

THE MARXIST-LENINIST RESEARCH BUREAU Report No. 9

THE INDUSTRIAL PARTY AFFAIR

The Formation of the 'Industrial Party' (1925-28)

At his trial in November 1930, Professor Leonid Ramzin* admitted that he had been the

" . . . ideological leader"

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): 'Wreckers on Trial'; London; 1931; p. 39).

of a counter-revolutionary organisation called the 'Industrial Party' (Prompartiya). He testified that the old engineering circles, from which the party had been formed, constituted

" . . . an aloof caste"

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 6).

which was hostile to socialism:

"In their political views the old engineering circles . . . (were) completely alien to the ideology of the Communist Party. The old engineers were completely and firmly convinced of the necessity for a capitalist structure as the only base on which the productive forces of the country could develop successfully and steadily".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 7).

These anti-socialist engineers formed in 1925 an organisation called the 'Engineering Centre', the forerunner of the 'Industrial Party', as an instrument for organising sabotage and counter-revolution.

"During the first half of 1928, . . . the name 'Industrial Party' was adopted".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: 'Le Procès des Industriels de Moscou' (The Trial of the Moscow Industrialists); Paris; 1931; p. 65).

The Growth and Financing of the Industrial Party (1928-30)

By mid-1929 the Industrial Party had some 2,000 members.

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *op. cit.*; p. 6).

The main source of finance for the Industrial Party was the 'Russian Trade and Industrial Committee' (Torgprom), established in Paris in 1920-21. Torgprom was

" . . . an organisation abroad of former Russian industrialists. Its aim is, first, to defend the interests of the former Russian industrialists abroad; and, secondly, to secure the return of their former enterprises in the USSR, or at least to recover compensation for them".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 15).

"The regular financing of the Industrial Party from abroad began at the end of 1928. . . . From November 1928 to March 1930 about 1,600,000 roubles were received from abroad".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 17).

The Industrial Party

" . . . had its own men at key points",

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 34).

in order to weaken the economy and arouse the dissatisfaction of the working people, the members of the Industrial Party

" . . . adopted the method of planned sabotage".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 13).

The Plans for Foreign Intervention (1928-30)

However, the Industrial Party realised that sabotage alone would not be sufficient to bring about successful counter-revolution, and so it relied primarily on foreign intervention:

"The ideal of intervention became defined clearly and sharply as the one means for the real achievement of a counter-revolutionary upheaval and the overthrow of the Soviet Government".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 13).

Thus, the Industrial Party secretly allied itself with

" . . . official circles in France and, during the first period, England".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 18).

and also engaged in

" . . . 'reconnaissance',

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 37).

that is, in espionage.

The Plan for Foreign Intervention (1928-30)

The financing of the intervention was to be carried out mainly from French War Ministry funds, by the oil companies and, to a small extent by Torgprom:

"In regard to the financing of intervention, . . . most of the money was to come through the estimates of the French War Ministry, and then from oil circles. A small portion of these funds was to come from the Torgprom".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein

(Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 27).

It was planned that the intervention force would be

" . . . a small but strong army of 600,000 to 800,000".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Trial, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 24).

composed of forces from Poland, Romania and the Baltic States. together with White Russian troops under Generals Pyotr Wrangel* and Pyotr Krasnov*:

"In the forefront were the military forces of Poland and Romania, and then came those of the Baltic States, the Wrangel Army and a small corps of Krasnov's Cossacks".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 27).

France

" . . . expected to furnish training and general leadership of the military side of intervention".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 27).

while Britain

" . . . was supposed to lend assistance through its fleet in the Black Sea and in the Gulf of Finland".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 28).

The plan of the campaign was to bring about a simultaneous attack on Moscow and Leningrad:

"The military plan provided for a simultaneous attack on Moscow and Leningrad. While the southern army was to move through the western districts of the Ukraine, with its flank on the right bank of the Dnieper, and so on towards Moscow, the northern army, with the support of the naval and air fleet, was to move against Leningrad".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 29).

It was planned that the intervention forces would be under the overall command of the White Russian General Aleksandr Lukomsky*:

"The leader of the military intervention was to be General Lukomsky".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 21).

and that they would have to establish a military dictatorship:

"Everyone was agreed that a military dictatorship would be necessary at first".

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 11).

As the price of their support of intervention, the participating states

had put in demands for territorial concessions --

" . . . Poland and Romania for the western territory of the Ukraine, the Deterding* group, and subsequently France for sweeping concessions in the Caucasus and . . . for the separation of the Ukraine and Georgia". (Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 30).

In his testimony, Ramzin described a meeting with representatives of Torgprom during a visit to Paris in October 1928. There he was told of meetings between leaders of Torgprom and French Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré* and Foreign Minister Aristide Briand*. He was informed that Poincaré

" . . . expressed complete sympathy with the idea of organising intervention against the USSR, and stated that this question had already been turned over to the French General Staff to be worked out". (Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 21).

Continuing his evidence, Ramzin gave an account of meetings he had had in London with representatives of the British engineering firm of 'Vickers' and with the British intelligence agent Thomas Lawrence* ('Lawrence of Arabia').

(Leonid Ramzin: Evidence at Industrial Party Tribunal, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 20, 26, 36).

The Trial (1930)

On 25 November 1930, the trial began in Moscow of the leaders of the Industrial Party, eight scientists, headed by Leonid Ramzin, former Director of the Thermo-Technical Institute and Professor at the Moscow Technical High School, They were charged with espionage and treason.

The trial was held in public, except for one brief session. The Presiding Judge was Andrey Vyshinsky* and the prosecution was headed by the Public Prosecutor of the RSFSR, Nikolay Kryenko*.

All the defendants pleaded guilty to the charges.

Ramzin testified:

"I unreservedly admit my guilt. . . . I can only succeed in mitigating my guilt by frank and truthful testimony and by sincerely admitting my crimes and mistakes".

(Leonid Ramzin, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 5-6).

The trial ended on 7 December 1930, when all defendants were found guilty. Five of the defendants, including Ramzin, were sentenced to death, the other three to ten years' imprisonment.

(Andrew Rothstein (Ed.) *ibid.*; p. 209-10).

On 8 December the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union commuted the death sentences to ten years' imprisonment, and reduced the terms of imprisonment imposed on the other defendants to eight years.

(Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 212).

In prison, Ramzin was provided with facilities to proceed with his

scientific work on boiler design:

"After the trial, he (Ramzin -- Ed.) was set to work in prison on boiler construction. . . .

Ramzin's re-employment in penal servitude was not an isolated case". (Robert C. Tucker: 'Stalin in Power: The Revolution from above: 1928-1941'; New York; 1990; p. 100).

International Reactions (1930)

On 24 November 1930, Torgprom issued a statement denying any connection with the accused persons. However, its declaration of innocence was

" . . . somewhat weakened"
('New York Times', 7 December 1930: Section III, p. 3).

by the assertion in the statement that it would

" . . . continue untiringly its struggle against the Soviet Government . . . and will continue to prepare for the future emancipation of the Fatherland".'

(Torgprom: Statement of 24 November 1930, in: Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): op. cit.; p. 112).

On 27 November,

" . . . both former Premier Poincaré and Foreign Minister Briand . . . issued official contradictions of statements made by the Russian Professor Ramzin during his trial in Moscow".
('New York Times', 27 November 1930; p. 22).

On 28 November the 'Times' reported that one of the persons with whom Ramzin had claimed to have had discussions in Paris in 1928, Ryabushinsky, had in fact died some years earlier in France, where he had been

" . . . buried on June 19, 1924".
('Times', 28 November 1930; p. 16).

However, on 30 November it was revealed in court in Moscow that the Riabushinsky who had died in 1924 was Pavel Riabushinsky, while the Riabushinsky referred to in Ramzin's testimony was his brother Vladimir, an anti-Soviet newspaper article by whom (dated July 1930) was submitted to the Court in evidence.

(Andrew Rothstein (Ed.): op. cit.; p. 107-09).

In general, the British and French press dismissed both the charges and the trial as

" . . . farcical"
('Times', 14 November 1930; p. 14).

"BRITISH CALL TRIAL BY REDS A FRAME-UP".
('New York Times', 29 November 1930; p. 9).

although some left-wing journalists were more honest:

"There was no honest observer, even an enemy of the Soviet Union, who

would not reject the suggestion of a 'staged' trial as a foolish piece of malice. . . .

They (the defendants -- Ed.) were guilty and they knew it".

(Walter H. Holmes: 'The Wreckers exposed in the Trial of the Counter-Revolutionary Industrial Party'; London; 1931; p. 3, 7).

and the more reputable American newspapers -- no Americans were involved in the case! -- paid tribute to the skill of the prosecutor:

"Mr. Krylenko led them subtly from one admission to another".

('New York Times', 29 November 1930; p. 9).

and accepted the case against the defendants as proved:

"With the abandonment of NEP (New Economic Policy -- Ed.) they . . . took to treason to save their ideals and themselves".

('New York Times', 29 November 1930; p. 9).

"The testimony is impressive by the sheer weight and mass of detail, and there seems little doubt that the conspiracy, as far as its intent and activities and its connections with the powerful émigré Industrial Union in Paris is concerned, was high-placed, widespread and dangerous.

It is more than probable . . . that the conspirators gave valuable information to foreign military espionage services about the Red Army, chemical and munitions factories, and the Soviet air force".

('New York Times', 30 November 1930; Section III; p. 3).

"To this correspondent, it sounded real".

('New York Times', 3 December 1930; p. 17).

"That documents once existed might be gathered from the haste of the émigré press, when the indictment was published, to suggest that the charges would be supported by a mass of 'forged documents'. That none were produced -- because, as N. V. Krylenko, the prosecutor, said: 'The accused were very cautious and destroyed them in time' -- seems to contradict the émigré assertion that the confessions were extracted by torture, since it would be far easier to force a man to accept a faked paper than to make him continue for ten days to swear his own life away by detailed admissions. . . .

Professor L. K. Ramzin's speech . . . was full proof of the baselessness of the assertion that he spoke under pressure. . . .

No man could speak words like these under pressure of the 'third degree' alone, and they rang so true that eyes were wet among the spectators".

('New York Times', 7 December 1930; p. 20).

The view that the prosecution had proved its case

". . . is not confined to Communists alone, but is believed almost integrally by the vast majority of the Russian people. . . .

The foreign colony here (in Moscow -- Ed.) is generally inclined to think that the prosecution succeeded in building up a pretty convincing foundation. . . .

('New York Times', 7 December 1930: Section III; p. 3).

Aftermath

Two years later, in 1932, Ramzin was amnestied,

" . . . restored to office and to favour, and even awarded an Order".
(Robert Conquest: 'The Great Terror'; Harmondsworth; 1971; p. 225).

"A governmental decree amnestied Ramzin and eight other fellow convicts in the Industrial Party trial for their successful work on boiler design while in prison. Along with the decree was printed a letter of thanks for clemency, in which Ramzin and three others took note of the 'solicitude for man' that the NKVD had shown during their . . . imprisonment by providing all the conditions for continued scientific work".

(Robert C. Tucker: op. cit.; p. 322).

"Subsequently, Professor Ramzin completed a number of valuable technical projects. . . .

Ramzin received the State Prize of the USSR in 1943. He was also awarded the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner of Labour".
('Great Soviet Encyclopedia', Volume 21; New York; 1978; p. 134, 486).

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26, Cambridge Road,

Ilford,

Essex,

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- BRIAND, Aristide, French lawyer and politician (1862-1932); expelled from Socialist Party (1906); Minister of Education (1906-09); Premier 11 times between 1909 and 1931, most notably 1909-11, 1913, 1915-17 and 1921-22); Minister of Foreign Affairs in 14 successive governments between 1915 and 1931, most notably 1915-17, 1921-22 and 1925-31.
- DETERDING, Henri W. A., Dutch oil magnate (1866-1939); Managing Director, Dutch Petroleum Co. (1902-07); Managing Director Royal Dutch Shell group (1907-36); retired (1937); died in Switzerland (1938).
- KRASNOV, Pyotr N., Russian military officer (1869-1947); appointed by Kerensky to command troops in Petrograd sent to fight Bolsheviks (1917); to Germany (1919); organised Russian prisoners-of-war into army to fight Soviet forces (1941-45); tried for and found guilty of treason, sentenced to death and executed (1947).
- KRYLENKO, Nikolay V., Soviet revisionist lawyer (1885-1938); RSFSR State Prosecutor (1918-31); RSFSR People's Commissar of Justice (1931-36); USSR People's Commissar of Justice (1936-38); arrested, tried for and found guilty of treason (1936); died in imprisonment (1938).
- LAWRENCE, Thomas E., British soldier and intelligence officer (1883-1935); intelligence officer in North Africa (1914-16); adviser on Arab affairs to Colonial Office (1921-22); in Royal Air Force (1922-35); killed in motor-cycle accident (1935).
- LUKOMSKY, Aleksandr S., Russian military officer (1868-1939); arrested by Provisional Government (1917); escaped from prison and fled with Kornilov (1917); Chief of Staff, White Volunteer Army (1918-19); to Constantinople as representative of Wrangel on Allied Council (1920); died in Paris (1939).
- POINCARÉ, Raymond N. L., French politician (1860-1934); Minister of Education (1893, 1895); Minister of Finance (1894, 1906); Senator (1903); Premier (1911-13, 1922-24, 1926-29); President (1913-20).
- RAMZIN, Leonid K., Soviet revisionist engineer (1887-1948); Professor, Moscow Higher Technical School (1920-21); Director, All-Union Heat Engineering Institute (1921-30); arrested, tried for and found guilty of espionage and treason (1930); imprisoned (1930-32); amnestied (1932); Professor, Moscow Power Engineering Institute (1944-48).
- VYSHINSKY, Andrei I., Soviet Marxist-Leninist lawyer, diplomat and politician (1893-1954); Professor of Criminal Law, Moscow State University (1923-25); Rector, Moscow State University (1925-28); RSFSR Public Prosecutor and People's Commissar of Justice (1939-33); USSR Public Prosecutor (1935-39); USSR Deputy Foreign Minister (1940-49, 1953); USSR Permanent Representative at UN (1945-49, 1953-54); Deputy Premier (1953); died in New York (1954).
- WRANGEL, Pyotr N., Baron, Russian military officer (1878-1928); appointed commander, White Russian armed forces (1917); commander-in-chief (1920); evacuated to Constantinople (1929); in exile in Western Europe (1920-28); died in Brussels (1928).

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