

October 1940

# Fourth International

*The Monthly Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party*



Twenty Cents

The magazine is late in reaching the workers, first because of financial difficulties, and then because the contents had to be changed to make it a memorial issue. That our tribute to Trotsky should have been delayed because of a shortage of money is a bitter situation. Yet, who better than the Old Man knew of the heartaches involved in keeping a revolutionary press alive in periods of reaction. And who better than he proved that it can be kept alive and influential in face of the most persistent persecution.

While Trotsky is no longer able to guide and assist us, his memory will play no small part in steeling us for the tasks ahead. Our memorial to the Old Man will not be merely this October issue, but rather the hundreds of issues not yet gone to press; our renewed faith in, and dedication to, his political principles; and our determination that our magazine will continue to live and grow and play its part in the coming revolution.

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Newsstands are of particular importance right now. Los Angeles has been concentrating on this angle during the past month and reports fine results. H. T. writes, "We are distributing most of the F.I.'s through newsstands and contact sales. As a matter of fact, now that we've gotten under way there is an increasing demand for the magazine from the news sellers. One newsstand declined to take our magazine at first but we created a demand for it by canvassing his neighborhood. He now handles twenty copies of each issue and is often sold out before the first week." This is a fine report from H. T. and shows that a little joint concentration

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### MANAGER'S COLUMN

*Inside Front Cover*



on neighborhood and newsdealer will bring results.

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While you are out creating newsstand demand for the magazine, don't overlook your library. A great many libraries subscribe but a local check-up should be made by every branch. If you find no F.I. in your library, send us the word and we'll forward a sample copy. After the sample copy is on the shelves, the rest is up to you. See that it is used!

Bundle orders have remained constant over the summer months. The magazine weathered the reduced bundle orders with considerably more difficulty. Now that the S.W.P. is making organizational gains, that progress must be reflected in the bundle orders. Some branches take more than they sell and distribute the remainder free, and this is not the least unsound. The main objective is to get our message to the workers, and however you finance it locally is your concern. Do be careful that your bundle order keeps pace with your organizational gains. Analyze your F.I. distribution this fall.

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Good distribution news from Chicago. The **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** is now on sale at: Argus Book Store, 156 West

Randolph Street; Magazine Stand, 141 North Clark Street; Ziv Book Shop, 167 North Clark Street; 51st Street L Station; L Station, Cottage Grove and 63rd Street; News Stand, 57th Street and Blackstone; and University of Chicago Bookstore, 57th and Ellis.

letter from H. T. of Los Angeles. Since any comment would be superfluous, we merely print the letter as received. "Dear Mike: Where is the September issue of the **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**? The irregular appearance of the F.I. has to stop. If the F.I. is to increase its influence and its readers, it must appear regularly each month, and on the first of the month. A drive must be started, similar to the Trotsky Defense Fund Drive to raise adequate financial support for the continued existence of the F.I. Furthermore, the Plenum must demand that all Locals and Branches cease their horseplay with accounts. There must be no retreat on the F.I. It must appear at all costs. Its educational value for our members and our sympathizers is too important for any retreat."

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# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

*The Monthly Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party*

VOLUME I

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NUMBER 5

## With Trotsky to the End

By JOSEPH HANSEN  
*Secretary to Leon Trotsky*

Since the May 24 machine-gun attack by the GPU on Trotsky's bedroom, the house at Coyoacan had been converted into a virtual fortress. The guard was increased, more heavily armed. Bullet proof doors and windows were installed. A redoubt was constructed with bomb-proof ceilings and floors. Double steel doors, controlled by electric switches, replaced the old wooden entrance where Robert Sheldon Harte had been surprised and kidnapped by the GPU assailants. Three new bullet-proof towers dominated not only the patio but the surrounding neighborhood. Barbed wire entanglements and bomb-proof nets were being prepared.

All this construction had been made possible through the sacrifices of the sympathizers and members of the Fourth International, who did their utmost to protect Trotsky, knowing that it was absolutely certain that Stalin would attempt another and more desperate assault after the failure of the May 24 attack. The Mexican government, which alone of all the nations on the earth had offered asylum to Trotsky in 1937, tripled the number of police guards on duty outside the house, doing everything in its power to safeguard the life of the world's most noted exile.

Only the form of the coming attack was unknown. Another machine gun assault with an increased number of assailants? Bombs? Sapping? Poisoning?

### August 20, 1940

I was on the roof near the main guard tower with Charles Cornell and Melquiades Benitez. We were connecting a powerful siren with the alarm system for use when the GPU attacked again. Late in the afternoon, between 5:20 and 5:30, Jacson, known to us as a sympathizer of the Fourth International and as the husband of Sylvia Ageloff, former member of the Socialist Workers Party, drove up in his Buick sedan. Instead of parking it with the radiator facing the house, as was his usual custom, he made a complete turn in the street, parking the car parallel to the wall, nose pointed towards Coyoacan. When he got out of the car, he waved to us on the roof and shouted, "Has Sylvia arrived yet?"

We were somewhat surprised. We did not know that Trotsky had made an appointment with Sylvia and Jacson, but ascribed our lack of knowledge of such an appointment to an oversight by Trotsky, something not uncommon on his part in such matters.

"No," I responded to Jacson: "wait a moment." Cornell then operated the electrical controls on the double doors and Harold Robins received the visitor in the patio. Jacson wore a raincoat across his arm. It was the rainy season, and although the sun was shining, heavy clouds massed over the mountains to the southwest threatened a downpour.

Trotsky was in the patio feeding the rabbits and chickens—his way of obtaining light exercise in the confined life he was forced to follow. We expected that as was his usual custom, Trotsky would not enter the house until he had finished with the feeding or until Sylvia had arrived. Robins was in the patio. Trotsky was not in the habit of seeing Jacson alone.

Melquiades, Cornell and I continued with our work. During the next ten or fifteen minutes I sat in the main tower writing the names of the guards on white labels to be affixed to the switches connecting their rooms with the alarm system.

A fearful cry wrent the afternoon calm—a cry prolonged and agonized, half scream, half sob. It dragged me to my feet, chilled to the bone. I ran from the guard-house out onto the roof. An accident to one of the ten workers who were remodeling the house? Sounds of violent struggle came from the Old Man's study, and Melquiades was pointing a rifle at the window below. Trotsky, in his blue work jacket became visible there for a moment, fighting body to body with someone.

"Don't shoot!" I shouted to Melquiades, "you might hit the Old Man!" Melquiades and Cornell stayed on the roof, covering the exits from the study. Switching on the general alarm, I slid down the ladder into the library. As I entered the door connecting the library with the dining room the Old Man stumbled out of his study a few feet away, blood streaming down his face.

"See what they have done to me!" he said.

At the same moment Harold Robins came through the north door of the dining room with Natalia following. Throwing her arms frantically about him, Natalia took Trotsky out on to the balcony. Harold and I had made for Jacson, who stood in the study gasping, face knotted, arms limp, automatic pistol dangling in his hand. Harold was closer to him. "You take care of him," I said, "I'll see what's happened to the Old Man." Even as I turned, Robins brought the assassin down to the floor.

Trotsky staggered back into the dining room, Natalia sobbing, trying to help him. "See what they have done," she said. As I put my arm about him, the Old Man collapsed near the dining room table.

The wound on his head appeared at first glance to be superficial. I had heard no shot. Jacson must have struck with some instrument. "What happened?" I asked the Old Man.

"Jackson shot me with a revolver; I am seriously wounded... I feel that this time it is the end."

"It's only a surface wound. You will recover," I tried to reassure him.

"We talked about French statistics," responded the Old Man.

"Did he hit you from behind?" I asked.

Trotsky did not answer.

"No, he did not shoot you," I said; "we didn't hear any shot. He struck you with something."

Trotsky looked doubtful; pressed my hand. Between the sentences we exchanged, he talked with Natalia in Russian. He touched her hand continually to his lips.

I scrambled back up to the roof, shouted to the police across the wall; "Get an ambulance!" I told Cornell and Melquiades: "It's an assault—Jacson..." My wrist watch read at that moment ten minutes to six.

Again I was at the Old Man's side, Cornell with me. Without waiting for the ambulance from the city, we decided that Cornell should go for Dr. Dutren, who lived nearby, and who had attended the family on previous occasions. Since our car was locked up in the garage behind double doors, Cornell decided to take Jacson's car standing in the street.

As Cornell left the room, sounds of renewed struggle came from the study where Robins was holding Jacson.

"Tell the boys not to kill him," the Old Man said, "be must talk."

I left Trotsky with Natalia, and entered the study. Jacson was trying desperately to escape from Robins. His automatic pistol lay on the table nearby. On the floor was a blood-spattered instrument which looked to me like a prospector's pick, but with the backside hammered out like a pick-axe. I joined in the struggle with Jacson, hitting him in the mouth and on the jaw below the ear, breaking my hand.

As Jacson regained consciousness, he moaned; "They have imprisoned my mother... Sylvia Ageloff had nothing to do with this... No, it was NOT the GPU; I have NOTHING to do with the GPU..." He placed heavy stress on the words which would separate him from the GPU, as if he had suddenly remembered that the script of his role called here for a loud voice. But he had already betrayed himself. When Robins brought the assassin down, Jacson had evidently believed it was his last moment. He had writhed in terror; words he could not control had escaped from his lips: "They MADE me do it." He had told the truth. The GPU had made him do it.

Cornell burst into the study. "The keys aren't in his car." He tried to find the keys in Jacson's clothing but without success. While he searched, I ran out to open the garage doors. In a few seconds Cornell was on his way with our car.

We waited for Cornell to return—Natalia and I kneeling at the Old Man's side, holding his hands. Natalia had wiped the blood from his face and placed a block of ice against his head, which was already swelling.

"He hit you with a pick," I told the Old Man. "He did not shoot you. I am sure it is only a surface wound."

"No," he responded, "I feel here" (indicating his heart) "that this time they have succeeded."

I tried to reassure him, "No, it's only a surface wound; you'll get better."

But the Old Man only smiled faintly with his eyes. He understood...

"Take care of Natalia. She has been with me many, many years." He pressed my hand as he gazed at her. He seemed to be drinking in what her features were like, as if he were leaving her forever—in these fleeting seconds compressing all the past into a last glance.

"We will," I promised. My voice seemed to flash among the three of us the understanding that this was really the end. The Old Man pressed our hands convulsively, tears suddenly

in his eyes. Natalia cried brokenly, bending over him, kissing his hand.

When Dr. Dutren arrived, the reflexes on the Old Man's left side were already failing. A few moments later the ambulance came and the police entered the study to drag out the assassin.

Natalia did not wish to let the Old Man be taken to a hospital—it was in a hospital in Paris that their son, Leon Sedov, was killed only two years ago. For a moment or two Trotsky himself, lying stricken on the floor, felt doubtful.

"We will go with you," I told him.

"I leave it to your decision," he told me, as if he were now turning everything over to those about him, as if all the days of making decisions were now gone.

Before we placed the Old Man on a stretcher, he again whispered: "I want everything I own to go to Natalia." Then with a voice that tugged unendurably at all the deepest and most tender feelings in the friends kneeling at his side...

"You will take care of her..."

Natalia and I made the sad ride with him to the hospital. His right hand wandered over the sheets covering him, touched the water basin near his head, found Natalia. Already the streets were jammed with people, all the workers and the poor lining the way as the ambulance sired behind a squadron of motorcycle police through the traffic on its way to the center of the city. Trotsky whispered, pulling me down insistently near his lips so that I should not fail to hear:

"He was a political assassin. Jacson was a member of the GPU or a fascist. Most likely the GPU." Impressions of Jacson were going through the Old Man's mind. In the few words left to him, he was telling me the course he thought should be followed in our analysis of the assault, on the basis of the facts already in our possession:—Stalin's GPU is guilty but we must leave open the possibility that they were aided by Hitler's Gestapo. He did not know that Stalin's calling card in the form of a "confession" was in the assassin's pocket.

## The Last Hours

At the hospital, the most prominent doctors in Mexico gathered in consultation.

The Old Man, exhausted, wounded to death, eyes almost closed, looked in my direction from the narrow hospital bed, moved his right hand feebly. "Joe, you...have...notebook?"

How many times he had asked me this same question!—but in vigorous tones, with the subtle innuendo he enjoyed at our expense about "American efficiency." Now his voice was thick, words scarcely distinguishable. He spoke with great effort, fighting against the encroaching darkness. I leaned against the bed. His eyes seemed to have lost all that quick flash of mobile intelligence so characteristic of the Old Man. His eyes were fixed, as if no longer aware of the outside world, and yet I felt his enormous will power holding away the extinguishing darkness, refusing to concede to his foe until he had accomplished one last task. Slowly, haltingly, he dictated, choosing the words of his last message to the working class painfully in English, a language that was foreign to him. On his death-bed he did not let himself forget that his secretary spoke no Russian!

"I am close to death from the blow of a political assassin...struck me down in my room. I struggled with him...we...entered...talk about French statistics...he struck me... Please say to our friends...I am sure...of the victory...of the Fourth International...Go forward."

He tried to talk more; but the words were incomprehensible. His voice died away, the tired eyes closed. He never re-

gained consciousness. This was about two and a half hours after the blow was struck.

An x-ray picture was taken of the wound and the doctors decide that an immediate operation was necessary. The surgeon in charge of the hospital performed the delicate work of trepanning in the presence of leading Mexican specialists and the family doctors. They discovered that the pick-axe had penetrated seven centimeters, destroying considerable brain tissue. Some of these doctors declared the case absolutely hopeless. Others gave the Old Man a fighting chance.

For more than twenty-two hours after the operation, despair alternated with the desperate hope that he would survive. In the United States friends arranged to send a world famous brain specialist, Dr. Walter E. Dandy of Johns Hopkins, by airplane. Hour after agonized hour we listened to the Old Man's heavy breathing as he lay on the hospital bed. With his head shaved and bandaged he bore a startling resemblance to Lenin. We thought of the days when they had led the first victorious working class revolution. Natalia refused to leave the room, refused food, watched dry-eyed, hands clenched, knuckles white, as the hours passed one by one during that long, horrible night and the endless following day. The reports of the doctors noted favorable signs, an occasional improvement, and up until the very last, we still felt that somehow this man who had survived the Czar's prisons, exiles, three revolutions, the Moscow trials, would survive this unspeakably treacherous blow of Stalin.

But the Old Man was over sixty years old. He had been in ill health for a number of months. At 7:25 P. M. on August 21, he entered the final crisis. The doctors worked for twenty minutes, utilizing all the scientific methods at their disposal, but not even adrenalin could revive the great heart and mind which Stalin had destroyed with a pick-axe.

## What Happened in the Study

On August 17 Jacson showed Trotsky a draft of an article he intended to write on the recent dispute in the Fourth International over the Russian question. Trotsky invited Jacson to come into his study while he read the draft. This was the first time Jacson was alone there with Trotsky. To Jacson it meant that the time was ripe. It was a dress rehearsal for what the GPU had ordered him to do.

Trotsky offered a few suggestions to the author, but told Natalia that the draft showed confusion and was without particular interest.

On August 20, Jacson came to the house with the finished article. Under the title "The Third Camp and the Popular Front," it ostensibly dealt with the Burnham-Shachtman theory of a "Third Camp" in the World War. The idea of the article, a comparison of the class basis of the "Third Camp" with that of the French Popular Front was not Jacson's, but an idea first expressed to my knowledge by Otto Schuesler, one of the secretaries of Trotsky. Jacson picked up the idea in conversation with the guards and wrote some kind of an article for no other purpose than to cause Trotsky to sit down at his desk in a helpless position while he raised the pickaxe from behind.

It was Jacson's plan, apparently, to kill Trotsky with one blow, silently, and then to leave the house as he had come, without arousing attention—with his revolver gripped in his pocket in case it was necessary to shoot his way out. He carried a large sum of money in his pocket—\$890—indicating that he hoped to escape. Besides this, he carried a letter of "confession", obviously dictated by the GPU—planted on him for discovery by the police in the event he was shot by the guards. He expected either to escape or be killed.

Jacson met Trotsky near the rabbit hutches, told him that he had brought the finished article, that he and Sylvia were leaving for New York the following day. Trotsky responded with his typical cordiality, but continued placing dried alfalfa in the feed troughs.

Catching sight of Natalia on the balcony between the kitchen and the dining room, Jacson left Trotsky. He wore his hat, kept his raincoat pressed close to his body as he advanced to make his greeting.

To Natalia he appeared nervous and absent minded, as if he were in deep abstraction. Jacson asked her for a glass of water; he was very "thirsty" he explained. Natalia offered him tea, as she and Trotsky had just finished their customary afternoon cup and there was still some left in the pot. Jacson refused, however, saying that he had eaten but a short while before—"the food is still sticking in my throat."

After drinking the glass of water, he returned with Natalia to Trotsky's side at the rabbit hutches. "You know that Jacson and Sylvia are returning to New York tomorrow?" asked Trotsky. "They have come to say goodbye." Then in Russian: "We should prepare something for them."

A few minutes conversation passed before Trotsky without enthusiasm asked, "You wish me to read your article?"

"Yes."

"Good, we can go into the study."

Without notifying any of his guards, Trotsky took Jacson into his room. Natalia parted from them at the door and went into the kitchen.

Later, as he lay bleeding on the dining room floor, Trotsky told Natalia that it flashed across his mind as he entered the room, "*This man could kill me.*" But he did not listen to the intuitive warning from the subconscious layers of his mind. As a proletarian revolutionist, Trotsky had carried his life in his hands for too many years.

Trotsky seated himself at the wide table, scattered with books, newspapers, manuscripts. Near an ink-well a few inches from his hand lay his .25 calibre automatic—it had been oiled and reloaded just a few days before. He began reading Jacson's article. Jacson sat behind and to the left of Trotsky, near the switch that would set off the alarm system.

"The opportunity was too good to be lost," Jacson told the police afterward. "I took the 'piolet'. I raised it up high. I shut my eyes and struck with all my strength... As long as I live I can never forget his cry..."

Trotsky staggered up from his seat as the assassin wrenched the weapon loose and struck again at his victim's face. Chairs were broken, papers and books scattered, the dictaphone smashed, blood spattered over the desk, on the books, the newspapers—on the last pages of the manuscript of Trotsky's biography of Stalin.

## Could We Have Prevented It?

In the morning here at the house in Coyoacan when I am half awake, it still seems that I can hear the Old Man's voice calling. Sometimes it seems that he is impatient, as if he were anxious that the day should begin energetically—as if there were mountainous tasks before us and only a few short hours left. Every stone, every turn in the paths, even the shade from the tall pines where the Old Man used to talk with us in the patio is a memory, keen, raw, painful... The Old Man is everywhere. And yet the house seems empty and vacant, like a ruin left long ago to crumble into dust.

Couldn't we have prevented it?

When I feel like this—the intolerable burden of what might have been; I remember the pressure of his hand as he lay on the floor.

I remember what he said about his escape in the May 24 assault: *"In war, accidents are inevitable, favorable accidents and unfavorable—it is a part of war."*

I remember Natalia's words: "On the morning of August 20, when we got up, L. D. said, 'Another lucky day. We are still alive.' He had repeated that every morning since May 24."

Trotsky knew that Stalin had decreed his death. He knew that Stalin counted on the assassination being lost in the titanic events of the Second World War where whole states are wiped out and the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of human beings means no more than a brief headline in the daily dispatches from the battlefields. Trotsky knew that against all the enormous resources of the powerful state apparatus controlled by Stalin, were pitted only the courage and woefully inadequate means of a small handful of revolutionaries. Trotsky knew that all the tactical advantages were with the enemy; the chosen moment, surprise, the ability to attack a fixed position with a number of variant methods. It was virtually certain that with enough attempts, one time sooner or later the accidents of war would be unfavorable to us. Trotsky even predicted that the next assault would occur when Hitler launched his battle against England.

Trotsky's politics were never the politics of despair. He fought with every ounce of his energy; nevertheless many times during the month in which we constructed our "fortress", I knew that he felt himself doomed.

"I will not see the next revolution," he told me once, "that is for your generation." I felt in his words a deep regret—what pleasure to see the class struggle in its next stage of development, what keen joy to participate in one more revolution—what vistas opening for the human race in the coming period!

"It is not like before", he said again. "We are old—we don't have the energy of the younger generation. One becomes tired... and old... It is for your generation, the next revolution. We will not see it."

Yet Trotsky carried on despite the fact that he knew all the probabilities were against his personal survival. He was fighting against time, steeling the Fourth International, arming it with the ideas of Bolshevism.

Each day in this period of world war, of factional struggles, was of immeasurable value to the new generation of revolutionary cadres. Trotsky knew it better than anyone. He wanted to hand us intact the entire heritage of Bolshevism which was in his charge, even down to the smallest item. He knew what that heritage had cost, what it was worth to us in the epoch now opening before us. The time was so short!

Since September 1937 Trotsky's secretaries tried to institute a system in the household whereby everyone who entered would be searched for concealed weapons. They also attempted to make it an iron rule that Trotsky was never to talk with anyone alone in his study. Trotsky could not endure either of these rules. Either we trust the people and admit them without search, or we do not admit them at all. He could not bear having his friends submit to search. No doubt he felt that in any case it would be useless and could even give us a false sense of security. If a GPU agent succeeded in entering, he would find some way of setting at naught what search we could make. Trotsky had dozens upon dozens of friends in Mexico, whom the guards—so far as their vigilance was concerned—placed in the same general category as Jacson before the assault. As to our second proposal that someone should always remain with him in his study, this too was never effective. So many of his guests had personal problems—would not talk freely in the presence of a guard! Sometimes I was able to remain in the room merely by sitting down contrary

to Trotsky's instructions to leave, but both he and I felt uncomfortable about it, and he would never permit this discomfort from anyone else. Trotsky was the builder of the political party and a worker in the field of ideas. He preferred to trust his friends rather than to suspect them.

All of Trotsky's guards tried to make themselves suspicious of everyone. Trotsky, however, was interested not only in being guarded, but in teaching his guards by example some of the fundamentals of organizing a political movement. Mutual suspicion in his eyes was a disintegrating force much worse than the inclusion of a spy in the organization, since such suspicions are useless anyway in uncovering a highly skilled provocateur. Trotsky hated personal suspicion towards the members and sympathizers of the Fourth International. He considered it worse than the evil it was supposed to cure.

Whenever this subject came up, he was fond of telling the story of Malinovsky, who became a member of the Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party, its representative in the Duma and a trusted confidant of Lenin. Malinovsky was at the same time an agent of the Czar's secret police, the dread Okhrana. He sent hundreds of Bolsheviks into exile and to death. Nevertheless, in order to maintain his position of confidence, it was necessary for him to spread the ideas of Bolshevism. These ideas eventually caused his downfall. The proletarian revolution is more powerful than the most cunning police spy.

Could the guards have prevented the assassination of Trotsky? With more precaution could they have prevented Jacson from ingratiating himself into the household? From using a more subtle method? Poisoning? A shot from ambush on a picnic? A direct suicidal assault with some weapon especially built by the GPU to escape our limited means of detection?

The GPU itself answered this question through the mouth of its agent, Jacson: "In the next attack, the GPU will use different methods."

## How the Assassin Gained Entry

Jacson came to Mexico in October 1939. According to his story, he was told not to force an entry into the household but to let the meeting be "casual." He followed his instructions perfectly. For months he did not come near Coyoacan but stayed in Mexico City. When Sylvia Ageloff, his wife, who was well known to the household, came to Mexico, he did not attempt to enter the house with her. But he utilized her to become known to the Rosmers—friends of Trotsky and Natalia since 1913—who were staying at the house after bringing Trotsky's grandson from France. Through these trusted people he became known by name to the household.

Many of the guards knew him, were accustomed to admitting him for a few moments to the patio where he would wait to meet whomever he had come to see. It is absolutely certain that Robert Sheldon Harte knew him and trusted him. But he did not meet Trotsky until after the May 24 assault.

On May 28, the Rosmers were leaving Mexico via Vera Cruz, carrying out the decision of several months before to return home. Jacson had offered, some weeks previously, to take them from Mexico City to the port. He had told them that he went to Vera Cruz every two weeks on business anyway, and could combine this trip with the affairs of his "boss."

He came out to the house early in the morning, rang the bell and was invited inside to wait until the Rosmers were ready. Trotsky was in the patio, and met Jacson for the first time. They shook hands. Trotsky continued with his chores about the chicken yard. Jacson retired and began

speaking to Seva, Trotsky's grandson, to whom he gave a toy glider. Both Natalia and Trotsky noticed him in Seva's room and asked Seva what it meant. Jacson then explained the working of the glider to them.

Trotsky with his customary thoughtfulness for others asked Natalia if Jacson should not be invited in. Natalia responded that he must have already had his breakfast. At the table, however, as a matter of courtesy, he was invited to come in and have a seat. He took a cup of coffee. This was the first time Jacson sat down at the table with Trotsky.

Jacson cultivated friendly relations with consummate skill. Already well known for his generosity, his car was at the constant disposal of the household. When he went to New York he left it for the use of the guards. He did small services not only for Trotsky and Natalia, but also for everyone connected with the house. When friends were visiting, he took them sightseeing. If it was necessary to make a trip, he offered his car and himself as a chauffeur.

In the dispute between the minority and majority, on the Russian question, he supported Trotsky's position, even against that of his wife, Sylvia Ageloff. In talking with the guards, he was careful to mention the donations he claimed he had given to the French section. He told Jake Cooper that he knew Rudolph Klement; was in Paris when the GPU had foully murdered him. He was fond of mentioning that he had met James P. Cannon in Paris. Thus he built up an impression of himself as one known to our people.

Following the assault of May 24, he entered the house ten times in all before he carried out the GPU order to murder his host. Twice he came with Sylvia Ageloff, had tea with the Trotskys. When Trotsky reviewed the controversy in the Fourth International, Jacson warmly defended Trotsky's views, attacked those of Sylvia.

Upon one visit he gave Natalia an elaborate box of chocolates, saying that it was a gift from Sylvia.

Nevertheless, Jacson—mainly because he was not a member of the Fourth International and because his political ideas seemed confused and far from being serious—was never accepted as an intimate or a close friend of the house.

When Jacson took a trip to New York after the May 24 assault, returning in the last part of July, he admitted that he had not visited any of the members of the Socialist Workers Party.

"Why?" we asked with astonishment.

Jacson glibly explained that it was because he spent so much time in the evenings arguing with Sylvia and her sisters, trying to convince them that the majority viewpoint was correct, that he didn't have time to visit so much as the headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party. He said that he spent his days "slaving in an office on Wall Street."

The fact that he had not contacted the headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party produced a bad impression on the guards, which they communicated to Trotsky. Trotsky responded:

"It is true, of course, that he is rather light minded and will probably not become a strong member of the Fourth International. Nevertheless, he can be won closer. In order to build the party we must have confidence that people can be changed." Trotsky added that Jacson was carrying on some studies in French statistics which could prove useful to us.

It is my conviction that Trotsky, who saw the possibility for anyone to develop into a revolutionary, wished to utilize Jacson as an example in point. The very distance which the guards kept between themselves and the apparently difficult job of turning this rather unpromising clay into a revo-

lutionary, spurred Trotsky into making a stronger demonstration. He suggested to me specifically that I should go out of my way to become friendly with Jacson in order to help bring him closer to the Fourth International.

It was precisely at this time that Jacson was plotting how to murder Trotsky.

In a conversation with Jacson, in which Cornell and I participated, Trotsky asked Jacson what he thought of the "fortress." Jacson responded that everything seemed well done, but "in the next attack the GPU will use other methods."

"What methods?" one of us asked.

Jacson shrugged his shoulders slightly.

## Stalin's Calling Card

When Frank Jacson was taken to the hospital, the police found in his pocket a letter of "confession." This letter obviously intended for use by the GPU in its propaganda following the assassination, constitutes documentary evidence that Jacson was a paid agent of the GPU. It alone would fix the guilt for Trotsky's murder directly on the Super-Borgia in the Kremlin.

Like the classic "confessions" manufactured by the GPU for use in the Moscow Trials, the "confessor" starts out as an ardent "Trotskyist," is ordered on fantastic missions by superiors lacking names, accepts the assignments without murmur, is finally "ordered by Trotsky" to kill Stalin and "spread sabotage in the USSR," discovers Trotsky is "linked" with a "foreign power" (with whatever power Stalin has not signed a pact), immediately becomes "disillusioned," repents, acknowledges the genial Stalin to be right and the successor of Lenin, and "confesses" all. This pattern, developed to its finished form by Yagoda in the Lubyanka torture chambers has, despite the discovery that Yagoda was a super-poisoner for ten years under Stalin, been repeated now monotonously and with little change.

Jacson's letter includes a few variations for the local use of North American supporters of the GPU, such as Lombardo Toledano, Harry Block, correspondent of the *Nation*, and Frank Jellinek, correspondent of *PM* and the Stalinist "Federated Press."

These variations include the slander that Trotsky sneered at the Mexican Revolution, supported Almazan. These sentences in Jacson's letter sound as if they had been lifted bodily from the Mexican organs of the GPU—*La Voz de Mexico*, *Futuro*, and *El Popular*, where Trotsky was accused of being "linked with the Dies Committee," an "agent of Wall Street" and a "traitor" who committed "self-assault" for no other reason save that of embarrassing the Cardenas government which had given him asylum alone of all the governments in the world.

Jacson claims he was a disillusioned member of the Fourth International. Lie! This was simply an attempt of the GPU to trick world opinion into believing its hands are spotless. Under questioning by the investigating judge he has now admitted he was never a member.

Jacson claims a "member of the Bureau of the Fourth International" sent him to Mexico to see Trotsky because "something more was expected of him than being a simple militant." Another lie written in the jargon invented by the GPU for the Moscow Trials!

Jacson says that Trotsky ordered him to go to Shanghai, steal the China Clipper, fly across Manchukuo to Russia, and there, without knowing a word of the Russian language, begin spreading sabotage and plotting the death "of the leaders of the USSR!" Recall the Stalin-Hitler dictum: "The grosser

the lie, the more readily will people believe it." Jacson's letter could not follow this dictum any closer.

The story is more absurd than the story concocted by the GPU in 1936 about the airplane in which Pyatakov was alleged to have flown from Berlin to Oslo in order to help Trotsky make a pact with Hitler.

In Jacson's letter, the GPU again over-reached itself, succeeded in accomplishing nothing but convincing the world of Stalin's guilt in the murder of Trotsky.

It is merely necessary to substitute in Jacson's letter the three letters "GPU" for the "member of the Bureau of the Fourth International." Then the story told by Jacson as to how he was ordered to go to Mexico to see Trotsky becomes clear. The reasons for the infinite caution and casualness with which he approached the household become apparent. The whole "confession" crumbles before one's eyes and the truth stands revealed: GPU agent Jacson is lying in the easiest way possible for him—wherever possible he attributes to the Fourth International the actual instructions given him by the GPU.

### Who Is "Frank Jacson"?

According to the declarations the assassin made to the police, he was furnished a false passport by "the member of the Bureau of the Fourth International," who "proposed that he go to Mexico to see Trotsky." On his final trip to Coyoacan from Mexico City, Jacson claims that he stopped on Avenida Insurgentes and burned this false passport along with his other personal papers. Why did Jacson burn his passport? The reason is not difficult to determine. Forgers always leave certain identifying marks. In the hands of government experts it would have been possible to trace such a passport back to those who falsified it, just as it is possible for experts to trace forged money back to the particular individual who made it. In the case of Jacson's passport the identifying mark would have been "GPU."

The passport on which Frank Jacson entered the United States was issued in March 1937 to Tony Babich, resident of Canada and a naturalized British subject, born at Lovinac, Yugoslavia, June 13, 1905. Tony Babich used this passport to travel from Canada ostensibly on a visit to his home. He went to Spain, instead, where he fought in the Loyalist army. On May 12, 1939, the Spanish government issued a death certificate for Tony Babich.

What happened to Tony Babich's passport?

It is well known that the foreigners who enlisted in the Loyalist army were systematically robbed of their passports by the GPU. Walter Krivitsky, former head of the Soviet Intelligence Service in western Europe, reported that the diplomatic pouches sent to the USSR from Spain carried bundles of these passports in every mail. That is obviously what happened to the passport of Tony Babich. In the hands of the GPU it underwent certain alterations by the most skilled passport forgers in the world. The name of Tony Babich was changed to read "Frank Jacson." The photograph of Babich was removed and replaced by that of the man who later murdered Trotsky.

The GPU attempts to picture Jacson in his "confession" as a naive lad in the beginning, so gullible that he instantly packed his valises and sent to his mother for \$5,000 when the "member of the Bureau of the Fourth International" asked him to go to Mexico. It would be interesting to hear the GPU explain how this innocent "rabbit," as Jacson labels himself, gained his expert knowledge of passport regulations between the United States and Mexico.

When he left Mexico the last time, he applied at the

American Consulate on June 12 for a transit visa to Canada. Apparently he utilized this transit visa to enter the United States without giving up the Mexican tourist card which was issued to him in October 1939. From all information available, he did not apply for a tourist card on his second entry, but merely walked across the border and took passage to Mexico City, exhibiting his original tourist card with its time extension to whatever authorities demanded his credentials. Only a person with an expert acquaintance with these matters could have done this.

When Jacson was struggling with the guards, he cried out several times: "They have imprisoned my mother!" When he was dragged out of Trotsky's study, he repeated, "Ma mere! Ma mere!" If he is not a subject of the USSR, it is possible that the Gestapo, as a slight service to Stalin, turned Jacson's mother, possibly his whole family, over to the GPU, subsequent to the German invasion of the Lowlands and France. Jacson was then threatened with the death of his family if he did not carry out Stalin's order to assassinate Trotsky. It is possible that Jacson's story about being born in Persia of Belgian parents is true, but there are many indications that his story about the "Mornard" family and its wealth is a complete fabrication:

1. The Belgian minister in Persia from 1904 to 1908 was not his father, "Mornard Van den Dreschd," as Jacson claims, but a man named T'Sterstevens.

2. There is no record of the older brother of Jacson, "Robert Mornard," being in the Belgian Consular service as Jacson claims.

3. When Jacson gave the address of his family residence in Brussels, he named one of the longest and busiest streets in the city, and the number mentioned turned out to be that of a public building.

4. Jacson wrote to Sylvia many times about his father, and the things his father was doing. But he told the Mexican police that his father died years ago.

Jacson was well supplied with money. He claims that during the last days of August, 1939, his "mother" gave him \$5,000 in addition to the \$200 given him by the alleged member of the Bureau of the Fourth International. In New York City he entrusted \$3,000 to Sylvia Ageloff. Later, in October 1939 he established a letter of credit with the American Express agency in New York City for approximately \$2,500. On this letter of credit he cashed heavy checks in January of this year, again in May of this year, just before the first assault on Trotsky, and withdrew the balance early in June. When he was taken by the police he had more than \$890 in his pockets. In Mexico he bought an automobile for 3,500 pesos. When he traveled, he used airplanes. In Mexico he lived expensively from October, 1939, up until the time of the assassination without holding any job whatsoever.

Although he listed himself on his tourist card as a "mechanical engineer" he declared upon his capture that he had studied journalism and was a journalist by profession. To the household he claimed that he worked for a mysterious individual who at first dealt in oil for the Allies, but who had lately shifted to diamonds. He claimed that he was paid \$50 a week by this mysterious boss.

Sylvia Ageloff testified to the police that after she met Jacson in Paris he began working for the "Argus Press Service." He sold a number of Ageloff's articles on child psychology to this service, but told Sylvia it was impossible to find out where they were published since she could then deal directly with the magazine, cutting the Argus' service out of its commission. He himself, he claims, wrote sports articles at a high salary for the Argus Service. Sylvia Ageloff never saw



any of her own articles in print. The Argus Service, it is clear, was merely another name for the GPU even though it might have had "Argus" printed on its letterheads and across some office door.

In personal appearance, Jacson before the assault struck one as a nervous individual, prematurely aged, darkened as if some poison were working its way through his skin. His features twitched. He talked rapidly but found words with difficulty, causing him occasionally to stumble in his utterances. While he was not husky, nevertheless he appeared wiry. He wore horn-rimmed glasses, dressed neatly, rarely covered his dark hair with a hat. It was impossible to carry on a sustained political conversation with him; he always wandered into another subject. He claimed to be an ardent sympathizer of the Fourth International, and especially devoted to Trotsky, of whom he said many times in an admiring tone, in the presence of the guards: "He has the greatest intellect in the world."

Since the assault, Jacson has appeared completely prostrated and near collapse. When he is brought into the judge's chambers for questioning, he drags his feet as if they were weighted to the floor, hangs his head, requires the support of two men. During the questioning he keeps his eyes on the floor, answers in tones that are scarcely audible, refuses to speak in any language but French, although he is quite familiar with Spanish and English. However, he dropped this mask completely when Albert Goldman pressed him on his story about the alleged member of the Bureau of the Fourth International who had sent him to Trotsky. He appeared suddenly alert, cautious. He sat up in his chair, gesticulated, employed histrionics. At times his eyes would peer balefully from under his bandaged head, like an animal in a trap studying its captor before lunging.

In view of the consummate skill with which he penetrated the household, ingratiated himself, brutally carried out his horrible assignment and stuck to the line prepared for him by the Stalinists, Jacson can be considered one of the most finished products of the GPU terror machine.

### Professional GPU Killer

We can now look back upon some of the previous murders of our comrades committed by the GPU and begin to fix the sinister role played by Frank Jacson.

In February 1938 Leon Sedov was stricken with an intestinal ailment. He was taken to a hospital. Somehow his whereabouts leaked out to the Stalinists. Leon Sedov died within a few days under the most mysterious circumstances.

"What is your opinion about the death of Sedov?" Judge Trujillo asked Jacson at the preliminary hearing.

The assassin hesitated, fumbled for words, replied sullenly: "Only what is printed on the case."

"Was it the GPU?"

"Yes. The GPU killed Leon Sedov."

An intensely interesting statement! Was it a single slip of the tongue, an unintentional admission of a truth well known among the agents of the GPU? Was it the very height of deviousness—a conscious attempt to separate himself from the GPU by implying: the GPU did THAT job but NOT THIS one? Or was it the admission of a fact he knew to be true because of his personal involvement in the murder of Sedov and which he admitted as a welcome relief from the strain of constant lying because he did not feel it could be dangerous to him? The last hypothesis seems the most likely. It would explain his hesitation when the question was first asked—should he lie? was it necessary? "only what is printed . . ." A cautious reply made to gain time while he decided

on the danger involved in answering truthfully: "Yes, The GPU killed Leon Sedov."

Just before the World Conference of the Fourth International in September, 1938, Rudolf Klement, secretary of the organization, was kidnapped. A letter forged in his handwriting was mailed to Leon Trotsky from Perpignan, a small town in southern France with which Jacson shows great familiarity. This letter, in terms almost identical to those in Jacson's letter of "confession," reports Klement's "disillusionment" over his supposed discovery that Trotsky was negotiating to make a pact with "Hitler."

That the "Klement letter" was a GPU job became clear, a few days later, when Klement's body was found floating in the Seine river at Paris. The head, arms and legs had been amputated by someone with a knowledge of anatomy.

Jacson was proud to show off at a dinner table his general knowledge of anatomy. With a sharp knife, a roast chicken under his hands seemed to fall apart almost by itself.

Why was Klement killed? It was Trotsky's opinion that Klement stumbled across some information of utmost importance concerning the GPU. The identity of a provocateur—perhaps proof that the GPU murdered Leon Sedov, was preparing the assassination of Trotsky.

Jacson knew David Alfaro Siqueiros, the leader of the May 24 assault. "By accident," Jacson told Judge Trujillo, he gave to Sylvia Ageloff as his business address in Mexico that of the house named "Ermita" which was frequented by David Alfaro Siqueiros.

It is easy now to reconstruct the night of May 24. Jacson rang the bell during Harte's shift. Harte answered the door.

"It's Jacson—I have a message of utmost importance."

Harte, who knew Jacson, as admitted by the assassin himself, opened the door, holding it by the safety latch. He saw Jacson, whom he recognized as a friend of the house. He saw the GPU agents in disguise as Mexican policemen, took them for genuine and opened the door.

That was why Harte was murdered. He could have identified the GPU agent who tricked him into opening the door. This phase of the May 24 assault, one of the most mysterious, can now be considered solved. Likewise, in all probability Jacson was the mysterious "French-Jew" who spoke Spanish with a decided French accent, who gave orders to Siqueiros, who drove about in a black Packard with New York license plates, who furnished the money for the May 24 assailants.

We can picture the scene in GPU headquarters in New York when Jacson returned to make his report following the failure of the May 24 assault:

"Go back and finish the job yourself; or—"

### The Reaction to Trotsky's Death

Indignation and sorrow over the murder of Leon Trotsky by Stalin swept through the working class on a world wide scale. Telegrams and letters poured in from all the countries from which the censorship would permit. Working class organizations, one after the other in Mexico, passed resolutions condemning the murder of Trotsky by the GPU.

President Lazaro Cardenas issued a scathing denunciation of the perpetrators of the murder, naming them as "agents of a foreign power" and "traitors" to Mexico.

Only the friends and agents of the GPU were silent or tried to insinuate that Jacson's "confession" was true. *El Popular*, Lombardo Toledano's paper, for instance, published the declaration of Trotsky's murderer under the front-page headline: "Sensational Confession of the Assassin of Leon Trotsky—Launches Tremendous Accusation Against the Dead Chief of the Fourth International." This was the biggest play

*El Popular* gave to the whole assassination, which of course is only natural for an organ of the GPU.

In a more cautious form *El Popular* expresses the same sentiment toward Trotsky as that expressed by David Serrano before Judge Trujillo. Serrano, a member of the Political Bureau of the Mexican Communist Party and believed to be the GPU representative on that body, was arrested in connection with the May 24 assault. It was he who ordered the police uniforms with which the assailants disguised themselves. It was his ex-wife who acted as one of the spies who seduced the police on guard at the Coyoacan house.

"The Third International is opposed to personal terror," Serrano declared cynically in testifying before Judge Trujillo, "but I would not be sorry if anything happened to Trotsky."

"You understand that a statement like that will go against you in the case?" asked the judge astonished.

"I understand; but that's what I believe."

This was on August 1, not three weeks before the assassination. It was the order from the GPU representative to finish the job.

Among those working for the GPU in the campaign against Trotsky is Frank Jellinek. This man, long known to be at least a close sympathizer of the Stalinists, came to Mexico in the fall of 1937. He tried to visit Trotsky, was refused admittance. Later he came to the press interview which Trotsky gave following the verdict of the John Dewey Commission that he was innocent of the charges levelled against him in the Moscow Trials. Jellinek came with his friend, Frank Kluckhohn, and had to be called to order by Trotsky because of the disturbance he was creating. Frequently seen with leading Stalinists in Mexico, he wrote reports on the May 24 assault in accordance with the GPU line. What is most interesting about Jellinek, however, is what he did when Trotsky appeared in the Coyoacan court to answer questions by Serrano's attorney, Pavon Flores. Although Flores is a member of the Political Bureau of the Mexican Communist Party and one who survived the March purge, which prepared for the assault of May 24, he consulted Jellinek in the courtroom so frequently as to give Jellinek the appearance of wielding a great deal of authority. Following the murder of Trotsky, Jellinek wrote a report in *PM*, which attempted to bolster Jacson's self-portrait of warring factions in the Fourth International as the matrix out of which came the murder. Jellinek reported "quarreling factions are now competing for Trotsky's body." What quarreling factions? Those of James P. Cannon and Albert Goldman! (*PM*, Aug. 23)

Jellinek's defense of the GPU is as stupid as Jacson's "confession." The hand which becomes warped to the handle of a pickaxe loses its dexterity with a pen.

## The Last Days with Trotsky

During the construction work when we were converting the house into a fortress, Trotsky often walked about the patio, suggesting changes, improvements. Nevertheless, he did not feel happy about having to live in such a place. Often he told me: "It reminds me of the first prison I was in, at Khirghizan. The doors make the same sound when they shut. It is not a home; it is a medieval prison."

The place was, indeed, like a prison. Trotsky confined himself to living behind those twenty-foot walls as if he were serving a term in a Czarist jail.

One day he caught me gazing at the new towers. His eyes twinkled in one of those warm, intimate smiles of his, a glance and nod that took one into his confidence.

"Highly advanced civilization—that we must still make such constructions," he said, his eye brow lifting good humoredly.

"Yes," I responded—it was not the first time he had made this remark to me—"just such constructions in order to organize the economic system on a rational basis."

"To have to spend a life-time on that!"

The hot Mexican sun high-lighted his eagle features, cut his white bushy hair away from the dark vines behind him. His eyes were no longer on me but speculatively on the towers, and I was suddenly looking at the life's task of a Bolshevik from a thousand years in the future.

The Old Man taught those about him like that—with half jest converting even his own distastes into something valuable for this new generation surrounding him.

Trotsky enjoyed the Mexican country-side; liked sitting beside a good chauffeur and driving off the paved highway onto some obscure road filled with chuck holes, boulders, mud, bayonet-bladed cactus. Such roads reminded him of the old days and campaigns with the Red Army. But these excursions, which he called "walks," were dangerous, and for months at a time the Old Man would deny himself the pleasure.

On the last "walk" the Old Man took, he slept much more than usual. As if he were exhausted and this were his first opportunity in a long time to rest. He relaxed in the seat beside me and slept from Cuernavaca almost to Amecameca, where the volcanos, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, the sleeping woman, gather great fleecy clouds about their white summits. While one of the other cars re-fueled, we stopped beside an ancient hacienda with towering strongly buttressed walls. The Old Man regarded the walls with interest: "A fine wall, but medieval. Like our own prison."

As we approached Coyoacan, he slid down low in the seat so that his head would not show—from any of the windows facing the streets near our house might come a burst of machine gun fire.

"After this we must have two of the best drivers in the car," the Old Man said. He was thinking of the danger connected with these enjoyable "walks"—the chance of the driver being killed. But there was never another "walk" on which to carry out his suggestion.

From the May 24 assault until the week before his death, Trotsky worked on uncovering the GPU—fighting its agents and its friends, such as Lombardo Toledano who carried on a rabid campaign of vilification, slander, foul personal attacks under the monotonously repeated slogan of the GPU: "Expel the Traitor Trotsky from Mexico."

On the Saturday before the assault Trotsky told me that he had practically finished all his work in relation to exposing the perpetrators of the May 24 assault and that now he expected to return to his "poor, neglected Stalin book." But before doing so he wanted to know what I thought about his writing something on the question of militarism. We discussed the form and content of such an article, whether it would be an article for *Fourth International*, something for the *Socialist Appeal*, or because of world conditions an unsigned article.

The thesis of the project in his own words as I recall them was as follows: "We must now launch a fight to the finish with all the remnants of pacifism in our ranks. This pacifism is not only a heritage of our entry into the Socialist Party but a heritage of the last imperialist war. Even the Bolsheviks in 1914 did not have the perspective of taking power. Our politics then flowed more or less from a sheer opposition point of view to the official politics of the government. Even Lenin when he was in Switzerland wrote some articles in which he

said that the second or third generation may see socialism but we will not. Now the world situation is even more ripe than at that time. Our politics must flow from the perspective of seizing power. There will be revolutionary situations in the coming period, one after the other. It will be a period rich in revolutionary situations. At first there will be defeats. They are inevitable; but we will learn from them. It is also inevitable that we will have victories. One good victory can change the whole world situation. It is not excluded that you will gain power in the United States in the coming period."

We talked over this thesis several times during the afternoon. I told Trotsky of my experience in writing a war pamphlet in which it was very easy to point out the horrors and causes of war, but not so easy to tell the workers exactly what steps to take next, and that this difficulty came from the fact that we had not yet settled completely on our politics in relation to pacifist sentiment. I also gave him my reaction to the victories of Hitler as indicating not so much the strength of fascism as the rottenness of democratic imperialism, a rottenness which not even we had measured to the full and which clearly showed that we were much nearer to power than we had thought—that it would take but very little from the working class to smash this whole structure. "Of course," Trotsky said. "Well, I will have plenty of time to think over the problem tomorrow," referring to his doctor's order that he stay in bed all day Sunday to rest. But he became so interested in this thesis that he went into his study and began dictating immediately. I heard his strong vibrant voice dictating to his dictaphone with a frequent "totchka!" until 9:30 that evening and again Monday morning. He had gotten an excellent start on the article, he told me just before dinner, utilizing as his point of departure the "miserable article" of Dwight Macdonald in the *Partisan Review* which I had underlined for him. He also mentioned some of the pacifist tendencies in the minority group who split from the Fourth International which he intended to use along with the "miserable and contemptible" pacifism of Norman Thomas as illustrations in the article.

The first draft was typed and on his desk at the time he was attacked. Knowing Trotsky's methods of work, I am sure that he had blocked out most of his main ideas; the illustrations and quotations were in the large still missing, possibly he had not yet arrived at a formulation of his key idea. But attack against pacifism as expressed in his conversation with me is certain to permeate the entire Fourth International in the coming period. \*

## The Funeral of Trotsky

On August 22, funeral services were held for Trotsky in accordance with the Mexican custom. A cortege followed the casket slowly through the streets. An enormous crowd followed from the funeral parlors to the Pantheon, some eight miles. At funeral pace, the procession wound through one of the densely populated working class sections of Mexico. The streets were packed on both sides with the most humble people of this city which Trotsky had learned to love during the last years of his life. As the casket approached, covered with a red flag, they took off their hats and stood silently in tribute until it had passed.

At the Pantheon, three of Trotsky's friends spoke over the bier. Albert Goldman, who had defended Trotsky at the hearings of the John Dewey Commission, assured the people of Mexico, the only country which would grant him asylum,

that his remains would finally rest here. He spoke of the irretrievable loss Trotsky's death meant to the working class of the world.

Garcia Trevino, former leader of the CTM, one of the founders of *El Popular* and a well-known socialist, condemned Lombardo Toledano and his Stalinist cohorts as those directly responsible for the intellectual preparation of the murder of Trotsky. He called on the Mexican workers to purge their ranks of these perfidious and venal agents and friends of the GPU.

Grandizo Munis, one of the leaders of the Spanish section of the Fourth International, who fought in Spain and had been imprisoned there by the GPU, outlined the major events in Trotsky's life, particularly his struggle against the degeneration of the Russian Revolution in the person of Stalin. Grandizo ended his speech with the last words of Trotsky, translated into Spanish: "*Estoy seguro de la victoria de la Cuarta Internacional. Adelante!*"

From August 22 until August 27 Trotsky's body was kept at the funeral parlors pending an answer from the U. S. government on the request to take his remains to New York City for a funeral service. A guard of honor, composed of Mexican workers and members of Trotsky's household stood at attention twenty-four hours a day beside the casket. There was a constant flow of those who wished to pay their last respects to Trotsky. By August 27 an estimated 300,000 people had passed his casket. They were composed almost entirely of the poorest people, burdened with toil, many of them ragged, barefoot. They filed in silently, heads bowed.

From all over the world telegrams and letters expressing the deepest sorrow were sent to Coyoacan. All the sections of the Fourth International, where it was possible, sent messages of solidarity, vowing to carry on the struggle for the ideas of Trotsky.

President Lazaro Cardenas and Mrs. Cardenas visited Natalia and expressed their indignation at the crime and their deepest sympathy with Natalia. They assured her that they "understood very well where letters such as that found in the assassin's clothing were manufactured", and that she was "not to worry about it."

On August 26 the State Department of the United States government categorically refused to permit Trotsky's body to be taken to the United States for a funeral service. The decayed capitalist class, entering the final stage of the epoch of wars and revolutions from which socialism will emerge, does well to stand in holy terror of everything associated with Leon Trotsky!

\* \* \*

So died our comrade, friend, teacher. He saw the future as if he were already living in it, and like Marx, Engels and Lenin, directed all his titanic energy into arousing the working class towards taking the necessary road to that future society. Trotsky neither feared death nor believed in a god or an after-life. "All that is fit to live is fit to perish." He wished to be remembered by nothing but his revolutionary deeds and ideas, and these only so that they could be utilized in the liberating struggle of the working class. He was opposed to the mummifying of Lenin's body, and expressed the desire to Natalia that when he died his remains should be cremated. Let the fire consume everything that decays! On August 27 this wish of his was carried out. Many of his friends on that day no doubt thought of one of Trotsky's favorite quotations:

"Not to laugh; not to weep;  
But to understand."

\* The unfinished article referred to is published in this issue.

# Trotsky's Last Letters

## On Japan's Plans for Expansion

May 1, 1940

My dear Chris,

Do you know what the Tanaka Memorial is? I call your attention to this very important and very much discussed document. It was published in the United States for the first time, I think, at the end of 1923 or during 1924, hardly any later. In what paper? I imagine in one of secondary importance because the most important publications were afraid of the diplomatic importance of the document, especially for the relations between the United States and Japan and they inclined to the version that the document was a forgery. This was not true, the document was not a forgery, it is completely authentic in spite of all the Japanese denials.

Rear Admiral Taussig made an allegation about it before the Senate Committee on April 22, but the *New York Times* reminded its readers that the "so-called" Tanaka Memorial is, according to the Japanese, a forgery.

I will now prove in the big press that the document whose origins I know very well is authentic. But to help my memory and my personal archives I need an investigation of the fate of the document in the American press: the date and the place of the first appearance; the reaction provoked by the document in the press and public opinion; the discussions about its authenticity, etc. I would even need the English text of the document itself.

Can you spend time for such an investigation which would, in my opinion, be very useful to you, introducing you to Japanese-American relations and preparing you for the coming great events in the Pacific? If you agree, the best way would be to invite a typist for the copying of the document and the quotations. I would be glad to cover the necessary expenses.

With best greetings,  
Yours,

Coyoacan, D. F.

L. TROTSKY

## On A "Socialist" Ally of Chamberlain

*(The following letter is in reply to one from Miss Suzanne LaFollette, requesting an article for the American Mercury, the title to be "The Coming Peace." Miss LaFollette proposed that Trotsky's article appear beside one by H. N. Brailsford, British Laborite, entitled "Can Europe Federate?", which advocated something similar to the League of Nations but with "real power.")*

My dear Miss LaFollette,

May 14, 1940

I would be ready to move heaven and earth in order to grant your request, but I cannot. I am writing now a large document for the Fourth International on the war and I must finish it during the next week.

But I must also confess that I felt a horror at the idea of seeing my article published at the side of one by Mr. Brailsford. When I publish an article in *Life* or in *Liberty* it's the same as when I use the tramway: I am not interested in knowing who are the other passengers because nobody can identify me with them. An "opinion" magazine is quite another thing. Mr. Brailsford considers himself a left author, a kind of socialist and so on. But in my eyes he is only a petty bourgeois reactionary shadow of the conservative Mr. Chamberlain. Politically I prefer to deal with Chamberlain than with Brailsford. The idea itself, that I could have common ground with Mr. Brailsford is for me a thousand times less acceptable than

would be an occasional contribution to the Hearst press.

I appreciate too highly your moral personality, my dear friend, not to tell you the whole truth—"Hier stehe ich und ich kann nicht anders."

With my warmest greetings and wishes.

Cordially yours,  
LEON TROTSKY

Coyoacan, D. F.

\* \* \*

## Manifesto of the Fourth International

*(Trotsky had nearly completed the Manifesto of the Fourth International on "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution", when the May 24 machine-gun attack on his house occurred. The Manifesto was adopted by the Emergency Conference of the International and is available in pamphlet form. "Comrade Hank" arrived to supervise reorganization of the defenses of the household.)*

Dear Comrades.

May 28, 1940

You have now, I hope, the full text of the Manifesto in English. I was very sorry about the delay occasioned one time by a bad state of health, then by the length of the document and finally by the attempt. If you have already approved the document, as I hope (with some changes possibly), it is necessary in my opinion to undertake immediately a serious international action on the basis of the Manifesto. My general proposals are as follows:

1. Publish the Manifesto in English as a special issue of the *Socialist Appeal* or of the *Fourth International* in an enlarged edition.

2. Apart from the general channels of circulation I propose to send copies to all the labor publications, trade union offices, liberal and radical papers and magazines, etc. with a special letter which should in a very friendly manner invite the respective gentlemen and ladies to take a position toward the document in view of the importance of the matters treated therein. The letters should be signed by the General Secretary of the Party.

3. Simultaneously the document should be translated in New York into German, French and if possible into Spanish and published in foreign languages at least in the form of a bulletin because we cannot hope that it would be published in Europe during the next period.

4. The document should be seriously studied and discussed in Party branches.

\* \* \*

The length of the document is determined by the necessity to present again our whole program in connection with the war. The Party cannot preserve its tradition without periodical repetitions of the general ideas of our program.

\* \* \*

I hope to receive the text of the translation before its publication because secondary misunderstandings are inevitable in a text of such length.

With warmest greetings,  
L. TROTSKY

P. S. Comrade Hank came just in time. Not necessary to say how useful was his presence here this week.

\* \* \*

The resignation of Burnham is an excellent confirmation of our analysis and prognosis concerning the ex-Minority. We don't believe that it is the last separation.

L. T.

## On Conscription

July 9, 1940

Dear Comrade Al,

I believe that we agree with you on all the points of a principled character as they are formulated in your letter of July 6.

It is very important to understand that the war does not nullify or diminish the importance of our Transitional Program. Just the contrary is true. The Transitional Program is a bridge between the present situation and the proletarian revolution. War is a continuation of politics by other means. The characteristic of war is that it accelerates the development. It signifies that our transitional revolutionary slogans will become more and more actual, effective, important with every new month of the war. We have only of course to concretize and adapt them to the conditions. That is why in your first paragraph I would eliminate the word "to modify" because it can produce the impression that we must modify something of a principled character.

We are absolutely in favor of compulsory military training and in the same way for conscription. Conscription? Yes. By the bourgeois state? No. We cannot entrust this work, as any other, to the state of the exploiters. In our propaganda and agitation we must very strongly differentiate these two questions. That is, not to fight against the necessity of the workers being good soldiers and of building up an army based on discipline, science, strong bodies and so on, including conscription, but against the capitalist state which abuses the army for the advantage of the exploiting class. In your paragraph four you say: "Once conscription is made into law, we cease to struggle against it but continue our struggle for military training under workers' control, etc." I would prefer to say: "Once conscription is made into law we, without ceasing to struggle against the capitalist state, concentrate our struggle for military training and so on."

We can't oppose compulsory military training by the bourgeois state just as we can't oppose compulsory education by the bourgeois state. Military training in our eyes is a part of education. We must struggle against the bourgeois state; its abuses in this field as in others.

We must of course fight against the war not only "until the very last moment" but during the war itself when it begins. We must however give to our fight against the war its fully revolutionary sense, opposing and pitilessly denouncing pacifism. The very simple and very great idea of our fight against the war is: we are against the war but we will have the war if we are incapable of overthrowing the capitalists.

I don't see any reason why we should renounce the slogan of a people's referendum on the war. It is a very good slogan to unmask the futility of *their* democracy in such a vital question as the war.

I don't believe that the demand for workers' defense guards will be eliminated by the demand for universal military training. The approach of the war and the war itself with the rise of chauvinistic moods will inevitably provoke pogroms against the trade unions, revolutionary organizations and papers. We can't give up defending ourselves. Universal training can only facilitate for us the creation of workers' defense guards.

"Government ownership... of all war industries" should be replaced by "national" or by "state ownership."

Such are the remarks I can make in relation to your letter.

Fraternally  
L. TROTSKY

## Misfortune of an Intellectual

July 29, 1940

Dear Al:

Thank you for your letter of July 4th enclosing letter of Comrade X. My delay in answering has been caused by the judicial investigation which has taken up all of my time.

What you write about J. confirms my apprehensions that he may be completely lost for the movement. His misfortune is that he never belonged to the mass movement. He never learned the workers' organization from the inside. He shares this misfortune with many others, only in a sharper form. His reasonings about the methods of organizing workers, etc. are purely speculative and without any basis or content.

During the last few months we were visited by our friends in Minneapolis. What a difference! These people are active, optimistic, sure of themselves and thoroughly revolutionary.

On the other hand, we were also visited by a group of seven minorityites. They have all the characteristics of the Russian Mensheviks at the beginning of the history of the party. Three of them, who seemed to us at first glance more stable, more firm, more serious, are abandoning the so-called Workers Party.

With best greetings.

TROTSKY

• • •

## Nipping A New GPU Lie

August 2, 1940

Dear Friend Charles:

It seems that the Stalinists here are making a new desperate attempt to transform David Siqueiros into my agent.

David Serrano, a member of the Politburo (of the Mexican Communist Party) and one of the prisoners in connection with the (May 24) assault, made a deposition that Diego Rivera and I have given money to David Siqueiros for his paper.

This new construction surely comes from the GPU through the defender of David Serrano, a certain Pavon Flores, a miserable person who is capable of any villany. They will again represent my break with Diego Rivera as fictitious.

In view of the fact that you played a very important role during the period immediately preceding and following the break, it would be a good thing for you to send me an affidavit on this matter. It is not necessary to present a large exposition of various incidents; one or two pages would be sufficient. In view of the fact that the agents of the GPU repeat that I intervened in the presidential campaign, it is necessary not to forget that one of the most important points in my disagreement with Diego Rivera was his adventurous intervention in the presidential campaign.

I would be glad to have your affidavit as early as possible.

Also please give me some information about the situation in general and in the party.

In all friendship, I am,

Sincerely,  
L. TROTSKY

• • •

## To Generous Friends

August 3, 1940

Dear Mr. —:

My old friends, during their visit here and later in their letters, have communicated to me that your friendship is indefatigable. This fact is one hundred times more precious now,

when the chauvinistic epidemic created by the war dominates even honest liberal friends and removes them from us—who are incorrigible revolutionaries.

Thanks to the efforts of the North American friends, our peaceful suburban house is now being transformed, week by week, into a fortress—and at the same time into a prison. Not in the modern manner, it is true, but rather like a prison in medieval times. My young friends, who have the difficult and risky job of being guards are hopeful that, thanks to the reconstruction now under way, the assailants will not escape a second time as easily as they did the first.

My wife, Natalya, and I send you our warmest greetings and hope—in case your plans make it necessary or possible for you to come to Mexico—that we will have the pleasure of meeting you, and of showing you our “fortress”.

With cordial greetings and thanks, I am,

Sincerely yours,  
L. TROTSKY

August 3, 1940.

Dear Mr. Kay:

The only thing I know about you, through my friends Jim Cannon and Farrell Dobbs, is that you are a very sure and generous friend. There are not many such friends in these times of war fury; of nationalistic tendencies and red-baiting.

We live here, my family and my young friends, under the permanent threat of a new “blitzkrieg” assault on the part of the Stalinists and, as in the case of England, the material aid comes from the States.

During the past two months the house has been undergoing transformation into a kind of “fortress”; in a few more weeks we will be very well protected against new “blitzkrieg” assaults.

Please be assured of my friendliest thanks and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,  
L. TROTSKY

\* \* \*

## On A Petty Bourgeois Philistine

August 9, 1940

Albert Goldman

Dear Friend:

I don't know whether you have seen Dwight Macdonald's article in the August issue of his *Partisan Review*.

This man was a disciple of Burnham, the intellectual snob. After Burnham deserted, Dwight Macdonald was left in Shachtman's party as the lone representative of “Science”.

On the question of fascism, Macdonald serves up a poor compilation of plagiarisms from our arsenal which he represents as his own discoveries and to which he opposes some banalities that he characterizes as our ideas. The whole—without perspective, without proportion and without elementary intellectual honesty.

However, this is not the worst. Burnham's orphan proclaims: “We must examine again with a cold and sceptical eye, the most basic premises of Marxism” (Page 266). And what must the poor “Workers Party” do during this period of examination? What must the proletariat do? They should wait of course, for the result of Dwight Macdonald's study. This result will probably be Macdonald's desertion himself into the camp of Burnham.

The last four lines of the article can be nothing but preparation for personal desertion. “Only if we meet the stormy and terrible years ahead with both scepticism and devotion—

scepticism towards all theories, governments and social systems; devotion to the revolutionary fight of the masses—only then can we justify ourselves as intellectuals.”

Revolutionary activity based upon theoretical scepticism is the most awkward of inner contradictions. “Devotion to the revolutionary fight of the masses” is impossible without theoretical understanding of the laws of this revolutionary fight. Revolutionary devotion is possible only if one gains the assurance that his devotion is reasonable, adequate; that it corresponds to its aim. Such assurance can be created only by theoretical insight into the class struggle. “Scepticism towards all theories” is nothing but preparation for personal desertion.

Shachtman remains silent; as “General Secretary” he is too busy to defend the “most basic premises of Marxism” from petty bourgeois philistines and snobs . . .

Fraternally yours,  
L. TROTSKY

\* \* \*

## How to Defend Ourselves

(In a Dies Committee raid on some student rooms in Austin, Texas, large quantities of Trotskyist literature were seized. There were headlines in the Texas press about it and the sensationalist stories attempted to link Trotsky to the case. The following letter suggests the course to be taken by the defense.)

August 12, 1940

Dear Friend:

The Texas story is very important. The attitude of the people involved can become decisive from the legal point of view.

We, of course, cannot imitate the Stalinists who proclaim their absolute devotion to the bourgeois democracy. However, we do not wish to furnish any pretext for persecutions.

In this case, as in any others, we should speak the truth as it is; namely, the best, the most economical and favorable method for the masses would be to achieve the transformation of this society by democratic means. The democracy is also necessary for the organization and education of the masses. That is why we are always ready to defend the democratic rights of the people by our own means. However, we know on the basis of tremendous historical experience that the 60 Families will never permit the democratic realization of socialist principles. At a given moment the 60 Families will inevitably overthrow, or try to overthrow, the democratic institutions and replace them by a reactionary dictatorship. This is what happened in Italy, in Germany and in the last days in France—not to mention the lesser countries. We say in advance that we are ready to reject such an attempt with arms in hands, and crush the fascist dictatorship by a proletarian dictatorship.

This position corresponds to the historical reality and is juridically unattackable.

Fraternally,  
L. TROTSKY

\* \* \*

## How to Really Defend Democracy

(The theme of the following letter is the same as that of the article upon which Trotsky was working when he was assassinated; the article appears in this issue.)

August 13, 1940

Dear Friends:

We should, in my opinion, fortify and deepen our cam-

paign against the pacifist tendencies, prejudices and falsehoods.

The liberals and democrats say: "We must help the democracies by all means except direct military intervention in Europe." Why this stupid and hypocritical limitation? If democracy is to be defended, we should defend it also on European soil; the more so as this is the best way to defend democracy in America. To help England—to crush Hitler—by all means including military intervention, would signify the best way to defend "American democracy". The purely geographical limitation has neither political nor military sense.

That which we workers find worth defending, we are ready to defend by military means—in Europe as well as in the United States. It is the only possibility we have of assuring the defense of civil liberties and other good things in America.

But we categorically refuse to defend civil liberties and democracy in the French manner; the workers and farmers to give their flesh and blood while the capitalists concentrate in their hands the command. The Petain experiment should now form the center of our war propaganda. It is important, of course, to explain to the advanced workers that the genuine fight against fascism is the socialist revolution. But it is more urgent, more imperative, to explain to the millions of American workers that the defense of their "democracy" cannot be delivered over to an American Marshal Petain—and there are many candidates for such a role.

Carl O'Shea's article in the Socialist Appeal of August 10th is very good. We can, in this manner, develop a very effective campaign against William Green as well as against John L. Lewis, who flatly reject conscription in favor of a voluntary slave army.

The Institute of Public Opinion established that over 70% of the workers are in favor of conscription. It is a fact of tremendous importance! Workers take every question seriously. If the Fatherland should be defended, then the defense cannot be abandoned to the arbitrary will of individuals. It should be a common attitude. This realistic conception shows how right we were in rejecting beforehand purely negative pacifist or semi-pacifist attitudes. We place ourselves on the same ground as the 70% of the workers; against Green and Lewis, and on this premise we begin to develop a campaign in order to oppose the workers to their exploiters in the military field. You, workers, wish to defend and improve democracy. We, of the Fourth International, wish to go further. However, we are ready to defend democracy with you, only on condition that it should be a real defense, and not a betrayal in the Petain manner.

On this road I am sure we can make some progress.

Fraternally,

L. TROTSKY

\* \* \*

## A Letter to C. Charles

August 16, 1940

Dear Friend Charles:

Everything has been received. I will use your testimony only in case of real necessity, but in such a case it would be extremely helpful.

The bullet-proof vest has been piously admired by everyone. We have not yet decided upon what occasion we will wear it. In any case it can be used on trips. On the other hand I doubt if it would be comfortable enough as a protection during sleep.

The siren provoked even more admiration. It is wonderful enough just in appearance. We have not yet tried it out because we do not wish to provoke some supplementary "zafaranchos" (clearing for action); for we are told that this siren can be heard from here to Los Angeles. I, personally, consider this an exaggeration.

We had a talk with comrade T, and his sister, both of whom produced a good impression. We will have some more talks with them.

More than two and a half months of my time has been almost exclusively devoted to the investigation (of the May 24 assault). Tomorrow I shall present to the Judge a very large memorandum about the Mexican Stalinists, the GPU and the financial aid to the Moscow agents, with affidavits from Ben Gitlow, Joseph Zack, Walter Krivitsky and Albert Goldman. I hope this memorandum will not fail to have its effect. And now I hope to be able to go back to my book.

Our warmest thanks for the exceptional gifts and our fraternal greetings.

L. TROTSKY

\* \* \*

## On Dewey's Philosophy

August 16, 1940

Dear Gerland:

I completely agree with your idea about the necessity of giving a Marxist criticism of Dewey's philosophy and I believe it is your direct duty to do this job.

With best wishes and warmest greetings,

L. TROTSKY

\* \* \*

## Another Thought on Conscription

August 17, 1940

Dear Chris:

Thank you very much for the Tanaka material. It has arrived in plenty of time, because for the past two and a half months I have been busy almost exclusively with the investigation of the assault.

I very much enjoyed your appreciation of the anti-pacifist position accepted by the party. There are two great advantages to this position: first, it is revolutionary in its essence and based upon the whole character of our epoch, when all questions will be decided not only by arms of critics, but by critiques of arms; second, it is completely free of sectarianism. We do not oppose to events and to the feelings of the masses an abstract affirmation of our sanctity.

The poor "Labor Action" of August 12th writes: "In his fight against conscription we are with Lewis 100%." We are not with Lewis for even a single percent, because Lewis tries to defend the Capitalist Fatherland with completely outdated means. The great majority of the workers understand or feel that these means (professional voluntary armament) are outdated from a military point of view and extremely dangerous from a class point of view. That is why the workers are for conscription. It is a very confused and contradictory form of adhering to the "arming of the proletariat." We do not flatly reject this great historical change, as do the sectarians of all kinds. We say "Conscription? Yes. But made by ourselves." It is an excellent point of departure.

With best greetings, I am,

Fraternally,  
(Signed) YOUR OLD MAN

## Welcome to "Our Small Garrison"

(*R. was to have gone to Mexico to help train the guards.*)

August 18, 1940

Dear Comrade R.:

During the last two years there has been more than one discussion about your coming here. Next to the last time we waited for you when your daughter and her husband visited us. The last time it was when Jim Cannon and Farrell Dobbs and Joe Hansen came here to check the situation after the assault.

Now we hear that the matter is being discussed again. Of course the decision is completely up to the party and you, since you should know better there on the ground if your trip would be detrimental to the party and trade union work. I can only express the wish from our local and very "provincial" point of view that your visit announced so many times should really be carried out. I am sure that your visit even for a couple of weeks would be of high value for our small garrison not to mention the pleasure of meeting you.

You will of course find a room and a plate in our home.

With best comradesly greetings,

L. TROTSKY

\* \* \*

## His Last Three Letters, Written On the Day He Was Struck Down

August 20, 1940

My dear Hank:

Please do not think that we have forgotten you, because we have not yet sent the photographs. Everything is slower here, as you know from your own experience in the reconstruction of the house.

From Joe's letters you probably know that we have made some progress during the past weeks, but we are still far from the end.

How are your feet, and your health in general? I hope that the soil of the fatherland is more favorable to your general status. And how are your wife and daughter?

I received an excellent gift from Grace—a dictionary of slang. There is only one difficulty—that at meal-times I must

permanently keep this book in my hands in order to be able to understand the conversation. However, I shall try to study it between meals in order to better check the "academic" part of the household. In the part I have already studied, which is devoted to college slang, I had hoped to find some abbreviations for the various sciences, philosophical theories, etc., but instead I found merely about 25 expressions for an attractive girl. Nothing at all about dialectics or materialism. I see that the official "Science" is a bit unilateral.

The *Northwest Organizer* becomes more precise—more aggressive—more political. We enjoyed it very much.

With friendliest and warmest greetings from household to household, I am,

Fraternally yours,  
L. TROTSKY

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(*These two letters Trotsky wrote to two class war prisoners, who were to be released in a few days after having served prison terms for their activity in a strike.*)

August 20, 1940

Dear Comrade Edward:

Jake Cooper tells me that you will be released from your provisional asylum on August 23rd.

It is always preferable to leave than to enter such a place.

My warmest congratulations and wishes.

Fraternally yours,  
L. TROTSKY

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August 20, 1940

Dear Comrade Max:

I learned from my friend, Jake Cooper that on August 23rd you will be released from jail.

From my own personal experience I know that such a day is very agreeable.

I wish you all the best and especially—not to be hasty in visiting the same place...

Fraternally yours,  
L. TROTSKY

## His Last Article

*Comrade Trotsky never saw this article in written form. He had dictated it into his dictaphone, as was his custom, part of it merely as notations for later elaboration. Further sections would come later, and the whole would be considerably revised, some paragraphs cut out altogether, others placed at other points in the manuscript, and so on. For, contrary to popular myth and despite his enormous production, Trotsky did not write easily. What follows is, therefore, a literal translation of the transcription made by his Russian stenographer*

*from the records dictated by Trotsky. Despite its unfinished form, however, this article belongs among Trotsky's most important contributions. More precisely and sharply than elsewhere, he established here the historical law that fascism is successful only after the radicalization of the masses and after the proletarian vanguard has failed to lead the radicalized masses to the conquest of power. The profound importance of this concept, particularly for the workers of the United States, will be clear to every serious reader.—EDITORS.*

In his very pretentious, very muddled and stupid article \* Dwight Macdonald tries to represent us as holding the view that fascism is simply a repetition of Bonapartism. A greater piece of nonsense would be hard to invent. We have analyzed

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\*National Defense: The Case for Socialism, *Partisan Review*, July-August, 1940.

fascism as it developed, throughout the various stages of its development and advanced to the forefront now one now another of its aspects. There is an element of Bonapartism in fascism. Without this element, namely, without the raising of state power above society owing to an extreme sharpening of the class struggle, fascism would have been impossible. But we pointed out from the very beginning that it was primarily



a question of Bonapartism of the epoch of imperialist decline which is qualitatively different from Bonapartism of the epoch of bourgeois rise. At the next stage we separated out pure Bonapartism as the prologue to a fascist regime. Because in the case of pure Bonapartism the rule of a monarch is approximated and . . . .

in Italy . . .

In post-war Italy the situation was profoundly revolutionary. The proletariat had every opportunity. . . .

the Ministries of Bruening, Schleicher and the Presidency of Hindenburg in Germany, Petain's Government in France, but they all have proved, or must prove, unstable. In the epoch of imperialist decline a pure Bonapartist Bonapartism is completely inadequate; imperialism finds it indispensable to mobilize the petty bourgeoisie and to crush the proletariat under its weight. Imperialism is capable of fulfilling this task only in case the proletariat itself reveals its inability to conquer power, while the social crisis drives the petty bourgeoisie into a condition of paroxysm.

The sharpness of the social crisis arises from this, that with today's concentration of the means of production, i.e., the monopoly of trusts, the law of value—the market is already incapable of regulating economic relations. State intervention becomes an absolute necessity. Inasmuch as the proletariat . . .

The present war, as we have stated on more than one occasion, is a continuation of the last war. But a continuation does not signify a repetition. As a general rule, a continuation signifies a development, a deepening, a sharpening. Our policy, the policy of the revolutionary proletariat toward the second imperialist war is a continuation of the policy elaborated during the last imperialist war, primarily under Lenin's leadership. But a continuation does not signify a repetition. In this case too, continuation signifies a development, a deepening and a sharpening.

## We Were Caught Unawares in 1914

During the last war not only the proletariat as a whole but also its vanguard and, in a certain sense, the vanguard of this vanguard was caught unawares. The elaboration of the principles of revolutionary policy toward the war began at a time when the war was already in full blaze and the military machine exercised unlimited rule. One year after the outbreak of the war, the small revolutionary minority was still compelled to accommodate itself to a centrist majority at the Zimmerwald Conference. Prior to the February revolution and even afterwards the revolutionary elements felt themselves to be not contenders for power but the extreme left opposition. Even Lenin relegated the socialist revolution to a more or less distant future. (In 1915 or 1916) he wrote in Switzerland: (quotation)\* If that is how Lenin viewed the situation, then there is hardly any need of talking about the others.

\* Several citations from Lenin during that period fit Trotsky's description. We quote two:

"It is possible, however, that five, ten and even more years will pass before the beginning of the socialist revolution." (From an article written in March, 1916, Lenin's Collected Works, vol. XIX, p. 45, Third Russian Edition.)

"We, the older men, will perhaps not live long enough to see the decisive battles of the impending revolution." (Report on 1905 Revolution delivered to Swiss students, January, 1917, idem, page 357.)

This political position of the extreme left wing expressed itself most graphically on the question of the defense of the fatherland.

In 1915 Lenin referred in his writings to revolutionary wars which the victorious proletariat would have to wage. But it was a question of an indefinite historical perspective and not of tomorrow's task. The attention of the revolutionary wing was centered on the question of the defense of the capitalist fatherland. The revolutionists naturally replied to this question in the negative. This was entirely correct. But this purely negative answer served as the basis for propaganda and for training the cadres but it could not win the masses who did not want a foreign conquerer. In Russia prior to the war the Bolsheviks constituted four-fifths of the proletarian vanguard, that is, of the workers participating in political life (newspapers, elections, etc.). Following the February revolution the unlimited rule passed into the hands of defensists, the Mensheviks and the S. R.'s. True enough, the Bolsheviks in the space of eight months conquered the overwhelming majority of the workers. But the decisive role in this conquest was played not by the refusal to defend the bourgeois fatherland but by the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets!" And only by this revolutionary slogan! The criticism of imperialism, its militarism, the renunciation of the defense of bourgeois democracy and so on could have never conquered the overwhelming majority of the people to the side of the Bolsheviks. In all other belligerent countries, with the exception of Russia the revolutionary wing toward the end of the war all . . .

In so far as the proletariat proves incapable at a given stage of conquering power, imperialism begins regulating economic life with its own methods; the fascist party which becomes the state power is the political mechanism. The productive forces are in irreconcilable contradiction not only with private property but also with national state boundaries. Imperialism is the very expression of this contradiction. Imperialist capitalism seeks to solve this contradiction through an extension of boundaries, seizure of new territories, and so on. The totalitarian state, subjecting all aspects of economic, political and cultural life to finance capital, is the instrument for creating a super-nationalist state, an imperialist empire, the rule over continents, the rule over the whole world.

All these traits of fascism we have analyzed each one by itself and all of them in their totality to the extent that they became manifest or came to the forefront.

## The Point at Which Fascism Succeeds

Both theoretical analysis as well as the rich historical experience of the last quarter of a century have demonstrated with equal force that fascism is each time the final link of a specific political cycle composed of the following: the gravest crisis of capitalist society; the growth of the radicalization of the working class; the growth of sympathy toward the working class and a yearning for change on the part of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie; the extreme confusion of the big bourgeoisie; its cowardly and treacherous maneuvers aimed at avoiding the revolutionary climax; the exhaustion of the proletariat, growing confusion and indifference; the aggravation of the social crisis; the despair of the petty bourgeoisie, its yearning for change, the collective neurosis of the petty bourgeoisie, its readiness to believe in miracles; its readiness for violent measures; the growth of hostility towards the

proletariat which has deceived its expectations. These are the premises for a swift formation of a fascist party and its victory.

It is quite self-evident that the radicalization of the working class in the United States has passed only through its initial phases, almost exclusively in the sphere of the trade union movement (the CIO). The pre-war period, and then the war itself may temporarily interrupt this process of radicalization, especially if a considerable number of workers are absorbed into war industry. But this interruption of the process of radicalization cannot be of a long duration. The second stage of radicalization will assume a more sharply expressive character. The problem of forming an independent labor party will be put on the order of the day. Our transitional demands will gain great popularity. On the other hand, the fascist, reactionary tendencies will withdraw to the background, assuming a defensive position, awaiting a more favorable moment. This is the nearest perspective. No occupation is more completely unworthy than that of speculating whether or no we shall succeed in creating a powerful revolutionary leadership. Ahead lies a favorable perspective, providing all the justification for revolutionary activism. It is necessary to utilize the opportunities which are opening up and to build the revolutionary party.

### Problem of Power Posed to the Workers

The second world war poses the question of change of regimes more imperiously, more urgently than did the first war. It is first and foremost a question of the political regime. The workers are aware that democracy is suffering shipwreck everywhere, and that they are threatened by fascism even in those countries where fascism is as yet non-existent. The bourgeoisie of the democratic countries will naturally utilize this dread of fascism on the part of the workers, but, on the other hand, the bankruptcy of democracies, their collapse, their painless transformation into reactionary dictatorships compel the workers to pose before themselves the problem of power, render them responsive to the posing of the problem of power.

Reaction wields today such power as perhaps never before in the modern history of mankind. But it would be an inexcusable blunder to see only reaction. The historical process is a contradictory one. Under the cover of official reaction profound processes are taking place among the masses who are accumulating experience and are becoming receptive to new political perspectives. The old conservative tradition of the democratic state which was so powerful even during the era of the last imperialist war exists today only as an extremely unstable survival. On the eve of the last war the European workers had numerically powerful parties. But on the order of the day were put reforms, partial conquests, and not at all the conquest of power.

The American working class is still without a mass labor party even today. But the objective situation and the experience accumulated by the American workers can pose within a very brief period of time on the order of the day the question of the conquest of power. This perspective must be made the basis of our agitation. It is not merely a question of a position on capitalist militarism and of renouncing the defense of the bourgeois state but of directly preparing for the conquest of power and the defense of the proletarian fatherland.

May not the Stalinists turn out at the head of a new revolutionary upsurge and may they not ruin the revolution as they did in Spain and previously in China? It is of course impermissible to consider that such a possibility is excluded, for

example in France. The first wave of the revolution has often, or more correctly, always carried to the top those "left" parties which have not managed to discredit themselves completely in the preceding period and which have an imposing political tradition behind them. Thus the February revolution raised up the Mensheviks, the S. R.'s who were the opponents of the revolution on its very eve. Thus the German revolution in November, 1918, raised to power the social democrats who were the irreconcilable opponents of revolutionary uprisings.

Twelve years ago Trotsky wrote in an article published by "The New Republic":

"There is no epoch in human history so saturated with antagonisms as ours. Under a too high tension of class and international animosities, the 'fuses' of democracy 'blow out'. Hence the short-circuits of dictatorship. Naturally the weakest 'interrupters' are the first to give way. But the force of internal and world controversies does not weaken: it grows. It is doubtful if it is destined to calm down, given that the process has so far only taken hold of the periphery of the capitalist world. Gout begins in the little finger of a hand or in the big toe, but once on the way it goes right to the heart." ("The New Republic," May 22, 1929)

### The American Philistine Protests

This was written at a time when the entire bourgeois democracy in each country believed that fascism was possible only in the backward countries which had not yet graduated from the school of democracy. The editorial board of "The New Republic", which at that period had not yet been touched with the blessings of the GPU, accompanied Trotsky's article with one of its own. The article is so characteristic of the average American philistine that we shall quote from it the most interesting passages.

"In view of his personal misfortunes, the exiled Russian leader shows a remarkable power of detached analysis; but his detachment is that of the rigid Marxian, and seems to us to lack a realistic view of history—the very thing on which he prides himself. His notion that democracy is a fair-weather form of government, incapable of withstanding the storms of international or domestic controversy, can be supported (as he himself half admits) only by taking for your examples countries where democracy has never made more than the feeblest beginnings, and countries, moreover, in which the industrial revolution has hardly more than started."

Further on, the editorial board of "The New Republic" dismisses the instance of Kerensky's democracy in Soviet Russia and why it failed to withstand the test of class contradictions and yielded place to a revolutionary perspective. The periodical sagely writes:

"Kerensky's weakness was an historic accident, which Trotsky cannot admit because there is no room in his mechanistic scheme for any such thing."

Just like Dwight Macdonald, "The New Republic" accused the Marxists of being unable to understand history realistically owing to their orthodox or mechanistic approach to political events. "The New Republic" was of the opinion that fascism is the product of the backwardness of capitalism and not its over-ripeness. In the opinion of that periodical which, I repeat, was the opinion of the overwhelming majority of average democratic philistines, fascism is the lot of backward bourgeois countries. The sage editorial board did not even take the trouble of thinking about the question of why it was the universal conviction in the Nineteenth Century

that backward countries must develop along the road of democracy. In any case, in the old capitalist countries democracy came into its rights at a time when the level of their economic development was not above but below the economic development of modern Italy. And what is more, in that era democracy represented the main highway of historical development which was entered by all countries one by one, the backward ones following the more advanced and sometimes, ahead of them. Our era on the contrary is the era of democracy's collapse, and moreover, the collapse begins with the weaker links but gradually extends to those which appeared strong and impregnable. Thus the orthodox or mechanistic, that is, the Marxist approach to events enabled us to forecast the course of developments many years in advance. On the contrary, the realistic approach of "The New Republic" represented the approach of a blind kitten. "The New Republic" followed up its critical attitude toward Marxism by falling under the influence of the most revolting caricature of Marxism, namely, Stalinism.

### The Newest Crop of Philistines

Most of the philistines of the newest crop base their attacks on Marxism on the fact that contrary to Marx's prognosis fascism came instead of socialism. Nothing is more stupid and vulgar than this criticism. Marx demonstrated and proved that when capitalism reaches a certain level the only way out for society lies in the socialization of the means of production, i.e., socialism. He also demonstrated that in view of the class structure of society the proletariat alone is capable of solving this task in an irreconcilable revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. He further demonstrated that for the fulfillment of this task the proletariat needs a revolutionary party. All his life Marx, and together with him and after him Engels, and after them Lenin, waged an irreconcilable struggle against those traits in proletarian parties, socialist parties which obstructed the solution of the revolutionary historical task. The irreconcilability of the struggle waged by Marx, Engels, and Lenin against opportunism, on the one side, and anarchism, on the other, demonstrates that they did not at all underestimate this danger. In what did it consist? In this, that the opportunism of the summits of the working class, subject to the bourgeoisie's influence, could obstruct, slow down, make more difficult, postpone the fulfillment of the revolutionary task of the proletariat. It is precisely this condition of society that we are now observing. Fascism did not at all come "instead" of socialism. Fascism is the continuation of capitalism, an attempt to perpetuate its existence by means of the most bestial and monstrous measures. Capitalism obtained an opportunity to resort to fascism only because the proletariat did not accomplish the socialist revolution in time. The proletariat was paralyzed in the fulfillment of its task by the opportunist parties. The only thing that can be said is that there turned out to be more obstacles, more difficulties, more stages on the road of the revolutionary development of the proletariat than was foreseen by the founders of scientific socialism. Fascism and the series of imperialist wars constitute the terrible school in which the proletariat has to free itself of petty bourgeois traditions and superstitions, has to rid itself of opportunist, democratic and adventurist parties, has to hammer out and train the revolutionary vanguard and in this way prepare for the solving of the task apart from which there is not and cannot be any salvation for the development of mankind.

Eastman, if you please, has come to the conclusion that the concentration of the means of production in the hands of

the state endangers his "freedom" and he has therefore decided to renounce socialism. This anecdote deserves being included in the text of a history of ideology. The socialization of the means of production is the only solution to the economic problem at the given stage of mankind's development. The delay in solving this problem leads to the barbarism of fascism. All the intermediate solutions undertaken by the bourgeoisie with the help of the petty bourgeoisie have suffered a miserable and shameful fiasco. All this is absolutely uninteresting to Eastman. He noticed that his "freedom" (freedom of muddling, freedom of indifferentism, freedom of passivity, freedom of literary dilettantism) was being threatened from various sides, and he decided immediately to apply his own measure: renounce socialism. Astonishingly enough this decision exercised no influence either on Wall Street or on the policy of the trade unions. Life went its own way just as if Max Eastman had remained a socialist. It may be set down as a general rule that the more impotent is a petty bourgeois radical especially in the United States the more...

### Fascism Has Not Conquered in France

In France there is no fascism in the real sense of the term. The regime of the senile Marshal Petain represents a senile form of Bonapartism of the epoch of imperialist decline. But this regime too proved possible only after the prolonged radicalization of the French working class, which led to the explosion of June, 1936, had failed to find a revolutionary way out. The Second and Third Internationals, the reactionary charlatanism of the "People's Fronts" deceived and demoralized the working class. After five years of propaganda in favor of an alliance of democracies and of collective security, after Stalin's sudden passage into Hitler's camp, the French working class proved caught unawares. The war provoked a terrible disorientation and the mood of passive defeatism, or to put it more correctly, the indifferentism of an impasse. From this web of circumstances arose first the unprecedented military catastrophe and then the despicable Petain regime.

Precisely because Petain's regime is senile Bonapartism, it contains no element of stability and can be overthrown by a revolutionary mass uprising much sooner than a fascist regime.

### Especially Important to U. S. Workers

In every discussion of political topics the question invariably flares up: Shall we succeed in creating a strong party for the moment when the crisis comes? might not fascism anticipate us? isn't a fascist stage of development inevitable? The successes of fascism easily make people lose all perspective, lead them to forget the actual conditions which made the strengthening and the victory of fascism possible. Yet a clear understanding of these conditions is of especial importance to the workers of the United States. We may set it down as an historical law: Fascism was able to conquer only in those countries where the conservative labor parties prevented the proletariat from utilizing the revolutionary situation and seizing power. In Germany two revolutionary situations were involved: 1918-1919 and 1923-24. Even in 1929 a direct struggle for power on the part of the proletariat was still possible. In all these three cases the social democracy and the Comintern criminally and viciously disrupted the conquest of power and thereby placed society in an impasse. Only under these conditions and in this situation did the stormy rise of Fascism and its gaining of power prove possible.

# Some Questions on American Problems

By LEON TROTSKY

QUESTION 1: *What should be the role of a draftable revolutionist in the United States now?*

- (a) *Should he try to avoid the draft?*
- (b) *To what extent should the party try to conserve its cadres?*
- (c) *Should the party concentrate most of its strength in the military or industrial sections of the country?*
- (d) *What are the alternative roles of a woman revolutionist in this war?*

TROTSKY: If he is draftable, then let him be drafted. I don't think he should try to avoid the draft—he must go with his generation and participate in its life. Should the party try to conserve its cadres by saving them from the army? This means conserving them in a very bad sense. When the best part of the population is mobilized, then our cadres must be among them.

Should the party concentrate most of its strength in the military or industrial organizations? This depends upon the size of the militarization and mobilization. If the greater part of the population is militarized then the greater part of our party would also be in the army.

About the women—inasmuch as the women will replace men in many branches of industry and social work, our comrades will also play the role of their generation.

We should understand that the life of this society, politics, everything, will be based upon war, therefore the revolutionary program must also be based on war. We cannot oppose the fact of the war with wishful thinking; with pious pacifism. We must place ourselves upon the arena created by this society. The arena is terrible—it is war—but inasmuch as we are weak and incapable of taking the fate of society into our hands; inasmuch as the ruling class is strong enough to impose upon us this war, we are obliged to accept this basis for our activity.

## "Program For Peace" Is Not Serious

I read a short report of a discussion that Shachtman had with a professor in Michigan, and Shachtman formulated this idea: "Let us have a program for peace, not war; for the masses, not for murder," etc. What does this mean? If we do not have peace, we cannot have a program for peace. If we have war, we must have a program for war, and the bourgeoisie cannot help but organize the war. Neither Roosevelt nor Willkie are free to decide; they *must* prepare the war, and when they have prepared it they will conduct it. They will say they cannot do otherwise, because of the danger from Hitler, etc., of the danger from Japan, etc. There is only one way of avoiding the war—that is the overthrow of this society. However, as we are too weak for this task, the war is inevitable. The question then, for us, is not the same as in the bourgeois salon—"let us write an article on peace, etc.", which is suitable for publications like *The Nation*. Our people must consider it seriously; we must say: the war is inevitable, so let us have an organized workers' program for the war. The draft of the youth is a part of the war and becomes part of our program.

It is questionable whether the United States will send an expeditionary force at this time. I have the impression that they are not disposed to send an army to Europe or anywhere

else for a couple of years, because you cannot create such an army over-night in a country where you do not have a military tradition, as, for instance, in Germany, where for centuries they have had a tradition of Prussian militarism.

Now the capitalists wish to create this tremendous army of millions, to create officers, to create a new military spirit, and they have begun with full success to change the public opinion of the nation toward militarism. At the time that Roosevelt made his campaign speech, there was an outburst of public opinion for isolationism, but now all this sentiment belongs to the past—to the childhood of the nation—in spite of the fact that it took place only a few months ago.

Now the national feeling is for a tremendous army, navy and air force. This is the psychological atmosphere for the creation of a military machine, and you will see it become stronger and stronger every day and every week. You will have military schools, etc., and a Prussianization of the United States will take place. The sons of the bourgeois families will become imbued with Prussian feelings and ideals, and their parents will be proud that their sons look like Prussian lieutenants. To some extent this will be also true of the workers.

## Separating the Workers from the Bosses

That is why we must try to separate the workers from the others by a program of education, of workers' schools, of workers' officers, devoted to the welfare of the worker army, etc. We cannot escape from the militarization but inside the machine we can observe the class line. The American workers do not want to be conquered by Hitler, and to those who say "Let us have a peace program", the worker will reply, "But Hitler does not want a peace program." Therefore *we* say: We will defend the United States with a workers' army, with workers' officers, with a workers' government, etc. If we are not pacifists, who wait for a better future, and if we are active revolutionists, our job is to penetrate into the whole military machine. Of course, out of this army, tomorrow they might select a corps to send to some battlefield, and no doubt this corps will be annihilated, but war is a risky business and we cannot invent any medicine against these risks.

Of course the party can make certain exceptions of those men who are necessary for a certain job, but this concerns only individual exceptions, and here we are discussing the rule. Furthermore, our comrades should be the best soldiers and the best officers and at the same time the best class militants. They should provoke in the workers a mistrust of the old tradition, the military plans of the bourgeois class and officers, and should insist upon the necessity of educating workers' officers, who will be absolutely loyal to the proletariat. In this epoch every great question, national or international, will be resolved with arms—not by peaceful means. It doesn't depend upon my will or your will, but is caused by the contradictions of the society which has put this problem before us, and from which we cannot escape. That is why it is the duty of every worker and revolutionist to learn how to manipulate arms skillfully.

About the losses in the trade unions, if we have a large mobilization, then the unions will immediately lose the best elements and only the older people will remain. These people are not as likely to be persistent. On the other hand, the younger generations for the first time in history will feel themselves armed—by the State itself! It is absolutely correct that

in the first period we will have an explosion of chauvinistic patriotism, and that we will be isolated even more than now, and that this period of activity will inevitably be limited by repressions, but we must adapt ourselves to the situation. That is why it would be doubly stupid to present a purely abstract pacifist position today; the feeling the masses have is that it is necessary to defend themselves. We must say: "Roosevelt (or Willkie) says it is necessary to defend the country; good! only it must be *our* country, not that of the 60 families and their Wall Street. The army must be under our own command; we must have our own officers, who will be loyal to us." In this way we can find an approach to the masses that will not push them away from us, and thus to prepare for the second step—a more revolutionary one.

### Profound Importance of French Events

We must use the example of France to the very end. We must say, "I warn you, workers, that they (the bourgeoisie) will betray you! Look at Petain, who is a friend of Hitler. Shall we have the same thing happen in this country? We must create our own machine, under workers' control." We must be careful not to identify ourselves with the chauvinists, nor with the confused sentiments of self-preservation, but we must understand their feelings and adapt ourselves to these feelings critically, and prepare the masses for a better understanding of the situation, otherwise we will remain a sect, of which the pacifist variety is the most miserable.

We must also say that the war has a tendency toward totalitarian dictatorship. War develops a centralization, and during war the bourgeois class cannot allow the workers any new concessions. The trade unions will therefore become a kind of Red Cross for the workers, a sort of philanthropic institution. The bosses themselves will be under control by the State, everything will be sacrificed to the army, and the trade union influence will become zero. And we must say of this now: "If you don't place yourselves on a workers' military basis, with workers' schools, workers' officers, etc., and go to war on the old style military basis, you will be doomed." And this, in its own way, will preserve the trade unions themselves.

Even if the United States sends armies abroad, to Europe or Asia, and the mortality rate will be expectedly high, we cannot make exceptions for our comrades, because on the other hand we cannot foresee the tempo of revolutionary development in Europe or Asia, and perhaps the American army will enter such a country during a revolutionary beginning. In that case even two or three of our men can play a tremendous role during such a period. They might try to use this American army against such a revolution, and in that case even one courageous man can turn the regiment into another direction. This cannot be foreseen—there are too many unknowns; but that is why we say we must all go with our class.

### We Cannot Stand Aside from Our Class!

I do not believe that a revolutionary can remain aside for the first critical period—say, a year or so—and then come with his stick and hat and say, "Now, comrades, we will begin the revolution!" Excuse me for making a caricature of this. But if he is in the army and tells the others about the dangers in the bourgeois institutions and advises them to create a workers' program for war, in spite of all the chauvinistic attacks upon him, and even if they turn him away, they will later say, "Remember, he told us so." And then he becomes an authority. This is repeated in every war, and not only in wars but in strikes and trade union movements. All they have to

remember is: "This man warned us and we rejected him." Then he becomes their leader, a hero.

If the leaders seek only to preserve themselves, that is what they become; preserves—dried preserves. If they enter the movement, they give the impulse to five, ten, twenty others. It is more important to multiply our cadres than to preserve them, and they can be multiplied by the hundreds. Our cadres need education and experience in mass movements, and how can they get this outside the life of the masses? No, it is not possible to jump out of your epoch. Moreover, we would have to make arrangements with the General Staff, and I am sure they would not agree with the idea of escape!

### The Coming Change in the American Workers

QUESTION 2: *How will the backwardness of the United States working class advance or retard the growth of fascism?*

(a) *What are the possibilities of the war time dictatorship becoming a full fledged fascist dictatorship?*

TROTSKY: The backwardness of the United States working class is only a relative term. In many very important respects it is the most progressive working class of the world; technically, and in its standard of living.

We can look forward now to a change in the economic situation of the United States—a very brusque change, and then when the war comes, to the misery which will follow. Even now, under the program of militarization, with millions upon millions thrown into the war machine, the rapid lowering of the standard of living for the working class will produce a very rapid change of mind in the American workers.

The American worker is very combative—as we have seen during the strikes. They have had the most rebellious strikes in the world. What the American worker misses is a spirit of generalization, or analysis, of his class position in society as a whole. This lack of social thinking has its origin in the country's whole history—the Far West with the perspective of unlimited possibilities for everyone to become rich, etc. Now all that is gone, but the mind remains in the past. Idealists think the human mentality is progressive, but in reality it is the most conservative element of society. Your technique is progressive but the mentality of the worker lags far behind. Their backwardness consists of their inability to generalize their problem; they consider everything on a personal basis.

Now, the war will teach the American workers social thinking. The economic crisis has already begun and in the C.I.O. we see the first reaction of the workers—confused but important. They begin to feel themselves as a class; they see 10 to 14 millions of unemployed, etc. Now the war will continue to teach them social thinking, and this means revolutionary thinking.

### Fascism Will Come Only If We Fail

About fascism. In all the countries where fascism became victorious, we had before the growth of fascism and its victory, a wave of radicalism of the masses; of the workers and the poorer peasants and farmers, and of the petty bourgeois class. In Italy, after the war and before 1922, we had a revolutionary wave of tremendous dimensions; the state was paralyzed, the police did not exist, the trade unions could do anything they wanted—but there was no party capable of taking the power. As a reaction came fascism.

In Germany the same. We had a revolutionary situation

in 1918; the bourgeois class did not even ask to participate in the power. The Social Democrats paralyzed the revolution. Then the workers tried again in 1922-23-24. This was the time of the bankruptcy of the Communist party—all of which we have gone into before. Then in 1929-30-31 the German workers began again a new revolutionary wave. There was a tremendous power in the Communists and in the trade unions, but then came the famous policy of Social Fascism, a policy invented to paralyze the working class. Only after these three tremendous waves, did fascism become a big movement. There are no exceptions to this rule—fascism comes only when the working class shows complete incapacity to take into its own hands the fate of society.

In the United States you will have the same thing. Already there are fascist elements, and they have of course the examples of Italy and Germany. They will therefore work in a more rapid tempo. But you also have the examples of other countries. The next historic waves in the United States will be waves of radicalism of the masses; not fascism. Of course the war can hinder the radicalization for some time but then it will give to the radicalization a more tremendous tempo and swing. The war cannot organically change developments but only retard them for some time—and then give them a push. War, as we have said before, is only the continuation of politics by other means. In this sense, I am sure you will have many possibilities to win the power in the United States before the fascists can become a dominant force.

We must not identify war dictatorship—the dictatorship of the military machine, of the staff, of finance capital—with fascist dictatorship. For the latter there is first necessary a feeling of desperation of large masses of the people. When the revolutionary parties betray them, when the vanguard of workers shows its incapacity to lead the people to victory—then the farmers, the small business men, the unemployed, the soldiers, etc. become capable of supporting a fascist movement, but only then.

A military dictatorship is purely a bureaucratic institution, reinforced by the military machine and based upon the disorientation of the people and their submission to it. After some time their feelings can change, and they can become rebellious against the military dictatorship.

Yes, the feeling against conscription in the United States could possibly become a point of departure for such a rebelliousness. Here is our opportunity to show the workers how the bourgeois class resolves its problems, and we could say: "You see, they now want to impose upon you a Prussian militarism, with its lack of regard for workers' lives." We could demand, possibly, the election of officers—and this can become a very good slogan. "Officers elected by the soldiers themselves."

### American Economy During the War

QUESTION 3: *What are the possibilities of building a self-sustaining economy in the Western Hemisphere?*

TROTSKY: Not very good, especially during the war.

During the war we will have a deepening of self-sustaining misery throughout the whole Western Hemisphere. The war is only the beginning—the results will remain for decades. Even Hitler, who now has Europe, and tomorrow will have Great Britain, has only hungry people. He must have the colonies, and that signifies the oceans—and that means a fight with the United States for the dominions of Great Britain. This would be a long term conflict, and after the German soldiers and sailors have been at war, they will return home to a country of misery,

of famine and pestilence. These are Hitler's gains for the next years.

When the United States goes to war they will introduce a war economy. This means sacrificing everything for the army and war purposes—and misery for the population. How can there be a self-sustaining economy for the United States? In times of peace you have 10 million unemployed—and this in a time of relative prosperity; during crises you have 13 to 14 million unemployed. Moreover you must export. To do this you must import. What? Products that will ruin your farmers, who are even now being supported artificially? No, there is no possibility. Instead, it is necessary to organize a kind of fascism—an organized control of the misery, because what is fascism except the organization of misery for the people. The New Deal tried to do it in a better way but did not succeed, because at that period you remained too rich for a fascist misery. However you will become poorer and poorer, and as a result the next New Deal will be in fascist form. The only solution carries the name of Socialism.

The Pan American conference is probably the last spectacular form of convulsion of the Rooseveltian Good Neighbor policy. The United States cannot enter a world war, or even make serious preparation for it without assuring first the full domination of the Latin American countries. Their real assurance is their American fleet and air-craft, so that the iron fist shows beneath the Good Neighbor policy. We saw that Argentina was a bit rebellious, but that was their last convulsion of independence. Washington will not permit such a rebellious attitude. The armies, of course, have a world purpose, but the immediate step is first directed to South America to teach them to obey. For the United States, Latin America is like Austria and Czechoslovakia was to Hitler—a springboard to the larger things.

As to whether the United States will take direct control over the Latin American countries, Canada, or let them remain under governors—*gauleiters*—we will see both! We will have various combinations in the next period, and Washington will name the terms.

### On the "Workers" Party

QUESTION 4: *In your opinion were there enough political differences between the majority and minority to warrant a split?*

TROTSKY: Here it is also necessary to consider the question dialectically, not mechanically. What does this terrible word "dialectics" mean? It means to consider things in their development, not in their static situation. If we take the political differences as they are, we can say they were not sufficient for a split, but if they developed a tendency to turn away from the proletariat in the direction of petty bourgeois circles, then the same differences can have an absolutely different value; a different weight; if they are connected with a different social group. This is a very important point.

We have the fact that the minority split away from us, in spite of all the measures taken by the majority not to split. This signifies that their inner social feeling was such that it is impossible for them to go together with us. It is a petty bourgeois tendency, not a proletarian. If you wish a new confirmation of this, we have an excellent example in the article of Dwight Macdonald.

First of all, what characterizes a proletarian revolution? No one is obliged to participate in a revolutionary party, but if he does participate, he considers the party seriously. If we dare to call the people for a revolutionary change of society, we carry a tremendous responsibility, which we must

consider very seriously. And what is our theory, but merely the tools of our action? These tools are our Marxist theory because up to today we have not found better tools. A worker is not fantastic about tools—if they are the best tools he can get he is careful with them; he does not abandon them or demand fantastic non-existent tools.

Burnham is an intellectual snob. He picks up one party, abandons it, takes up another. A worker cannot do this. If he enters a revolutionary party, addresses the people, calls them for action, it is the same as a general during a war—he must know where he is leading them. What would you think of a general who said he thought the guns were bad—that it would be better to wait for 10 years until they had invented better guns, so everybody had better go home. That is the way Burnham reasons. So he abandoned the party. But the unemployed remain, and the war remains. These things cannot be postponed. Therefore it is only Burnham who has postponed his action.

### Petty Bourgeois Scepticism

Dwight Macdonald is not a snob, but a bit stupid. I quote: "The intellectual, if he is to serve any useful function in society, must not deceive either himself or others, must not accept as good coin what he knows is counterfeit, must not forget in a moment of crisis what he has learned over a period of years and decades." Good. Absolutely correct. I quote again: "Only if we meet the stormy and terrible years ahead with both *scepticism* and devotion—scepticism towards *all* theories, governments and social systems; devotion to the revolutionary fight of the masses—only then can we justify ourselves as intellectuals."

Here is one of the leaders of the so-called "Workers" Party, who considers himself not a proletarian but an "intellectual". He speaks of scepticism toward all theories.

We have prepared ourselves for this crisis by studying, by building a scientific method, and our method is Marxism. Then the crisis comes and Mr. Macdonald says "be sceptical of all theories", and then talks about devotion to the revolution without replacing it with any new theory. Unless it is this sceptical theory of his own. How can we work without a theory? What is the fight of the masses and what is a revolutionary? The whole article is scandalous and a party which can tolerate such a man as one of its leaders is not serious.

I quote again: "What is the nature of the beast (fascism), then? Trotsky insists it is no more nor less than the familiar phenomenon of Bonapartism, in which a clique maintains itself in power by playing one class off against another, thus giving the State power a temporary autonomous character. But these modern totalitarian regimes are not temporary affairs; they have already changed the underlying economic and social structure, not only manipulating the old forms but also destroying their inner vitality. Is the Nazi bureaucracy a new ruling class, then, and fascism a new form of society, comparable to capitalism? That doesn't seem to be true either."

Here he creates a new theory, a new definition of fascism, but he wishes, nevertheless, that we should be sceptical toward

all theories. So also to the workers he would say that the instruments and tools they work with are not important but they must have devotion to their work! I think the workers would find a very sharp expression for such a statement.

It is very characteristic of the disappointed intellectual. He sees the war, the terrible epoch ahead, with losses, with sacrifices, and he is afraid. He begins to propagate scepticism and still he believes it is possible to unify scepticism with revolutionary devotion. We can only develop a revolutionary devotion if we are sure it is rational and possible, and we cannot have such assurances without a working theory. He who propagates theoretical scepticism is a traitor.

### Our Own Actual Analysis of Fascism

We analyzed in fascism different elements.

1. The element which fascism has in common with the old Bonapartism, is that it used the antagonisms of classes in order to give to the State power the greatest independence. But we have always underlined that the old Bonapartism was in a time of an ascending bourgeois society, while fascism is a State power of the declining bourgeois society.

2. That fascism is an attempt of the bourgeois class to overcome—to overstep, the contradiction between the new technique and private property without eliminating the private property. It is the "planned economy" of fascism. It is an attempt to save private property and at the same time to check private property.

3. To overstep the contradiction between the new, modern technique of productive forces within the limited borders of the national state. This new technique cannot be limited by the borders of the old national state and fascism attempts to overcome this contradiction. The result is the war. We have already analyzed all these elements.

### We Must Make Use of Every Intellectual

Dwight Macdonald will abandon the party just as Burnham did, but possibly because he is a little lazier, it will come later.

Burnham was considered "good stuff" at one time? Yes, the proletarian party in our epoch must make use of every intellectual who can contribute to the party. I spent many months on Diego Rivera, to save him for our movement, but did not succeed. But every International has had an experience of this kind. The First International had troubles with the poet, Freiligrath, who was also very capricious. The Second and Third Internationals had trouble with Maxim Gorki. The Fourth International with Rivera. In every case they separated from us.

Burnham was, of course, closer to the movement, but Cannon had his doubts about him. He can write, and has some formal skill in thinking, not deep, but adroit. He can accept your idea, develop it, write a fine article about it—and then forget it. The author can forget—but the worker cannot. However, so long as we can use such people, well and good. Mussolini at one time was also "good stuff"!

*Coyoacan, D. F.*

*August 7, 1940*

# We Do Not Change Our Course

By LEON TROTSKY

In the wake of a number of other and smaller European states, France is being transformed into an oppressed nation. German imperialism has risen to unprecedented military

heights, with all the ensuing opportunities for world plunder. What then follows?

From the side of all sorts of semi-internationalists one

may expect approximately the following line of argumentation: Successful uprisings in conquered countries, under the Nazi heel, are impossible, because every revolutionary movement will be immediately drowned in blood by the conquerors. There is even less reason to expect a successful uprising in the camp of the totalitarian victors. Favorable conditions for revolution could be created only by the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini. Therefore, nothing remains except to aid England and the United States. Should the Soviet Union join us it would be possible not only to halt Germany's military successes but to deal her heavy military and economic defeats. The further development of the revolution is possible only on this road. And so forth and so on.

### Nothing New in This Argument

This argumentation which appears on the surface to be inspired by the new map of Europe is in reality only an adaptation to the new map of Europe of the old arguments of social patriotism, i.e., class betrayal. Hitler's victory over France has revealed completely the corruption of imperialist democracy, even in the sphere of its own tasks. It cannot be "saved" from fascism. It can only be replaced by proletarian democracy. Should the working class tie up its fate in the present war with the fate of imperialist democracy, it would only assure itself a new series of defeats.

"For victory's sake" England has already found herself obliged to introduce the methods of dictatorship, the primary pre-requisite for which was the renunciation by the Labour Party of any political independence whatsoever. If the international proletariat, in the form of all its organizations and tendencies, were to take to the same road, then this would only facilitate and hasten the victory of the totalitarian regime on a world scale. Under the conditions of the world proletariat renouncing independent politics, an alliance between the USSR and the imperialist democracies would signify the growth of the omnipotence of the Moscow bureaucracy, its further transformation into an agency of imperialism, and its inevitably making concessions to imperialism in the economic sphere. In all likelihood the military position of the various imperialist countries on the world arena would be greatly changed thereby; but the position of the world proletariat, from the standpoint of the tasks of the socialist revolution, would be changed very little.

### Revolution Must Be Prepared For!

In order to create a revolutionary situation, say the sophists of social patriotism, it is necessary to deal Hitler a blow. To gain a victory over Hitler, it is necessary to support the imperialist democracies. But if for the sake of saving the "democracies" the proletariat renounces independent revolutionary politics, just who would utilize a revolutionary situation arising from Hitler's defeat? There has been no lack of revolutionary situations in the last quarter of a century. But there has been lacking a revolutionary party capable of utilizing a revolutionary situation. To renounce the training of a revolutionary party for the sake of provoking a "revolutionary situation" is to lead the workers blindfolded to a massacre.

From the standpoint of a revolution in one's own country the defeat of one's own imperialist government is undoubtedly a "lesser evil." Pseudo-internationalists, however, refuse to apply this principle in relation to the defeated democratic countries. In return, they interpret Hitler's victory not as a relative but as an absolute obstacle in the way of a revolution in Germany. They lie in both instances.

### What the Nazis Now Face

In the defeated countries the position of the masses will immediately become worsened in the extreme. Added to social oppression is national oppression, the main burden of which is likewise borne by the workers. Of all the forms of dictatorship, the totalitarian dictatorship of a foreign conqueror is the most intolerable. At the same time, to the extent that the Nazis will try to utilize the natural resources and the industrial machinery of the nations defeated by them, the Nazis will themselves become inevitably dependent upon the native peasants and workers. Only after the victory do economic difficulties always begin. It is impossible to attach a soldier with a rifle to each Polish, Norwegian, Danish, Dutch, Belgian, French worker and peasant. National-socialism is without any prescription for transforming defeated peoples from foes into friends.

The experience of the Germans in the Ukraine in 1918 has demonstrated how difficult it is to utilize through military methods the natural wealth and labor power of a defeated people; and how swiftly an army of occupation is demoralized in an atmosphere of universal hostility. These very same processes will develop on a far vaster scale in the European continent under Nazi occupation. One can expect with assurance the rapid transformation of all the conquered countries into powder magazines. The danger is rather this, that the explosions may occur too soon without sufficient preparation and lead to isolated defeats. It is in general impossible, however, to speak of the European and the world revolution without taking into account partial defeats.

Hitler, the conqueror, has naturally day-dreams of becoming the chief executioner of the proletarian revolution in any part of Europe. But this does not at all mean that Hitler will be strong enough to deal with the proletarian revolution as he has been able to deal with imperialist democracy. It would be a fatal blunder, unworthy of a revolutionary party, to turn Hitler into a fetish, to exaggerate his power, to overlook the objective limits of his successes and conquests. True enough, Hitler boastfully promises to establish the domination of the German people at the expense of all Europe and even of the whole world, "for one thousand years." But in all likelihood this splendor will not endure even for ten years.

We must learn from the lessons of the recent past. Twenty-two years ago not only the defeated countries but also the victors emerged from the war with their economic life disrupted and were able to realize very slowly, to the extent that they realized at all, the economic advantages accruing from victory. Therefore the revolutionary movement assumed very great proportions in the countries of the victorious Entente as well. The only thing lacking was a revolutionary party capable of heading the movement.

### Crisis in Germany Too!

The total, i.e., all-embracing character of the present war excludes the possibility of direct "enrichment" at the expense of the defeated countries. Even in the event of a complete victory over England, Germany in order to maintain her conquests would be compelled in the next few years to assume such economic sacrifices as would far outweigh those advantages which it might draw directly from her victories. The living conditions of the German masses must in any case worsen considerably in the next period. Million upon million of victorious soldiers will find on returning to their homeland an even more poverty-stricken home than the one from which they had been torn away by the war. A victory that lowers the living standard of the people does not strengthen a regime



but weakens it. The self-confidence of the demobilized soldiers who had scored the greatest victories will have been raised in the extreme. Their betrayed hopes will turn into sharp dissatisfaction and embitterment. On the other hand, the Brown-Shirted caste will rise even higher above the people; its arbitrary rule and profligacy will provoke ever greater hostility. If in the last decade the political pendulum in Germany has, as a result of the impotence of belated democracy and the betrayal of labor parties, swung sharply to the right, then, as a result of disillusion in the consequences of the war and of the Nazi regime, the pendulum will now swing even more sharply and decisively to the left. Dissatisfaction, alarm, pro-

tests, strikes, armed clashes will again be on the order of the day for Germany. Hitler will have too many worries in Berlin to be able successfully to fulfill the role of executioner in Paris, Brussels or London.

Consequently the task of the revolutionary proletariat does not consist of helping the imperialist armies create a "revolutionary situation" but of preparing, fusing and tempering its international ranks for revolutionary situations of which there will be no lack.

The new war map of Europe does not invalidate the principles of revolutionary class struggle. The Fourth International does not change its course. *End of June, 1940*

# The Kremlin's Role in the War

By LEON TROTSKY

The capitulation of France is not a simple military episode. It is part of the catastrophe of Europe. Mankind can no longer live under the regime of imperialism. Hitler is not an accident; he is only the most consistent and the most bestial expression of imperialism, which threatens to crush our whole civilization.

But in line with the general causes of the catastrophe inherent in imperialism, it is impermissible to forget the criminal, sinister role played by the Kremlin and the Comintern. Nobody else rendered such support to Hitler as Stalin. Nobody else created such a dangerous situation for the U.S.S.R. as Stalin.

During a period of five years the Kremlin and its Comintern propagandized for an "alliance of democracies" and "people's fronts" with the aim of preventive war against "fascist aggressors." This propaganda, as witnessed most strikingly in the example of France, had a tremendous influence upon the popular masses. But when war really approached, the Kremlin and its agency, the Comintern, jumped unexpectedly into the camp of the "fascist aggressors." Stalin with his horse-trader mentality sought in this way to cheat Chamberlain, Daladier, Roosevelt, and to gain strategic positions in Poland and the Baltic countries. But the Kremlin's jump had immeasurably greater consequences: not only did it cheat the governments but it disoriented and demoralized the popular masses, in the first place in the so-called democracies. With its propaganda of "people's fronts" the Kremlin hindered the masses from conducting the fight against the imperialist war. With his shift to Hitler's side Stalin abruptly mixed up all the cards and paralyzed the military power of the "democracies." In spite of all the machines of destruction the moral factor retains decisive importance in the war. By demoralizing the popular masses in Europe, and not solely in Europe, Stalin played the role of an agent provocateur in the service of Hitler. The capitulation of France is one of the results of such politics.

But it is by no means the only result. In spite of the Kremlin's territorial seizures, the international position of the USSR is worsened in the extreme. The Polish buffer disappeared. The Rumanian buffer will disappear tomorrow. Mighty Germany, master of Europe, acquires a common frontier with the USSR. Scandinavia, a place of weak and almost disarmed countries, is occupied by this same Germany. Her victories in the west are only preparation for a gigantic move toward the east. In the attack on Finland the Red Army, decapitated and demoralized, again by Stalin, demonstrated its weakness before the whole world. In his coming march against the USSR, Hitler will find support in Japan.

The agents of the Kremlin begin to speak once more about the alliance of the democracies against the fascist aggressors. It is possible that as the cheated cheater, Stalin will be forced to make a new turn in his foreign politics. But woe to the peoples if they again trust the dishonest agents of the Kremlin's chief! Stalin helped convert Europe into bloody chaos and took the USSR to the very brink of the abyss. The peoples of the USSR now cannot help but feel the greatest anxiety. . . . Only the overthrow of the Moscow totalitarian clique, only the regeneration of Soviet democracy can unleash the forces of the Soviet peoples for the fight against the inevitable and fast-approaching blow from imperialist Germany. Hence Soviet patriotism is inseparable from irreconcilable struggle against the Stalinist clique.

*Coyoacan, D. F.*

*June 17, 1940*

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*(The following statement was issued by Leon Trotsky to the United Press.)*

Molotov's latest speech confirms that the Kremlin continues to be a satellite of Berlin and Rome. The Communist leaders in various countries have calmed their parties with promises that tomorrow if not today Moscow will turn towards the "democracies." Molotov's speech belies these promises. Five years of "anti-fascist" people's fronts are definitely unmasked as charlatanism. Moscow's foreign policy is determined by power politics and not by political principles.

Molotov, it is true, tried to cover the present Kremlin policy with anti-imperialist phraseology. But its falseness strikes one's eyes. Molotov unmasked England's wish to retain her colonies. But he kept silent about Germany's and Italy's wish to take them. He spoke about the imperialism of Japan and the United States but he didn't find a word of condemnation for Hitler's banditry and Mussolini's jackal politics. Even more, he underlined for the first time that the German-Soviet pact assured free hands to Hitler. This unilateral and thoroughly sham "fight" against imperialism only reveals that Moscow's politics is not independent but serves the interests of one imperialism against the other.

An increase in population of 23,000,000 doesn't solve the problem of security of the USSR. The victory of Hitler-Mussolini over Great Britain would immediately place the move towards the east on the order of the day for German imperialism. It would at once become clear that in following the line of least resistance the Kremlin oligarchy only accumulated difficulties and dangers.

*Coyoacan, D. F.*

*August 2, 1940*

# The May 24 Attempt to Kill Trotsky

*The Mexican press published on June 1 a letter, written by Leon Trotsky to the attorney general of Mexico, the chief of the federal police, and the foreign minister. By this letter Trotsky successfully thwarted attempts to direct away from the Stalinists the investigation of the May 24 attempt to assassinate Trotsky. The letter follows:*

It is first of all necessary to affirm that the attempted assassination could only be instigated by the Kremlin; by Stalin through the agency of the GPU abroad. During the last few years, Stalin has shot hundreds of real or supposed friends of mine. He actually exterminated my entire family, except me, my wife and one of my grandchildren. Through his agents abroad he assassinated one of the old leaders of the GPU, Ignace Reiss, who had publicly declared himself a partisan of mine. This fact has been established by the French police and the Swiss judiciary. The same GPU agents who killed Reiss trailed my son in Paris. On the night of November 7, 1936 GPU agents broke into the Scientific Institute of Paris and stole part of my archives. Two of my secretaries, Erwin Wolff and Rudolf Klement, were assassinated by the GPU; the first in Spain, the second in Paris. All the theatrical Moscow trials during 1936-37 had as their aim to get me into the hands of the GPU.

In saying this I do not exclude the possibility of the participation of Hitler's Gestapo in the assassination attempt. Up to a certain point the GPU and the Gestapo are connected with each other; it is possible and probable that in special cases the same agents are at the disposal of both. Authoritative representatives of the German government have publicly indicated that they consider me a dangerous enemy. It is completely possible that these two police forces cooperated in the attempt against me.

## How the GPU Is Organized

The general scheme of the GPU organization abroad is the following: *in the Central Committee of each section of the Comintern there is placed a responsible director of the GPU for that country.* His status is known only to the secretary of the party and one or two trustworthy members. The other members of the Central Committee have but a slight inkling of the special status of this member.

As a member of the Central Committee the country's GPU representative has the possibility of approaching with full legality all members of the party, study their characters, entrust them with commissions, and little by little draw them into the work of espionage and terrorism, appealing to their sense of party loyalty as much as to bribery.

This whole mechanism was discovered in France and Switzerland in connection with the murder of Reiss and the later moves against my dead son and other persons. As for the United States, Krivitsky established that the sister of Browder, general secretary of the party, became a GPU agent through her brother's recommendation. This example proves the rule rather than an exception.

Agents of the GPU upon coming to a foreign country for a specific task always work through the local head of the GPU, the above mentioned member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party; without this they could not orient themselves in the local situation and select the indispensable executors of their mission. The emissary from abroad and the local resident and their trustworthy aides work out the general plan of their undertaking, study the list of possible collaborators and draw them into the conspiracy step by step.

I do not have any information concerning the real role played by sergeant Casas and the five police under him who were on guard outside my house. I know only that they are arrested. One cannot be sure that they were not in the conspiracy; the GPU has means as no other institution in the world of convincing, coercion and bribery. They could have systematically insinuated to the police that I am an enemy of the Mexican people; promised them a career; and finally they could have offered a high price for their services. But foreign agents could not approach the Mexican police; local agents were necessary.

## Stalinist Agents Prepared Public Opinion

The GPU is particularly concerned with the problem of preparing public opinion for a terrorist act, especially when a person well-known nationally and internationally is the victim. This part of the job is always assigned to the Stalinist press, Stalinist speakers and the so-called "friends of the Soviet Union." The judicial investigation, it seems to me, from this point of view cannot fail to examine the work of the newspapers "El Popular," "La Voz de Mexico," and some collaborators of "El Nacional." I am not referring to criticism of my convictions, for such criticism, even though most severe, is the most elementary democratic right of everybody. But "La Voz de Mexico" and "El Popular" have never occupied themselves with such criticism.

I recall that many times they have accused me of connections with all the reactionary circles in Mexico as well as abroad; in one speech Toledano declared that I am preparing a general strike against the Cardenas government; in "El Machete" and afterward in "La Voz de Mexico" they accuse me, every Sunday, of preparing a revolution together with General Cedillo and many other real or supposed counter-revolutionaries; they pictured me in secret sessions with a certain Dr. Atl; in collaboration with the German fascists in Mexico, etc. In recent times "Futuro," "El Popular," as well as "La Voz de Mexico," systematically repeat that I am in secret contact with the reactionary U. S. congressman Dies and that I gave him certain information against Mexico. All these accusations, it is easy to see, make no sense, for they ascribe to me acts which are not only contrary to my convictions and my life's work, but also against my immediate interests, since I would have to lose all reason to commit disloyal acts against the Mexican government which has accorded me such generous hospitality.

I need but recall that through the press I have called upon my accusers repeatedly to bring their case before an impartial commission, appointed by the government or the (government) Party of the Mexican Revolution, in order to publicly examine the accusations made against me. Toledano and the Communist Party chiefs have always been careful enough not to accept my proposition.

With this I do not wish to say that Toledano and the Communist Party chiefs took direct part in preparing the attempt against me. The GPU has a strict division of labor. Known persons are assigned the task of propagating the slanders against me. Lesser known but more serious agents are assigned the task of assassination. Nevertheless Mr. Toledano is no youngster. He knows perfectly well the methods of the GPU, particularly the systematic persecution to which the members of my family, my friends and I have been and are exposed throughout the world. It is no secret to Toledano that

the GPU is out to annihilate me physically. I am therefore within my rights in saying that, in occupying himself systematically with the poisonous campaign against me, Mr. Toledano took part in the moral preparation of the terrorist act. Consequently Toledano as a witness should be of immense interest to the investigation.

It cannot be doubted in the least that the former and present chiefs of the Communist Party know who is the local director of the GPU. Permit me also to assume that David Alfaro Siqueiros, who took part in the civil war in Spain as an active Stalinist, may also know who are the most important and active GPU members, Spanish, Mexican, and of other nationalities who are arriving at different times in Mexico, especially via Paris. The questioning of the previous and the present general secretary of the Communist Party and also of Siqueiros, would help very much to throw light on the instigators of the assassination attempt and together with them discover their accomplices.

LEON TROTSKY

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### The Reptile Breed of "The Nation"

I see that the *Nation*, which besmirched itself through its attitude in regard to the Moscow judicial frame-ups, has hurried again this time\* to support the fantastic and stupid versions of the GPU in connection with the attack of May 24. Everyone it seems is guilty, General Almazan, the "reaction," possibly Trotsky himself—but by no means Stalin.

Meanwhile the Mexican police have uncovered the assailants. They are—by accident—agents of Stalin...

What an infamous reptile breed these radicals of the *Nation*! But they will not escape their punishment: we shall teach the American workers to appreciate them as they deserve—to despise them.

L. TROTSKY

*Coyoacan, D. F.*  
June 18, 1940

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Who is the author of the "Nation's" article on the attack upon Leon Trotsky? Harry Block is a citizen of the United States. His wife is Malu Cabrera, daughter of the Licenciado Luis Cabrera, a very rich and very reactionary lawyer retained by the oil companies and landlords of Yucatan. At the same time, Harry Block is a close collaborator of Lombardo Toledano, the notorious political agent of the GPU in Mexico. Harry Block is the managing editor of "Futuro," the foul, slanderous monthly of Lombardo Toledano. He is also the head of the publishing department of the Stalinist Universidad Obrera. Under orders of the CTM he publishes a special weekly bulletin, "Mexican Labor News," distributed free in the United States.

In the inner staff of Lombardo Toledano the "authority" of Harry Block is based upon the fact that he is considered the agent of the Soviet Embassy in Washington in relations with the CTM. The head of the Soviet agency in Washington

\*Harry Block, liaison man between Soviet Ambassador Oumansky in Washington and Lombardo Toledano in Mexico City is the *Nation's* regular Mexican correspondent. In its June 8, 1940 issue, the *Nation* published an article by Block which said the May 24 attack "had all the earmarks of a put-up job"—i.e. Trotsky had arranged it! The *Nation* also refused to publish a letter from Albert Goldman, Trotsky's attorney, answering Block.

is Oumansky, who made his diplomatic career as an agent of the GPU. Consequently Harry Block is the confidential go-between for two agents of the GPU, Oumansky and Lombardo Toledano. No wonder that Harry Block defended the dirty theory of "self-assault" in the pages of such a prostituted magazine as the "Nation."

Meantime the majority of the assailants have been apprehended. All are members of the Communist Party and agents of the GPU. They are the colleagues of Oumansky, Lombardo Toledano, and Harry Block. It will be interesting to learn the reaction of the "Nation's" editorial board now.

June 18, 1940

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### Letter to the "Herald Tribune"

*Editor, Herald Tribune*

*New York City, N. Y.*

Sir:

In the July 25 issue of the *Herald Tribune* an article was published, telephoned from Mexico City by Mr. Jack O'Brine, quoting declarations made by a certain Cesar Ortiz, "Foreign editor of Mexico's leading labor newspaper, 'Popular'," to sixty American educators visiting Mexico, of a "conspiracy" between me and General Juan Andreu Almazan to establish a "fascist regime south of the Rio Grande" and later in the United States in the event that I were admitted to that country. Mr. Cesar Ortiz, according to the report in the *Herald Tribune*, added that the Mexican authorities are investigating this "conspiracy" allegedly organized with the financial help of Hitler and Mussolini; that is, the German and Italian allies of Stalin.

Your readers no doubt are intelligent enough to discern the source of this dirty, arrogant, and stupid falsification. The source is specified by three letters: GPU.

As for Mr. Cesar Ortiz, I do not know anything about him. But I can admit that he really exists and directs what is called the "foreign" policy of "El Popular". On July 2, before the Mexican courts, I reaffirmed that this paper is a semi-official organ of the GPU; that in all questions of interest to Stalin it supports the politics of the GPU; that it invariably defends the crimes of the GPU and propagates all the falsifications and slanders which the GPU spreads against the enemies of Stalin; that if—after a long period of defending Hitler—"El Popular" today defends "democracy" it does so under direct orders from the GPU and in the interest of some temporary need of Stalin.

In view of the fact that the perpetrators of the assault against me, and particularly the murderers of Robert Sheldon Harte (Trotsky's secretary), are agents of the GPU and members of the Comintern; that the editors of "El Popular" were moral accomplices in the preparation of the May 24 assault and in the attempts to cover up the crime; that these facts are being placed before the court by me with all the necessary exactitude; and in view of the fact that the friends of the GPU and the inspirers of "El Popular" happen to be deeply compromised, the secret police of Stalin, its agents and friends including evidently Cesar Ortiz whom I do not know, are making desperate attempts to block the judicial investigation and to terrorize me in order to prevent further revelations concerning the criminal activity of the GPU on the American continent. All these attempts are in vain. I will carry my work through to the end.

In order to give my denial of the assertions reported in the *Herald Tribune* all the necessary completeness I add:

(a) I have never had either direct or indirect connections

with the internal politics of Mexico, in particular the recent election campaign.

(b) I do not have the honor of knowing General Juan Andreu Almazan. I have never had either direct or indirect relations with him in particular nor with any of the outstanding figures in general in any of the political camps of Mexico.

(c) I do not have and could not have any motive to create any difficulties for the government of the only country which granted me its hospitality.

(d) The assertions reported by your correspondent re-

present not an isolated fact but part of a campaign which has been uninterruptedly and systematically conducted against me under the direction and with the financial assistance of the GPU.

(e) I reserve the right to sue Mr. Cesar Ortiz for the malicious slanders he has made against me in the interests of the GPU.

LEON TROTSKY

*Coyoacan, D. F.  
July 27, 1940*

# Letter to the Workers of the USSR

By LEON TROTSKY

Greetings to the Soviet workers, collective farmers, soldiers of the Red Army and sailors of the Red Navy! Greetings from distant Mexico where I found refuge after the Stalinist clique had exiled me to Turkey and after the bourgeoisie had hounded me from country to country!

Dear Comrades! The lying Stalinist press has been maliciously deceiving you for a long time on all questions, including those which relate to myself and my political co-thinkers. You possess no workers' press; you read only the press of the bureaucracy, which lies systematically so as to keep you in darkness and thus render secure the rule of a privileged parasitic caste.

Those who dare raise their voices against the universally hated bureaucracy are called "Trotskyists," agents of a foreign power; branded as spies—yesterday it was spies of Germany, today it is spies of England and France—and then sent to face the firing squad. Tens of thousands of revolutionary fighters have fallen before the muzzles of G.P.U. Mausers in the USSR and in countries abroad, especially in Spain. All of them were depicted as agents of Fascism. Do not believe this abominable slander! Their crime consisted of defending workers and peasants against the brutality and rapacity of the bureaucracy. The entire Old Guard of Bolshevism, all the collaborators and assistants of Lenin, all the fighters of the October revolution, all the heroes of the Civil War, have been murdered by Stalin. In the annals of history Stalin's name will forever be recorded with the infamous brand of Cain!

## Revolution Was Not Made for Bureaucrats

The October revolution was accomplished for the sake of the toilers and not for the sake of new parasites. But due to the lag of the world revolution, due to the fatigue and, to a large measure, the backwardness of the Russian workers and especially the Russian peasants, there raised itself over the Soviet Republic and against its peoples a new oppressive and parasitic caste, whose leader is Stalin. The former Bolshevik party was turned into an apparatus of the caste. The world organization which the Communist International once was is today a pliant tool of the Moscow oligarchy. Soviets of Workers and Peasants have long perished. They have been replaced by degenerate Commissars, Secretaries and G.P.U. agents.

But, fortunately, among the surviving conquests of the October revolution are the nationalized industry and the collectivized Soviet economy. Upon this foundation Workers' Soviets can build a new and happier society. This foundation cannot be surrendered by us to the world bourgeoisie under any conditions. It is the duty of revolutionists to defend tooth and nail every position gained by the working class, whether it involves democratic rights, wage scales, or so colossal a conquest of mankind as the nationalization of the means of production and planned economy. Those who are incapable of

defending conquests already gained can never fight for new ones. Against the imperialist foe we will defend the USSR with all our might. However, the conquests of the October revolution will serve the people only if they prove themselves capable of dealing with the Stalinist bureaucracy, as in their day they dealt with the Tsarist bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

## Stalinism Endangers the Soviet Union

If Soviet economic life had been conducted in the interests of the people; if the bureaucracy had not devoured and vainly wasted the major portion of the national income; if the bureaucracy had not trampled underfoot the vital interests of the population, then the USSR would have been a great magnetic pole of attraction for the toilers of the world and the inviolability of the Soviet Union would have been assured. But the infamous oppressive regime of Stalin has deprived the USSR of its attractive power. During the war with Finland, not only the majority of the Finnish peasants but also the majority of the Finnish workers, proved to be on the side of their bourgeoisie. This is hardly surprising since they know of the unprecedented oppression to which the Stalinist bureaucracy subjects the workers of near-by Leningrad and the whole of the USSR. The Stalinist bureaucracy, so bloodthirsty and ruthless at home and so cowardly before the imperialist enemies, has thus become the main source of war danger to the Soviet Union.

The old Bolshevik party and the Third International have disintegrated and decomposed. The honest and advanced revolutionists have organized abroad the Fourth International which has sections already established in most of the countries of the world. I am a member of this new International. In participating in this work I remain under the very same banner that I served together with you or your fathers and your older brothers in 1917 and throughout the years of the Civil War—the very same banner under which together with Lenin we built the Soviet state and the Red Army.

## Goal of the Fourth International

The goal of the Fourth International is to extend the October revolution to the whole world and at the same time to regenerate the USSR by purging it of the parasitic bureaucracy. This can be achieved only in one way: By the workers, peasants, Red Army soldiers and Red Navy sailors, rising against the new caste of oppressors and parasites. To prepare this uprising, a new party is needed—a bold and honest revolutionary organization of the advanced workers. The Fourth International sets as its task the building of such a party in the USSR.

Advanced workers! Be the first to rally to the banner of Marx and Lenin which is now the banner of the Fourth In-

ternational! Learn how to create, in the conditions of Stalinist illegality, tightly fused, reliable revolutionary circles! Establish contacts between these circles! Learn how to establish contacts—through loyal and reliable people, especially the sailors—with your revolutionary co-thinkers in bourgeois lands! It is difficult, but it can be done.

The present war will spread more and more, piling ruins on ruins, breeding more and more sorrow, despair and protest, driving the whole world toward new revolutionary explosions. The world revolution shall re-invigorate the Soviet working masses with new courage and resoluteness and shall undermine the bureaucratic props of Stalin's caste. It is necessary to prepare for this hour by stubborn systematic revolutionary work. The fate of our country, the future of our people, the destiny of our children and grandchildren are at stake.

Down With Cain Stalin and his Camarilla!  
Down With the Rapacious Bureaucracy!  
Long Live the Soviet Union, the Fortress of the Toilers!  
Long Live the World Socialist Revolution!

Fraternally,

May, 1940

LEON TROTSKY

\* \* \*

WARNING! Stalin's press will of course declare that this letter is transmitted to the USSR by "agents of imperialism." Be forewarned that this, too, is a lie. This letter will reach the USSR through reliable revolutionists who are prepared to risk their lives for the cause of socialism. Make copies of this letter and give it the widest possible circulation.—L.T.

## On the Founding of the Fourth International

*On October 28, 1938 an inspiring mass meeting in New York celebrated the founding of the Fourth International as well as the tenth anniversary of the Trotskyist movement in this country. American imperialism would not permit Trotsky to be present at that memorable celebration. But an electrical transcription of Trotsky's speech to the meeting helped to bring him closer.*

*Trotsky never wasted words; the celebration became for*

*him the occasion to press home two fundamental thoughts. First, the unique nature of the revolutionary party and the relation between the individual and the party: "For a revolutionary to give himself entirely to the party signifies finding himself." Second, such a party cannot be destroyed by Stalin's murder gangs: "It is possible to kill individual soldiers of our army, but not to frighten them." Thus did Trotsky, in advance, armor us against deserters and the GPU.—EDITORS.*

Dear Comrades and Friends:

I hope that this time my voice will reach you and that I will be permitted in this way to participate in your double celebration. Both events: the tenth anniversary of our American organization as well as the foundation congress of the Fourth International deserve the attention of the workers incomparably more than the war-like gestures of the totalitarian chiefs, the diplomatic intrigues, or the pacifist congresses.

Both events will enter history as important milestones. No one has now the right to doubt that.

It is necessary to remark that the birth of the American group of Bolshevik-Leninists, thanks to the courageous initiative of Comrades Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern, didn't stand alone. It approximately coincided with the beginning of the systematic international work of the Left Opposition. It is true that the Left Opposition arose in Russia in 1923, but regular work on an international scale began with the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

### Work Began in 1928

Without a personal meeting we reached an agreement with the American pioneers of the Fourth International, before all, on the criticism of the program of the Communist International. Then, in 1928, began that collective work which after ten years led to the elaboration of our own program recently adopted by our International Conference. We have the right to say that the work of this decade was not only persistent and patient, but also honest. The Bolshevik-Leninists, the international pioneers, our comrades across the world, searched the way of the revolution as genuine Marxists, not in their feelings and wishes, but in the analysis of the objective march of events. Above all were we guided by the preoc-

cupation not to deceive others nor ourselves. We searched seriously and honestly. And some important things were found by us. The events confirmed our analysis as well as our prognosis. Nobody can deny it. Now it is necessary that we remain true to ourselves and to our program. It is not easy to do so. The tasks are tremendous, the enemies—innumerable. We have the right to spend our time and our attention on the jubilee celebration only insofar as from the lessons of the past we can prepare ourselves for the future.

### The Party Is Everything

Dear friends, we are not a party as other parties. Our ambition is not only to have more members, more papers, more money in the treasury, more deputies. All that is necessary, but only as a means. Our aim is the full material and spiritual liberation of the toilers and exploited through the socialist revolution. Nobody will prepare it and nobody will guide it but ourselves. The old Internationals—the Second, the Third, that of Amsterdam, we will add to them also the London Bureau—are rotten through and through.

The great events which rush upon mankind will not leave of these outlived organizations one stone upon another. Only the Fourth International looks with confidence at the future. It is the world party of Socialist Revolution! There never was a greater task on the earth. Upon every one of us rests a tremendous historical responsibility.

Our party demands each of us, totally and completely. Let the philistines hunt their own individuality in empty space. For a revolutionary to give himself entirely to the party signifies finding himself.

Yes, our party takes each one of us wholly. But in return it gives to every one of us the highest happiness: the con-

sciousness that one participates in the building of a better future, that one carries on his shoulders a particle of the fate of mankind, and that one's life will not have been lived in vain.

The fidelity to the cause of the toilers requires from us the highest devotion to our international party. The party, of course, can also be mistaken. By common effort we will correct its mistakes. In its ranks can penetrate unworthy elements. By common effort we will eliminate them. New thousands who will enter its ranks tomorrow will probably be deprived of necessary education. By common effort we will elevate their revolutionary level. But we will never forget that our party is now the greatest lever of history. Separated from this lever, everyone of us is nothing. With this lever in hand, we are all.

### **Stalin Cannot Frighten Us**

We aren't a party as other parties. It is not in vain that the imperialist reaction persecutes us madly, following furiously at our heels. The assassins at its services are the agents of the Moscow Bonapartistic clique. Our young International already knows many victims. In the Soviet Union they number by thousands. In Spain by dozens. In other countries by units. With gratitude and love we remember them all in these moments. Their spirits continue to fight in our ranks.

The hangmen think in their obtuseness and cynicism that it is possible to frighten us. They err! Under blows we become stronger. The bestial politics of Stalin are only politics of despair. It is possible to kill individual soldiers of our army, but not to frighten them. Friends, we will repeat again in this day of celebration . . . IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO FRIGHTEN US.

Ten years were necessary for the Kremlin clique in order to strangle the Bolshevik party and to transform the first Workers' State into a sinister caricature. Ten years were necessary for the Third International in order to stamp into the mire their own program and to transform themselves into a stinking cadaver. Ten years! Only ten years! Permit me to finish with a prediction: During the next ten years the program of the Fourth International will become the guide of millions and these revolutionary millions will know how to storm earth and heaven.

LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
OF THE UNITED STATES!

LONG LIVE THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

L. TROTSKY

*Coyoacan, D. F.*

*October 18, 1938.*

# Special Announcement

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We have just received the Russian manuscript of the work to which Trotsky devoted the last months of his life — his exposure of the machinery which murdered him. Beginning with an analysis of the May 24th machine-gunning of his house, Trotsky went on to a painstaking exposition of the role of the GPU and the way it is related to the Communist International.

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