

Pravoesserovskii politicheskii protsess v Moskve (8 iunia - 4 avgusta 1922 g.): stenogrammy sudebnykh zasedanii v 14 tomakh.; tt. 1-2. Edited by A. L. Litvin *et al.* Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011. 687 pp.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the new documents in this collection compiled by V. K. Vinogradov, V. N. Safonov, and V. S. Khristoforov under the direction of Kazan University professor A. L. Litvin. The documents illuminate previously little known aspects of the 1922 trial of members of the Central Committee of the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (PSR) and party activists. Held in Moscow from June to August 7, 1922, this trial had a serious impact on the study of Socialist Revolutionary Party history. Soviet authorities developed a broad and multifaceted propaganda campaign around the trial, employing meetings, assemblies, newspaper and journal articles, and popular brochures. Formation of the Bolshevik regime took place in the context of a continuous struggle, by ideological and other means, against these socialists. Soviet press commentator S. B. Ingulov noted, “the SR trial, indeed, has turned all our press into the bona fide operational party history of the Socialist Revolutionaries.”¹ Despite the doubtful epithet “bona fide,” on the whole S. B. Ingulov was right: in the spring and in the summer of 1922, the SR trial was one of the major events of Soviet Russian political life. The press and other outlets of agitation and propaganda played the leading role in formation of public opinion and, more broadly, awareness of contemporary events. The trial also attracted attention of international public opinion.

In the Soviet press, the prosecutor’s conclusion and fragments of the shorthand record of the trial were published, in addition to some documents on the activities of the SR Party.² Nevertheless, all documents published around the time of the trial constituted only an insignificant part of available materials and their selection had an extremely tendentious character. In the Soviet press only the viewpoint of the accusing party was represented. Speeches of PSR Central Committee members and others from the first group of accused on the whole were not published in the official press, however some SR renegades’ speeches (G. Semenov, L. Konopleva, etc.), belonging to the so-called “second group” of accused, appeared on the pages of Soviet newspapers and documentary collections. Speeches of PSR Central Committee members were partially published in the underground SR newspaper *Trud* (publication of PSR Moscow committee), underground student magazine

1. S. Ingulov, “O burno pozivshiei i besslavo pogibshiei partii (obzor literatury ob eserakh),” *Pechat’ i revoliutsiia*, no. 8 (1922): 94.

2. *Obvinitel’noe zakliuchenie po delu tsentralnogo komiteta i otdelnykh chlenov inykh organizatsii partii s.-r. Po obvineniiu ikh v vooruzhennoi bor’be protiv sovetskoi vlasti, organizatsii ubiistv, vooruzhennykh ograblenii i v izmennicheskikh snosheniakh s inostrannymi gosudarstvami* (Moscow: VZIK, 1922); *Protsess PSR: rechi gosudarstvennykh obvinitelei* (Moscow, 1922); *Protsess eserov, edition 2: rechi zashchitnikov i obvinitelei* (Moscow, 1922).

Stremeniia,³ and in the magazine *Revolutsionnaia Rossiia*, a publication of the PSR Foreign Delegation.

Certain characteristics of the 1922 trial, such as the noisy agitational propagandistic campaign that developed around it and some defendants' demonstrative repentance, suggest to many historians its artificiality, despite its organizers' aspiration to offer it as a well-produced performance. The court case against the Socialist Revolutionaries was an important component of Bolshevik leaders' retaliatory politics against both real and potential political opposition. Corollary attacks included persecution of the church, prosecutions of Mensheviks, and deportation of leading intellectuals from the country. Perceiving the Socialist Revolutionaries as the vanguard of oppositional forces, the authorities put first priority on their liquidation. Recent research shows that political trials formed part of repressive Bolshevik policy from the very beginning. Show trials were relied upon to consolidate the foundations of the political regime and to educate the masses in the spirit of absolute fidelity to the new authority. Organizing large-scale trials and demonstrating state power, Bolsheviks drew on traditions of both imperial Russia and revolutionary France. At the same time, the show trials of the 1920s departed from such traditions in their degree of falsification.

Monographs by Marc Jansen and K. N. Morozov and I. A. Safonov's dissertation thesis have analyzed the SR trial. Together with a 2002 collection of documents on the preparation and results of the trial, these works represent the most comprehensive research on the Socialist Revolutionary Party's opposition to the authorities in the first half of the 1920s.⁴ Study of important sources from the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (TsA FSB RF), including investigative materials and partial stenographic reports, have illuminated unknown aspects of the 1922 trial. Moreover, K. N. Morozov's monograph expanded study of the trial to include its consequences into 1926, including the standoff between imprisoned SRs and the authorities – a plot known only superficially before the FSB materials became available. Nevertheless, the full stenographic reports of the court sessions remained inaccessible to most researchers until the publication of *Pravoiserovskii politicheskii protsess*.

This documentary publication, created on the basis of typed copies from TsA FSB RF (fond N-1789), contains verbatim stenographic reports of 47

3. "Vyderzhki iz rechei na moskovskom protsesse sotsialistov-revolutsionerov," *Stremeniia*, no. 1 (Jan.-Febr. 1923): 30-34.

4. Marc Jansen, *A Show Trial under Lenin: The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Moscow 1922* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982); K. N. Morozov, *Sudebnyi protsess sotsialistov-revolutsionerov i tiuremnoe protivostoianie (1922-1926): etika i taktika protivoborstva* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005); I. A. Safonov, "Protsess partii sotsialistov-revolutsionerov 1922: politicheskie i sotsial'no-psikhologicheskie aspekty," kandidatskaia dissertatsiia (Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi oblastnoi universitet, 2005). *Sudebnyi protsess nad sotsialistami-revolutsionerami (iiun' - avgust, 1922): podgotovka, provedenie, itogy: sbornik dokumentov*, ed. by S. A. Krasilnikov, K. N. Morozov, I. V. Chubykin (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002).

court sessions of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal of VTsIK (All-Union Executive Committee). In the first two volumes (of fourteen planned) are published stenographic records for the first nine days of the trial through June 17, 1922. Among matters concerning the Tribunal during these days were procedural questions – a challenge to the entire jury declared by M. Ia. Gendel'man, representative of the first group of accused; subpoena of witnesses; entry of documents into the record; and formal interrogation of the accused about their confessions. The declaration of the accused of the first group read by E. M. Timofeev on June 10, 1922 is extremely important for discovery of the PSR position on the entire array of problems of post-October 1917 Russian history. The publication also reflects the dispute between the tribunal and foreign defense lawyers for the SRs (E. Vandervelde, K. Rosenfeld, A. Wauters, T. Liebknecht) over different interpretations of the agreement signed in Berlin by representatives of three Internationals. The agreement concerned the trial's public nature, presence of defenders, non-application of the death penalty and how the stenographic report was conducted). Foreign defense lawyers abandoned the trial due to the authorities' constant infringements upon the agreement and their rejection of practically all defense requests.

From June 12, 1922, the Tribunal began examining accusations laid out by the prosecution: involvement in the November 28-29, 1917 cadet revolt in Petrograd, SR defense of the Constituent Assembly, work of the SR military organization in 1918, and the assembly of worker representatives. Two points of view existed on all these questions: that of the Tribunal, actively supported by a part of the accused, and the view of the first group of accused, who defended their position. Stenographic records of court sessions show clearly that the Tribunal proceeded not at all according to legal rules, but according to the political logic of the Bolshevik Party, as that which seized power. After October 1917, the Bolsheviks regarded as illegal any other authority or oppositional political party that aspired to authority in the territory of Russia. According to the Tribunal's logic, the Socialist Revolutionary Party was obligated to recognize the Bolsheviks' authority and abstain from any struggle with it.

Unfortunately, vols. 1-2 of *Pravoesserovskii politicheskii protsess* have certain inadequacies. First, these volumes lack Russian translations of foreign defense lawyers' speeches and of witnesses' testimonies (L. Frossard). Second, there is no commentary and no index of names, for which the substantive introduction does not compensate. The stenographic record of the 1922 trial is a complex source demanding close analysis. Silences, partial truths, and outright falsifications emanated from all participants in the trial. Both defendants and the Tribunal regarded the trial as a continuation of political struggle. Therefore, scholarly commentary on the documents would be useful.

This first step in publishing the stenographic reports of the SR Trial of 1922 is an important historiographical event, which will enrich our knowledge of the history of the Russian Revolution.

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