This collection of materials\(^2\) is needed more as an afterword than as an introduction.

And for obvious reasons. Broad circles in our party are almost completely ignorant of the bitter struggle waged by Trotsky under the banner of Menshevism against Lenin and Leninism since 1903, the moment of the emergence of the Menshevik trend, to 1917, the moment of its collapse.

We have set ourselves the task of making Trotskyism speak for itself in its own language. We think it will be useful to purge the party consciousness once and for all of the hypnosis of pompous ‘leftist’ rhetoric which is rife with the most shameless opportunism.

The material we are citing here must not be understood as merely accidental manifestations of polemical impulsiveness. The reader of our collection will recognise not only the old and unchanged lexicon of Trotskyism, not only its ‘leftist’ phraseology, but also that evasively opportunistic, cravenly unprincipled formulation of all the questions of the proletarian struggle which even in this past year is again trying to claim some credit for itself in the ranks of the Leninist party.

With hindsight Trotsky is now sanctimoniously trying to correct his mistakes in the Brest era and in the argument about trade unions, as well as his old Menshevik views.

He has enough polemical irresponsibility and ‘extra-factional’ abandon to write his own shamefully renegade ‘Lessons of October’.

\(^1\) G. Safarov, ‘Avtobiografiia Trotskizma (vmesto poslesloviia)’, in Trotskyi o Lenine i Leninizme, 1925, pp. 3–36. For the sake of clarity, I have consecutively numbered the footnotes, even though they are numbered by the page in the original. Many of the themes developed here are repeated again in G. Safarov, ‘Trotskizm ili Leninizm’, in Za Leninizm, protiv Trotskizma 1925, pp. 136–91.

\(^2\) We would like to give special thanks to comrade V. Iu. Belov for his assistance on this work [original footnote].
Let the entire party, as one, universally recognise that Trotskyism, now challenging Lenin’s and Leninism’s historical claim to October, is nothing more than the theory and politics of petty-bourgeois, intelligentsia opportunism, the ideology of the absence of character in the intelligentsia, burning down today what they bowed down to yesterday, and burning down tomorrow what they bow down to today.

In ‘The Lessons of October’ we encounter the following concluding chord:

study of disagreements cannot and should not in any way be seen as an attack on those comrades who were pursuing a false [lozhnyi] policy.³ On the other hand, it would be intolerable to erase (!) the greatest chapter from the history of the party, just because not all members of the party kept pace with the revolutionary proletariat. The party can and must know its entire past if it is to be able to evaluate it correctly and assign proper significance to each part of it. The tradition of a revolutionary party is built not on evasions, but on critical clarity.⁴

Oh, we completely agree with this. That is precisely why our collection is needed more as an afterword than as an introduction: let’s give Trotskyism the place it actually earned!

This is even more urgent now that Trotsky no longer deems it necessary to conceal his true intentions.

‘History’, declares Trotsky,

provided our party with truly inestimable revolutionary advantages. The traditions of the heroic struggle against tsarism; the habits and methods of revolutionary self-sacrifice, bound up with the conditions of the underground; the broad theoretical examination of the revolutionary experience of all mankind; the struggle against Menshevism; [...] the struggle against conciliationism (!); the supreme experience of the 1905 revolution; the theoretical assimilation of this experience during the years of counter-revolution; the approach to problems of the international labour movement in light of the revolutionary lessons of 1905 – taken together, these tempered our party in an exceptional way, giving it the most penetrating theoretical insight and unparalleled revolutionary sweep. And yet, even in this party, in its upper reaches, before the moment of decisive actions, a group of exper-

³ It is well-known that hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue! [original footnote].
⁴ Trotsky, Document 1, p. 133 [original emphasis].