications in the communist and socialist presses of every European country, and a small library of apologetic literature was generated. After the second world war, a similar flow of misrepresentation accompanied the not dissimilar programme of trials in Eastern Europe, each of which aimed at discrediting President Tito of Yugoslavia, in precisely the same manner that the earlier scripts had been calculated to isolate and defame Leon Trotsky.²² The proceedings against Laslo Rajk and others in Budapest, against Traicho Kostov and others in Sofia, and against Slansky, Sling and their colleagues in Prague each had their specific targets, but all formed parts of the strategy to contain any influence that might have been exerted by events in Yugoslavia on communists in East or West Europe. But although Western Communists had joined in this reprehensible campaign with as much energy as they could muster for it, it was not left to them to make restitution for its evil effects. On the contrary, the Hungarian and Bulgarian communists were encouraged by the Soviet authorities themselves to revise and repudiate these trials, and to "rehabilitate" (most often posthumously) their victims: this was necessary in order to normalise Soviet state relations with Yugoslavia, and because, unlike Trotsky, Tito had not been a victim of the murderous attention of the overseas desk of the NKVD, and remained alive: a force still to be reckoned with. Thus, Western communists faced the rehabilitation of Rajk and Kostov as a given fact to be explained, rather than as a just cause to be campaigned for.

By contrast, in 1978, the Soviet Trials have still not been revised, and their most grisly inventions have only been repudiated by implication. 1978 is not only the 40th anniversary of Bukharin's execution, but it is the 90th anniversary of his birth. One fears, however, that a more weighty anniversary preoccupies the Soviet leadership: 1979 will be Stalin's Centenary. Should anyone intend to dig up the dictator's bones, or even some of them, it seems clear that it would be impolitic to have previously exonerated Bukharin. Are we wrong to assume that this conjunction of dates partially explains the following samizdat document?

"Early in June, 1977, an official of the Central Committee, Klimov, phoned at the apartment of A.M. Larina (N.I. Bukharin's widow) and asked that she get in touch with him. On June 9, since A.M. Larina was out of Moscow, Yu. N. Larin, her son and son of N.I. Bukharin, called the number indicated by Klimov and asked him hadn't he phoned in connection with the letters sent by Bukharin's son and widow on the eve of the 25th Coptress (of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) to the Congress itself, to the Presidium of the Congress, to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and personally to the General Secretary of the CC, CPSU, L.I. Brezhnev, appealing for Bukharin's rehabilitation. Klimov confirmed that his call was connected with this matter and said the following:

"I have been instructed to inform you that your appeal to have Bukharin reinstated in the Party and restored to full membership in the Academy of Sciences of the USSR cannot be granted since the guilty verdicts pertaining to the criminal offences for which he was tried have not been set aside."

Yu. N. Larin replied that many of Bukharin's co-defendants have been rehabilitated; for example, Krestinsky, Ikramov, and Khodzhaev.

Klimov answered that obviously Larin didn't know that the majority of the accused at the trial had not been rehabilitated. Yu. N. Larin asked, 'Do you really believe that Nikolai Ivanovich (Bukharin) murdered Gorky?' Klimov answered: 'That question falls under the jurisdiction of the courts and the procurator's office.' Yu. N. Larin asked: 'Does that mean that you think I should turn to these bodies?' To this Klimov answered: 'That's your right', but made it clear he oughtn't do that at the present time. 'You should know how complicated the situation is now.'

A.M. Larina and Yu. N. Larin first appealed for N.I. Bukharin's rehabilitation in 1961. Thus the rejection came 16 years after the first request and a year and a half after the last. (V.I. Lenin's friends, E.D. Stasova and V.A. Karpinsky, having made an analogous appeal in 1956 died and consequently never got an answer.)

Having received the foregoing statement, Yu. N. Larin addressed a petition for Bukharin's rehabilitation to the Chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR on June 11, 1977."²³

Whether or not this remarkably obtuse official reaction can be explained by a hankering to forgive Stalin on the part of some section of the Central Committee of the CPSU, it is tragically plain that Larin and his mother have, since June 11, 1977, got precisely nowhere in their efforts to secure justice for Bukharin.

This explains why Larin felt it necessary to appeal to Enrico Berlinguer for help, in an extraordinary letter which brings the bygone atmosphere of the late 'thirties menacingly back to life:

Respected Comrade Berlinguer,

I am writing this letter to you on the eve of the 40th Anniversary of the tragic death of my father, Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin. At that time I was only two years old and naturally was unable to remember my father. But my mother, who had spent many years in Stalin's prisons and camps, miraculously survived and told me the truth about my father. Later G.M. Krzhizhanovsky, one of V.I. Lenin's closest friends, and Old Bolsheviks, who had lived through the terror and who had known Nikolai Ivanovich in one circumstance or another, told me about him. In addition I read many Bolshevik books (which are banned in our country even today and have been preserved only by chance by certain Old Bolsheviks) including books by Nikolai Ivanovich himself and the works of foreign researchers. The information which I obtained in this way helped me to fully appreciate the character and the social and political activity of my father. I understood the enormity of Stalin's crimes, the extent to which he had falsified the history of the Party, the absurdity and stupidity of the accusations levelled against my father at the Plenum of the Central Committee of February/March 1937 and the trial of the so-called "Right-Trotskyist Bloc." However, on the basis of these absurd charges (espionage, treason, sabotage and murder), my father was expelled from the Central Committee and from the Party and condemned to death.

Beginning in 1961 my mother A.M. Larina and then I myself persistently raised with the highest Party-State organs of the country the question of the withdrawal of the monstrous allegations against N.I. Bukharin and his restoration to Party membership. This question was also raised with the Party leadership by the most senior of the Old Bolsheviks led by the former secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, E.D. Staseva. They died some time ago without receiving an answer and it was only last summer (1977) that we at last received some response in the form of a telephone call. An official of the Commission of Party Control of the Central Committee of the CPSU informed us by telephone that the accusations made at the trial of Bukharin had not been withdrawn as the process of examining the documents relating to the trial had not been completed; the question of the restoration of his Party membership could not, therefore, yet be resolved. This means that 40 years after the execution of my father we have received an answer, which, in effect, confirms the monstrous charges of Stalin. My approach to the Courts (the Supreme Court of the USSR) has been fruitless: the simple truth is they don't answer me.

In a country where the greater part of the population has been brought up on the mendacious "Short Course" there are many who still consider my father as a traitor and a hireling-of-Hitler although in reality the truth is that he was an outstanding fighter against fascism and in his last years he devoted all his energies to the exposure of fascism and to warnings against the growing fascist threat.

Leaving home for the last time for the Plenum of **February/March 1937** (from which he never returned) my father said to my mother "don't become embittered: there are sad errors in history. I want my son to grow up as a Bolshevik." He looked on the events which had occurred as tragic but transient; he believed in the ultimate victory of the forces of socialism.

I am not a member of the Party but for my father the word 'Bolshevik' undoubtedly meant a fighter for social justice. And we are unable to obtain such justice in our country for a man whom Lenin before his death called "the favourite of the whole Party." For my mother, who lived through the horrors of Stalin's camps, who knew many of **Lenin's** comrades-in-arms, representatives of the old Bolshevik Party—people about whom she preserves in **her memory** the happiest recollections and of whom she always speaks with tenderness and **love**—life in such a situation is becoming more and more intolerable. It is inconceivable that people who still carry on their shoulders the burden of Stalin's crimes and have not cast it into the **dustbin** of history can fight for high ideals.

I am approaching you, Comrade **Berlinguer**, not only because you are the leader of the largest communist party of western Europe and have thrown off this burden but also because N.I. Bukharin was a Communist-Internationalist, an active member of the International Workers' Movement. He was known to Communists of many countries: they always recalled him with warmth. Some of them are still living and are working in the ranks of the Italian Communist Party. I particularly have in mind Comrade **Umberto Terracini**.

I am approaching you to ask you to participate in the campaign for the rehabilitation of my father, in whatever form seems to you to be the most appropriate.

Not long before his death Nikolai Ivanovich wrote a letter "to the future generation of leaders of the Party" in which he appealed to them "to unravel the monstrous tangle of crimes." My mother learnt the text of this letter by heart in the dark days after her rehabilitation she passed it on to the Central Committee of the Party. This letter ended with the words:

"KNOW COMRADES THAT ON THE BANNER WHICH YOU WILL CARRY
IN YOUR VICTORIOUS MARCH TOWARDS COMMUNISM THERE IS A
DROP OF MY BLOOD."

Yours sincerely, Yu. Larin (Bukharin).

12.3.78

The Russel Foundation, having received this message, circulated it in many countries for endorsement, and secured a very wide response. But it remains all too apparent that in the one country that matters, it will fall upon ears which will rest studiously and impassively deaf.

For this reason, socialists outside the USSR must surely take a hand. The case for revising the Bukharin trial, like its forerunners, is morally overwhelming.

We may summarise it very simply.

First, of the **21** defendants charged in **1938**, at least seven have been fully rehabilitated: these include Krestinsky, Ivanov, Chernov, Grinko, Zelensky, Ikramov and Khodzayev. All the charges were, however, interwoven, since what was alleged against the accused was a great conspiracy, in which all were said to have been parties.

Second, at an "all-union Conference of Historians in **1964**, the Central Committee Secretary Pospelov said, in reply to a question, that neither Bukharin nor Rykov were spies or wreckers."²⁴

Third, as we have pointed out, the **1957** rehabilitations of Tukhachevsky and the military leaders, and of the executed Polish communists, sank without trace a key part of the Bukharin indictment.

Fourth, Goloded and Cherviakov, the Byelorussian communists, have been completely rehabilitated, although at the trial Sharangovich confessed that they were Polish spies. Ikramov, mentioned above, was supposed, according to the Trial script, to have been trying to make over Soviet Central Asia to the British.

Fifth, Rudzutak and Yenukidze have both been rehabilitated, although the Trial "proved" their complicity in the plots.

Sixth, Gorky's secretary has been rehabilitated, whatever the truth about Gorky's alleged "murder."²⁵

Seventh, the identical format of the East European trials in Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia reveals the existence of the technology and expertise of witchcraft trials: more, the scripts of pre- and post-war trials were to some degree interlinked.²⁶

Eighth, we know beyond doubt that Stalin was guilty of the mass-murder of communists outside the quasi-judicial legitimization of the trials: we know that the security forces were **completely** lawless and vicious in their operation, and we know that every head of the security service from Yagoda to Beria perished in total infamy.

And yet the Trial as a whole remains unrevised, and Bukharin and Rykov are still victims of continuing slander. It is only possible to murder a man once, but it is possible to lie about him repeatedly. If the Soviet authorities are unwilling to make amends, will no-one else? As a one-time leader of the Communist International, has not Bukharin the right to call in aid his former disciples and their pupils? It is greatly to be hoped that we shall not have to ask these questions much longer.

Afterword

At the time this essay was finished, the response to the Russell Foundation's appeal for support for Larin's request for the rehabilitation of his father was not yet clear. It soon became evident, however, that there really was widespread support for it.

The reply from the Italian Communists, when it came, was dramatic and completely unambiguous. On Friday, June 16th, the Party newspaper, *Unita* published a long statement by Paolo Spriano, who had already privately endorsed the appeal. It began with the injunction

"the need to do justice to this eminent representative of the international communist movement, as well as to the other victims of the trials of the '30s, is not merely a problem concerning their historical merit, but a moral and political necessity."

A week later, the text of the Larin letter was published in the independent newspaper, *La Repubblica*, together with another strong interview with Spriano, and a statement from Aldo Tortorella, the PCI's main official spokesman on cultural affairs. Subsequently, *Rinascita*, the Party's cultural weekly, featured a long article. Meantime, the signatures of the appeal were flooding in: French Communists Althusser and Balibar, the international secretary of the French Socialists, Robert Pontillon, Claude Bourdet of the radical Unified Socialist Party, and Simone de Beauvoir; the secretary of the Greek Communists, the Spanish historian Claudin, and the leader of the Fourth International Ernest Mandel; from the USA, Noam Chomsky, Corliss Lamont, Joe Hansen and Robert Cohen, Bukharin's biographer; the Australian Communist Party, which sent a heartwarming letter of complete solidarity; and Pierre Joye, the veteran Belgian Communist leader.

In England, a number of Labour MPs and several members of the Party Executive endorsed the appeal. The Labour Party newspaper, *Labour Weekly*, carried a full report:

A worldwide campaign has been launched on behalf of a long-dead victim of the Stalin purges.

Labour MPs have joined socialists in 15 countries to urge the Soviet Union to rehabilitate Nikolai Bukharin. . .

In Britain it is backed by Labour Party chairman Joan Lestor and seven other Labour MPs—Ian Mikardo, Norman Buchan, Geoff Edge, Martin Flannery, Eric Heffer, Stan Newens and Audrey Wise. Playwrights Tom Stoppard, Trevor Griffiths and Howard Brenton, and members of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation which is co-ordinating the British appeal, are also among those who have signed.

They are demanding that the Soviet Union gives a "full explanation to the circumstances which led to Bukharin's wrongful conviction. . ."

Liverpool Walton MP Eric Heffer, who has signed the appeal, says: "Undoubtedly the charges against him were part and parcel of Stalinism.

"If the Soviet Union is to get back to a democratic type of regime, which it had for only a short time after the revolution, it will have to accept that there were fundamental and vicious policies which they will have to totally repudiate.

"Bukharin was a great political leader and one of the early Bolsheviks, a man of tremendous intellectual ability."

The first batch of signatures has been sent forward to the Soviet authorities, and we await their reply.

NOTES

1. Cf. *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites."* Moscow, March 2-13, 1938. Moscow 1938. This "trial" involved Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda, Krestinsky, Rakovsky, Rosenglotz, Ivanov, Chernov, Grinko, Zelensky, Bessonov, Ikramov, Khodjayer, Sharangovich, Zubarev, Bulanov, Levin, Pletnev, Kazakov, Maximov-Dikovsky, Kryuchkov. Bukharin and Rykov were shot two days after the end of the hearing.
2. Cf. *The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre*, Moscow 1936, and *Report of the Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*, Moscow 1937. Both these trials were carefully examined by the Dewey Commission, whose report was published under the title: *Not Guilty: the Case of Leon Trotsky*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1938.
3. Cf. Medvedev: *Let History Judge*, Nottingham, Spokesman 1977, pp. 209 et seq. For accounts by military eyewitnesses, Bialer: *Stalin and His Generals*, London, Souvenir Press, 1970, pp. 63-86.
4. "All the former members of the various defunct opposition groups numbered no more than twenty to thirty thousand people, and most of them had been jailed or shot by the beginning of 1937. That was a painful loss to the Party, but it was only the beginning. Throughout 1937 and 1938 the flood of repression rose, carrying away the basic core of Party leadership. This well-planned, pitiless destruction of the people who had done the main work of the Revolution from the days of the underground struggle, through the insurrection and the Civil War, the restoration of the shattered economy and the great up-building of the early thirties, was the most frightful act in the tragedy of the thirties." Medvedev, op. cit., p. 192.
5. *Wreckers on Trial*, edited Andrew Rothstein, London, Modern Books, 1931.
6. Cf. notably Medvedev, op. cit., which quotes from an extraordinary clandestine documentation and displays a remarkable objectivity and scrupulousness in evaluating the most dreadful evidence.
7. *Khrushchev Remembers*, London, Andre Deutsch, 1971, p. 352-3. This book was repudiated by Khrushchev when the first volume appeared in the USA: but the second (subsequent) volume contained explanatory evidence about the circumstances of its publication which validate it as his work, at any rate in large measure. The book was prepared from tapes which Khrushchev dictated from memory, so that there is room for double error: it could be mistakenly edited in transcription, and it could be wrong because of Khrushchev's faulty recollection and the absence of necessary documentation. There is, however, no room in this particular passage for errors of either sort, and therefore we can take it that this actually was what Khrushchev said.

8. Pollitt: *The Crushing of the Traitors—a Triumph for Peace and Socialism*: International Press Correspondence, No. 14, 19th March 1938, p. 309 et. seq. A similar view was put forward in a British Communist Party pamphlet published in May 1938: R. Page Arnot and Tim Buck: *Fascist Agents Exposed in the Moscow Trials*. Tim Buck was, of course, spokesman of the Canadian Communists.
9. Cf. notably Katkov: *The Trial of Bukharin*, London, Batsford, 1969, and Stephen F. Cohen's exhaustively comprehensive biography: *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*, London, Wildwood House, 1974. Fitzroy Maclean, who attended the trial, gives an eyewitness account which emphasises this view in *Eastern Approaches*, London Pan Books, 1956, pp. 55 et. seq.
10. *Report of Court Proceedings*, p. 778.
11. Pollitt, op. cit., p. 309, col. II.
12. Khrushchev, op. cit., p. 352.
13. *The Communist International*, Vol. XIII, No. 10, Nov.-Dec. 1936, p. 641.
14. M. Ercoli: *The Lessons of the Trial of the Trotsky-Zinoviev Terrorist Centre*, Communist International, XIII, 10, pp. 341-51.
15. Togliatti: *Answers to Nine Questions*. In C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists*, London, Penguin Books, 1963, pp. 372-3.
16. Eg. Article in *News Chronicle: The Moscow Trial War Fair*, reprinted in "Russia Today" pamphlet, n.d. (1936?) and foreword to *Soviet Justice at the Trial of Radek and Others*, by Dudley Collard: Left Book Club (Gollancz) 1937.
17. *Autobiography of D.N. Pritt*: Vol. 1, From Right to Left. London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1965, p. 112. Pritt has the gall to continue "... industrious anti-Soviet propagandists in the West—those who sought to find a basis for their stories instead of just inventing them—eagerly studied the transcript, believed they had found a certain number of errors of fact in it which would help discredit the trial, and published the errors broadcast. I and others then, naturally, studied the allegations, and found that they were not in fact errors, although they looked as if they might be." (p. 113)
18. *The Second World War*: I. 1948, London, Cassell, pp. 288-9.
19. Cf. Sayers and Kahn: *The Great Conspiracy*, New York, Boni and Gaer, pp. 111 et. seq.
20. This is apparent not only from the relevant afterthoughts added to their book *Soviet Communism*, but also from the Correspondence, edited by Norman Mackenzie, and published by Cambridge University Press in 1978. (See especially Volume III), For a comprehensive discussion of a pathetic literature on this matter, see David Caute: *The Fellow Travellers*, London, Quartet, 1977.
21. *An Opposing Man*, London, Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, 1974, pp. 304 et. seq.
22. It is tedious to list all these tracts since the record has now been clearly established. But notably, in England, there was Derek Kartun: *Tito's Plot Against Europe* and James Klugman: *From Trotsky to Tito*. Both books were published by Lawrence and Wishart.
23. *In These Times*, November 16-22, 1977, p. 13. See also the useful article in the same journal, by Louis Menashe.
24. Roy Medvedev: *Bukharin's Last Two Years*, New Left Review 109, 1978. I am grateful to the editors of NLR for sending me a pre-publication proof of this important article.
25. For further evidence see *Let History Judge*, pp. 179 et. seq.
26. See, notably, Artur London: *The Confession*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1971: and Eugene Loebel: *Sentenced and Tried*, London, Elek, 1969.