

# **COLD WAR** - The Zinoviev Letter

## Source 1

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, THIRD COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, PRESIDIUM.

To the Central Committee, British Communist Party.

(Very Secret.)

Dear Comrades,

Moscow, September 15, 1924.

THE time is approaching for the Parliament of England to consider the treaty concluded between the Governments of Great Britain and the S.S.S.R. for the purpose of ratification. The fierce campaign raised by the British *bourgeoisie* around the question shows that the majority of the same, together with reactionary circles, are against the treaty for the purpose of breaking off an agreement consolidating the ties between the proletariats of the two countries leading to the restoration of normal relations between England and the S.S.S.R.

The I.K.K.L. will willingly place at your disposal the wide material in its possession regarding the activities of British imperialism in the Middle and Far East. In the meanwhile, however, strain every nerve in the struggle for the ratification of the treaty, in favour of a continuation of negotiations regarding the regulation of relations between the S.S.S.R. and England. A settlement of relations between the two countries will assist in the revolutionising of the international and British proletariat not less than a successful rising in any of the working districts in England, as the establishment of close contact between the British and Russian proletariat, the exchange of delegations and workers, &c., will make it possible for us to extend and develop the propaganda of ideas of Leninism in England and the colonies. Armed warfare must be preceded by a struggle against the inclinations to compromise which are embedded among the majority of British workmen, against the ideas of evolution and peaceful extermination of capitalism. Only then will it be possible to count upon complete success of an armed insurrection. In Ireland and the colonies the case is different; there there is a national question, and this represents too great a factor for success for us to waste time on a prolonged preparation of the working class.

Extracts from a letter by Comintern President Zinoviev to the British Communist Party, September 1924, generally known as the Zinoviev Letter.

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## Source 2

The Under-Secretary proceeded to minute the paper as follows :—

“ It is quite true—and we have always felt—that we get nothing out of the Soviet Government by any remonstrances simply because these quite shameless liars merely deny everything however clearly established. On the other hand, there is much force in the view that our best and only defence against these treacherous proceedings is publicity. It does not seem fair to our own people that our knowledge of these Russian machinations should remain for ever concealed. We have not only every right but almost a duty to bring such cases of propaganda as the present one to the notice of the Soviet Government under paragraph 13 of the memorandum handed to M. Krassin on the 29th May, 1923.\*

“ It was agreed in virtue of the formula respecting propaganda, enclosed in the memorandum of the 29th May, 1923, that the Soviet Government should not support with funds, or in any other form, persons or bodies or agencies or institutions whose aim is to spread discontent or to foment rebellion in any part of the British Empire. We cannot really rest content with the ridiculous assertion of the Soviet Government that they give no support whatever to the Third International.

“ I think therefore that we should do two things : (1) address to M. Rakovsky a formal note of protest with a request for the definite stoppage of this propaganda of the most violent and indefensible kind and (2) give full information to our press.

(Initialled)

“ E. A. C.

Both y Part of a private note from a senior Foreign Office minister to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, giving advice on what to do about the Zinoviev letter, October 15th 1924.



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The public response of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald to the Zinoviev letter, October 24th 1924.

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Source 4



## **ON THE LOAN TRAIL.**

[In a document just disclosed by the British Foreign Office (apparently after considerable delay), M. ZINOVIEFF, a member of the Bolshevik Dictatorship, urges the British Communist Party to use "the greatest possible energy" in securing the ratification of Mr. MACDONALD'S Anglo-Russian Treaty, in order to facilitate a scheme for "an armed insurrection" of the British proletariat.]

A cartoon from Punch Magazine, October 29th 1924, commenting on the Zinoviev letter.

NOTE: This cartoon shows Zinoviev carrying a flag and wearing a sandwich board saying Vote for MacDonald and Me.