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Leon Sedoff, son - friend - fighter

Leon Trotsky

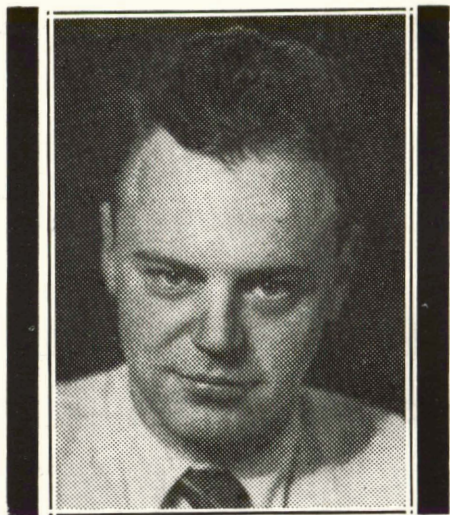
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Leon Sedoff



SON • FRIEND • FIGHTER

Dedicated to the Proletarian Youth

by

LEON TROTSKY

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Son - Friend - Fighter

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TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN



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Leon Sedoff

SON - FRIEND - FIGHTER

As I write these lines, with Leon Sedoff's mother by my side, telegrams of condolence keep coming from different countries. And for us each telegram evokes the same appalling question: "Can it really be that our friends in France, Holland, England, the United States, Canada, South Africa and here in Mexico accept it as definitely established that Sedoff is no more?" Each telegram is a new token of his death, but we are unable to believe it as yet. And this, not only because he was our son, truthful, devoted, loving, but above all because he had, as no one else on earth, become part of our life, entwined in all its roots, our co-thinker, our co-worker, our guard, our counselor, our friend.

Of that older generation whose ranks we joined at the end of the last century on the road to revolution, all, without exception, have been swept from the scene. That which Tsarist hard-labor prisons and harsh exiles, the hardships of emigration, the civil war and disease had failed to accomplish has in recent years been achieved by Stalin, the worst scourge of the revolution. Following the destruction of the older generation, the best section of the next,

that is, the generation which awakened in 1917 and which received its training in the twenty-four armies of the revolutionary front, was likewise destroyed. Also crushed underfoot and completely obliterated was the best part of the youth, Leon's contemporaries. He himself survived only by a miracle, owing to the fact that he accompanied us into exile and then to Turkey. During the years of our last emigration we made many new friends, some of whom have entered intimately into our lives, becoming, as it were, members of our family. But we met all of them for the first time in these last few years when we had already neared old age. Leon was the only one who knew us when we were young; he became part of our lives from the very first moment of his self-awakening. While young in years, he still seemed our contemporary. Together with us, he went through our second emigration: Vienna, Zurich, Paris, Barcelona, New York, Amherst (concentration camp in Canada), and finally Petrograd.

While but a child—he was going on twelve—he had, in his own way, consciously made the transition from the February revolution to that of October. His boyhood passed under high pressure. He added a year to his age so that he might more quickly join the Komsomol (Communist youth), seething at that time with all the passion of awakened youth. The young bakers, among whom he carried on propaganda, would award him a fresh loaf of white bread which he happily brought home under his arm, protruding from the torn sleeve of his jacket. Those were fiery and cold, great and hungry years. Of his

own volition Leon left the Kremlin for a proletarian student dormitory, in order not to be any different from the others. He would not ride with us in an automobile, refusing to make use of this privilege of the bureaucrats. But he did participate ardently in all Red Saturdays and other "labor mobilizations," cleaning snow from the Moscow streets, "liquidating" illiteracy, unloading bread and firewood from freight cars, and later, as a polytechnic student, repairing locomotives. If he did not get to the war front, it was only because even adding two or as much as three years to his age could not have helped him; for he was not yet fifteen when the civil war ended. However, he did accompany me several times to the front, absorbing its stark impressions, and firmly understanding why this bloody struggle was being waged.

The latest press reports speak of Leon Sedoff's life in Paris under "the most modest conditions"—much more modest, let me add, than those of a skilled worker. Even in Moscow, during those years when his father and mother held high posts, he lived not better but worse than for the past few years in Paris. Was this perhaps the rule among the youth of the bureaucracy? By no means. Even then he was an exception. In this child, growing to boyhood and adolescence, a sense of duty and achievement awakened early.

In 1923 Leon threw himself headlong into the work of the Opposition. It would be entirely wrong to see in this nothing more than parental influence. After all, when he left a comfortable apartment in the

Kremlin for his hungry, cold and dingy dormitory, he did so against our will, even though we did not resist this move on his part. His political orientation was determined by the same instinct which impelled him to choose crowded street cars rather than Kremlin limousines. The platform of the Opposition simply gave political expression to traits inherent in his nature. Leon broke uncompromisingly with those of his student friends who were violently torn from "Trotskyism" by their bureaucratic fathers and found a way to his baker friends. Thus, at seventeen he began the life of a fully conscious revolutionist. He quickly grasped the art of conspiratorial work, illegal meetings, and the secret issuing and distribution of Opposition documents. The Komsomol rapidly developed its own cadres of Opposition leaders.

Leon had exceptional mathematical ability. He never tired of assisting many worker-students who had not gone through grammar school. He engaged in this work with all his energy; encouraging, leading, chiding the lazy ones—the youthful teacher saw in this work a service to his class. His own studies in the Superior Technical Academy progressed very favorably. But they took up only a part of his working day. Most of his time, strength, and spirit were devoted to the cause of the revolution.

In the winter of 1927, when the police massacre of the Opposition began, Leon had passed his twenty-second year. By that time a child was born to him and he would proudly bring his son to the Kremlin to show him to us. Without a moment's hesitation,

however, Leon decided to tear himself away from his school and his young family in order to share our fate in Central Asia. In this he acted not only as a son but above all as a co-thinker. It was essential, whatever the cost, to guarantee our connection with Moscow. His work in Alma Ata, during that year, was truly peerless. We called him our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Police and Minister of Communications. And in fulfilling all these functions he had to rely on an illegal apparatus. Commissioned by the Moscow Opposition center, comrade X, very devoted and reliable, acquired a carriage and three horses and worked as an independent coachman between Alma Ata and the city of Frunze (Pishpek), at that time the terminus of the railroad. It was his task to convey the secret Moscow mail to us every two weeks and to carry our letters and manuscripts back to Frunze, where a Moscow messenger awaited him. Sometimes special couriers also arrived from Moscow. To meet with them was no simple matter. We were lodged in a house surrounded on all sides by the institutions of the G. P. U. and the quarters of its agents. Outside connections were handled entirely by Leon. He would leave the house late on a rainy night or when the snow fell heavily, or, evading the vigilance of the spies, he would hide himself during the day in the library to meet the courier in a public bath or among the thick weeds on the outskirts of the town, or in the oriental market place where the Kirghiz crowded with their horses, donkeys and their wares. Each time he returned excited and happy, with a conquering gleam in his eyes

and the precious booty under his clothing. And so for a year's time he eluded all enemies. What is more, he maintained the most "correct," almost "friendly," relations with these enemies who were "comrades" of yesterday, displaying uncommon tact and restraint, carefully guarding us from outside disturbances.

The ideological life of the Opposition seethed like a cauldron at the time. It was the year of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International. The Moscow packets arrived with scores of letters, articles, theses, from comrades known and unknown. During the first few months, before the sharp change in the conduct of the G. P. U., we even received a great many letters by the official mail services from different places of exile. It was necessary to sift this diversified material carefully. And it was in this work that I had the occasion to realize, not without surprise, how this little boy had imperceptibly grown up, how well he could judge people—he knew a great many more Oppositionists than I did—how reliable was his revolutionary instinct, which enabled him, without any hesitation, to distinguish the genuine from the false, the substance from the veneer. The eyes of his mother, who knew our son best, glowed with pride during our conversations.

Between April and October we received approximately 1,000 political letters and documents and about 700 telegrams. In this same period we sent out 550 telegrams and not fewer than 800 political letters, including a number of substantial works, such as the *Criticism of the Draft Program of the*

Comintern, and others. Without my son I could not have accomplished even one half of the work.

So intimate a collaboration did not, however, mean that no disputes or occasionally even very sharp clashes arose between us. Neither at that time, nor later in emigration and this must be said candidly—were my relations with Leon by any means of an even and placid character. To his categorical judgments, which were often disrespectful to some of the “old men” of the Opposition, I not only counterposed equally categoric corrections and reservations, but I also displayed toward him the pedantic and exacting attitude which I had acquired in practical questions. Because of these traits, which are perhaps useful and even indispensable for work on a large scale but quite insufferable in personal relationships people closest to me often had a very hard time. And inasmuch as the closest to me of all the youth was my son, he usually had the hardest time of all. To a superficial eye it might even have seemed that our relationship was permeated with severity and aloofness. But beneath the surface there glowed a deep mutual attachment based on something immeasurably greater than bonds of blood—a solidarity of views and appraisals, of sympathies and antipathies, of joys and sorrows experienced together, of great hopes we had in common. And this mutual attachment blazed up from time to time so warmly as to reward us three-hundred-fold for the petty friction in daily work.

Thus four thousand kilometers from Moscow, two hundred and fifty kilometers from the nearest rail-

way, we spent a difficult and never-to-be-forgotten year which remains in our memory under the sign of Leon, or rather Levik or Levusyatka as we called him.

* * *

In January, 1929, the Political Bureau decided to deport me "beyond the borders of the U. S. S. R."—to Turkey, as it turned out. Members of the family were granted the right to accompany me. Again without any hesitation Leon decided to accompany us into exile, tearing himself forever from his wife and child whom he dearly loved.

A new chapter, with its first pages almost blank, opened in our life. Connections, acquaintances, and friendships had to be built anew. And once again our son became all things for us: our go-between in relations with the outside world, our guard, collaborator and secretary as in Alma Ata, but on an incomparably broader scale. Foreign languages, with which he had been more familiar in his childhood than he was with Russian, had been almost completely forgotten in the tumult of the revolutionary years. It became necessary to learn them all over again. Our joint literary work began. My archives and library were wholly in Leon's hands. He had a thorough knowledge of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, was very well acquainted with my books and manuscripts, with the history of the party and the revolution, and the history of the Thermidorian falsification. In the chaos of the Alma Ata public library he had already studied the files of *Pravda* for the Soviet years and gathered the necessary quo-

tations and references with unfailing resourcefulness. Lacking this precious material and without Leon's subsequent researches in archives and libraries, first in Turkey, later in Berlin and finally in Paris, not one of my works during the past ten years would have been possible. This applies especially to *The History of the Russian Revolution*. Vast in point of quantity, his collaboration was by no means of a "technical" nature. His independent selection of facts, quotations, characterizations, frequently determined both the method of my presentation as well as the conclusions. *The Revolution Betrayed* contains not a few pages which I wrote on the basis of several lines from my son's letters and the quotations which he sent from Soviet newspapers inaccessible to me. He supplied me with even more material for the biography of Lenin. Such collaboration was made possible only because our ideological solidarity had penetrated our very flesh and blood. My son's name should rightfully be placed next to mine on almost all my books written since 1928.

In Moscow, Leon had lacked a year and a half to complete his engineering course. His mother and I insisted that while abroad he return to his abandoned science. In Prinkipo a new group of young co-workers from different countries had meanwhile been successfully formed, in intimate collaboration with my son. Leon consented to leave only because of the weighty argument that in Germany he would be able to render invaluable services to the International Left Opposition. Resuming his scientific studies in Berlin (he had to start from the beginning), Leon

simultaneously threw himself headlong into revolutionary activity. In the International Secretariat he soon became the representative of the Russian section. His letters for that period to his mother and myself show how quickly he acclimated himself to the political atmosphere of Germany and Western Europe, how well he judged people and gauged the differences and countless conflicts of that early period of our movement. His revolutionary instinct, already enriched by serious experience, enabled him in almost all cases to find the right road independently. How many times were we gladdened when, upon opening a letter just arrived, we discovered in it the very ideas and conclusions which I had just recommended to his attention. And how deeply and quietly happy he was over such coincidences of our ideas! The collection of Leon's letters will undoubtedly constitute one of the most valuable sources for the study of the inner pre-history of the Fourth International.

But the Russian question continued to occupy the center of his attention. While still in Prinkipo he became the actual editor of the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* from its inception (the middle of 1928), and took complete charge of this work upon his arrival in Berlin (the beginning of 1931), where the *Bulletin* was immediately transferred from Paris. The last letter we received from Leon written on February 4, 1938, twelve days before his death, begins with the following words: "I am sending you page-proofs of the *Bulletin* for the next ship will not leave for some time, while the *Bulletin* will

come off the press only tomorrow morning." The appearance of each issue was a minor event in his life, a minor event which demanded great exertions; making up the issue, polishing the raw material, writing articles, meticulous proof-reading, prompt correspondence with friends and collaborators, and, not the least, gathering funds. But how proud he was over each "successful" number!

During the first years of emigration he engaged in a vast correspondence with Oppositionists in the U. S. S. R. But by 1932 the G. P. U. destroyed virtually all our connections. It became necessary to seek fresh information through devious channels. Leon was always on the lookout, avidly searching for connecting threads with Russia, hunting up returning tourists, Soviet students assigned abroad, or sympathetic functionaries in the foreign representations. To avoid compromising his informant, he chased for hours through the streets of Berlin and later of Paris to evade the G. P. U. spies who trailed him. In all these years there was not a single instance of any one suffering as a consequence of indiscretion, carelessness or imprudence on his part.

In the files of the G. P. U. he was referred to by the nickname "synok" or "Little Son." According to the late Ignace Reiss, in the Lubyanka they said on more than one occasion: "The Little Son does his work cleverly. The Old Man wouldn't find it so easy without him." This was the actual truth. Without him it would not have been easy. Without him it will be hard. It was just for this reason that agents of the G. P. U., worming their way even into the

organizations of the Opposition, surrounded Leon with a thick web of surveillance, intrigues and plots. In the Moscow trials his name invariably figured next to mine. Moscow was seeking for an opportunity to get rid of him at all costs!

After Hitler assumed power, the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* was immediately banned. Leon remained in Germany for several weeks, carrying on illegal work, hiding from the Gestapo in different apartments. His mother and I sounded the alarm, insisting on his immediate departure from Germany. In the spring of 1933 Leon finally decided to leave the country which he had learned to know and to love, and moved to Paris where the *Bulletin* followed him. Here Leon again resumed his studies. He had to pass an examination for the French intermediate school and then for the third time to begin with the first term in the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics at the Sorbonne. In Paris he lived under very difficult conditions, in constant want, occupying himself with scientific studies at the University at odd moments; but thanks to his exceptional ability he completed his studies, i. e. obtained his diploma.

His main efforts in Paris, even to a greater extent than in Berlin, were devoted to the revolution and to literary collaboration with me. During recent years Leon himself began to write more systematically for the press of the Fourth International. Isolated indications, especially the notes on his reminiscences for my autobiography, made me suspect while still in Prinkipo that he had literary gifts. But he was loaded down with all sorts of other work, and

inasmuch as we held our ideas and subject matter in common, he left the literary work to me. As I recall, in Turkey he wrote only one major article: "Stalin and the Red Army—or How History is Written," under the pseudonym of N. Markin, a sailor-revolutionist to whom in his childhood he was bound by a friendship deepened by profound admiration. This article was included in my book *The Stalin School of Falsification*. Subsequently his articles began to appear more and more frequently in the pages of the *Bulletin* and in other publications of the Fourth International, written each time under the pressure of necessity. Leon wrote only when he had something to say and when he knew that no one else could say it better. During the period of our life in Norway I received requests from various places for an analysis of the Stakhanovist movement which to some extent caught our organizations by surprise. When it became clear that my prolonged illness would prevent me from fulfilling this task, Leon sent me a draft of an article by him on Stakhanovism, with a very modest accompanying letter. The work appeared to me excellent both in its serious and thorough analysis as well as in the terseness and clarity of its presentation. I remember how pleased Leon was by my warm praise! This article was published in several languages and immediately provided a correct point of view upon this "socialist" piecework under the whip of the bureaucracy. Scores of subsequent articles have not added anything essential to this analysis.

Leon's chief literary work was his book, *The Red Book on the Moscow Trial*, devoted to the trial of

the Sixteen (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, *et al*). It was published in French, Russian and German. At that time my wife and I were captives in Norway, bound hand and foot, targets of the most monstrous slander. There are certain forms of paralysis, in which people see, hear and understand everything but are unable to move a finger to ward off mortal danger. It was to such political paralysis that the Norwegian "Socialist" government subjected us. What a priceless gift to us, under these conditions, was Leon's book, the first crushing reply to the Kremlin falsifiers. The first few pages, I recall, seemed to me pale. That was because they only restated a political appraisal, which had already been made, of the general condition of the U. S. S. R. But from the moment the author undertook an independent analysis of the trial, I became completely engrossed. Each succeeding chapter seemed to me better than the last. "Good boy, Levusyatka!" my wife and I said. "We have a defender!" How his eyes must have glowed with pleasure as he read our warm praise! Several newspapers, in particular the central organ of the Danish Social Democracy, said with assurance that I apparently had, despite the strict conditions of internment, found the means of participating in the work which appeared under Sedoff's name. "One feels the pen of Trotsky..." All this is—fiction. In the book there is not a line of my own. Many comrades who were inclined to regard Sedoff merely as "Trotsky's son"—just as Karl Liebknecht was long regarded only as the son of Wilhelm Liebknecht—were able to convince themselves, if

only from this little book, that he was not only an independent but an outstanding figure.

Leon wrote as he did everything else, that is, conscientiously, studying, reflecting, checking. The vanity of authorship was alien to him. Agitational declamation had no lures for him. At the same time every line he wrote glows with a living flame, whose source was his unfeigned revolutionary temperament.

* * *

This temperament was formed and hardened by events of personal and family life indissolubly linked to the great political events of our epoch. In 1905, his mother sat in a Petersburg jail expecting a child. A gust of liberalism set her free in the autumn. In February of the next year, the boy was born. By that time I was already confined in prison. I was able to see my son for the first time only thirteen months later, when I escaped from Siberia. His earliest impressions bore the breath of the first Russian revolution whose defeat drove us into Austria. The war, which drove us into Switzerland, hammered into the consciousness of the eight-year-old boy. The next big lesson for him was my deportation from France. On board ship he conversed, in sign language, about the revolution with a Catalan stoker. The revolution signified for him all possible boons, above all a return to Russia. Enroute from America, near Halifax, the eleven-year-old Levik struck a British officer with his fist. He knew whom to hit; not the sailors who carried me off the ship, but the officer who issued the orders. In Canada, during my incarceration

in the concentration camp, Leon learned how to conceal letters not read by the police and how to place them unobserved in the mail box. In Petrograd he found himself immediately plunged into the atmosphere of Bolshevik-baiting. In the bourgeois school where he happened to be enrolled at the beginning, sons of liberals and Social Revolutionaries beat him up because he was Trotsky's son. Once he came to the Wood-Workers' Trade Union, where his mother worked, with his hand all bloody. He had had a political discussion in school with Kerensky's son. In the streets he joined all the Bolshevik demonstrations, took refuge behind gates from the armed forces of the then People's Front (the coalition of Kadets, S. R.'s and Mensheviks). After the July days, grown pale and thin, he came to visit me in the jail of Kerensky-Tseretelli. In the home of a colonel they knew, at the dinner table, Leon and Sergei threw themselves, knives in hand, at an officer who had declared that the Bolsheviks were agents of the Kaiser. They made approximately the same reply to the engineer Serebrovsky, now a member of the Stalinist Central Committee, when he tried to assure them that Lenin was—a German spy. Levik learned early to grind his young teeth when reading slanders in the newspapers. He passed the October days in the company of the sailor Markin who, in leisure moments, instructed him in the cellar in the art of shooting.

Thus a future fighter took shape. For him, the revolution was not an abstraction. Oh, no! It seeped into his very pores. Hence derived his serious

attitude toward revolutionary duty beginning with the Red Saturdays, and tutoring of the backward ones. That is why he later joined so ardently in the struggle against the bureaucracy. In the autumn of 1927 Leon made an "Oppositional" tour to the Urals in the company of Mrachkovsky and Beloborodov. On their return, both of them spoke with genuine enthusiasm about Leon's conduct during the sharp and hopeless struggle, his intransigent speeches at the meetings of the youth, his physical fearlessness in the face of the hooligan detachments of the bureaucracy, his moral courage which enabled him to face defeat with his young head held high. When he returned from the Urals, having matured in those six weeks, I was already expelled from the party. It was necessary to prepare for exile. He was not given to imprudence, nor did he make a show of courage. He was wise, cautious, and calculating. But he knew that danger constitutes an element in revolution as well as war. Whenever the need arose, and it frequently did, he knew how to face danger. His life in France, where the G. P. U. has friends on every floor of the governmental edifice, was an almost unbroken chain of dangers. Professional killers dogged his steps. They lived in apartments next to his. They stole his letters and archives and listened in on his phone conversations. When, after an illness, he spent two weeks on the shores of the Mediterranean—his only vacation for a period of years—the agents of the G. P. U. took quarters in the same *pension*. When he arranged to go to Mulhausen for a conference with a Swiss lawyer in connection with a legal

action against the slanders of the Stalinist press, a whole gang of G. P. U. agents was waiting for him at the station. They were the same who later murdered Ignace Reiss. Leon escaped certain death only because he fell ill on the eve of his departure, suffered from a high fever and could not leave Paris. All these facts have been established by the judicial authorities of France and Switzerland. And how many secrets still remain unrevealed? His closest friends wrote us three months ago that he was subject to a danger too direct in Paris and insisted on his going to Mexico. Leon replied: The danger is undeniable, but Paris today is too important a battle post; to leave it now would be a crime. Nothing remained except to bow to this argument.

When in the autumn of last year a number of foreign Soviet agents began to break with the Kremlin and the G. P. U., Leon naturally was to be found in the center of these events. Certain friends protested against his consorting with "untested" new allies: there might possibly be a provocation. Leon replied that there was undoubtedly an element of risk but that it was impossible to develop this important movement if we stood aside. This time as well we had to accept Leon as nature and the political situation made him. As a genuine revolutionist he placed value on life only to the extent that it served the struggle of the proletariat for liberation.

* * *

On February 16, the Mexican evening papers carried a brief dispatch on the death of Leon Sedoff following a surgical operation. Absorbed in urgent

work I did not see these papers. Diego Rivera on his own initiative checked this dispatch by radio and came to me with the terrible news. An hour later I told Nathalia of the death of our son—in the same month of February in which 32 years ago she brought to me in jail the news of his birth. Thus ended for us the day of February 16, the blackest day in our personal lives.

We had expected many things, almost anything, but not this. For only recently Leon had written us concerning his intention to secure a job as a worker in a factory. At the same time he expressed the hope of writing the history of the Russian Opposition for a scientific institute. He was full of plans. Only two days prior to the news of his death we received a letter from him dated February 4, brimming with courage and vitality. Here it is before me. "We are making preparations," he wrote, "for the trial in Switzerland where the situation is very favorable both as regards so-called 'public opinion' and the authorities." And he went on to list a number of favorable facts and symptoms. "*En somme nous marquons des points.*" The letter breathes with assurance concerning the future. Whence then this malignant disease, and lightning death? In twelve days? For us, the question is shrouded in deep mystery. Will it ever be cleared up? The first and natural supposition is that he was poisoned. It presented no serious difficulty for the agents of Stalin to gain access to Leon, his clothing, his food. Are judicial experts, even if untrammelled by "diplomatic" considerations capable of arriving at a definitive

conclusion on this point? In connection with war chemistry the art of poisoning has nowadays attained an extraordinary development. To be sure the secrets of this art are inaccessible to common mortals. But the poisoners of the G. P. U. have access to everything. It is entirely feasible to conceive of a poison which cannot be detected after death, even with the most careful analysis. And who will guarantee such care?

Or did they kill him without resorting to the aid of chemistry? This young and profoundly sensitive and tender being had had far too much to bear. The long years of the campaign of lies against his father and the best of the older comrades, whom Leon from his childhood had become accustomed to revere and love, had already deeply shaken his moral organism. The long series of capitulations by members of the Opposition dealt him blows that were no less heavy. Then followed in Berlin the suicide of Zina, my older daughter, whom Stalin had perfidiously, out of the sheerest vindictiveness, torn from her children, her family, her own milieu. Leon found himself with his older sister's corpse and her six-year old boy on his hands. He decided to try to reach his younger brother Sergei in Moscow by phone. Either because the G. P. U. was momentarily disconcerted by Zina's suicide or because it hoped to listen in to some secrets, a phone connection, contrary to all expectations, was made, and Leon was able to transmit the tragic news to Moscow by his own voice. Such was the last conversation between our two boys, doomed brothers, over the still-warm body of their sister.

Leon's letters to us in Prinkipo were terse, meager and restrained when they described his ordeal. He spared us far too much. But in every line one could feel an unbearable moral strain.

Material difficulties and privations Leon bore lightly, jokingly, like a true proletarian: but of course they too left their mark. Infinitely more harrowing were the effects of subsequent moral tortures. The Moscow Trial of the Sixteen, the monstrous nature of the accusations, the nightmarish testimony of the defendants, among them Smirnov and Mrachkovsky, whom Leon so intimately knew and loved; the unexpected internment of his father and mother in Norway, the period of four months without any news; the theft of the archives, the mysterious removal of my wife and myself to Mexico; the second Moscow Trial with its even more delirious accusations and confessions, the disappearance of his brother Sergei, accused of "poisoning workers"; the shooting of countless people who had either been close friends or remained friends to the end; the persecutions and the attempts of the G. P. U. in France, the murder of Reiss in Switzerland, the lies, the baseness, the perfidy, the frame-ups—no, "Stalinism" was for Leon not an abstract political concept but an endless series of moral blows and spiritual wounds. Whether the Moscow masters resorted to chemistry, or whether everything they had previously done proved sufficient, the conclusion remains one and the same: *It was they who killed him.* The day of his death they marked on the Thermidorian calendar as a major celebration.

Before they killed him they did everything in their power to slander and blacken our son in the eyes of contemporaries and of posterity. Cain Djugashvili and his henchmen tried to depict Leon as an agent of Fascism, a secret partisan of capitalist restoration in the U. S. S. R., the organizer of railway wrecks and murders of workers. The efforts of the scoundrels are in vain. Tons of Thermidorian filth rebound from his young figure, leaving not a stain on him. Leon was a thoroughly clean, honest, pure human being. He could before any working class gathering tell the story of his life—alas, so brief—day by day, as I have briefly told it here. He had nothing to be ashamed of or to hide. Moral nobility was the basic warp of his character. He unwaveringly served the cause of the oppressed, because he remained true to himself. From the hands of nature and history he emerged a man of *heroic* mould. The great awe-inspiring events which hover over us will need such people. Had Leon lived to participate in these events he would have shown his true stature. But he did not live. Our Leon, boy, son, heroic fighter, is no more!

His mother—who was closer to him than any other person in the world—and I are living through these terrible hours recalling his image, feature by feature, unable to believe that he is no more and weeping because it is impossible not to believe. How can we accustom ourselves to the idea that upon this earth there no longer exists the warm, human entity bound to us by such indissoluble threads of common memories, mutual understanding, and tender attach-

ment. No one knew us and no one knows us, our strong and our weak sides, so well as he did. He was part of both of us, our young part. By hundreds of channels our thoughts and feelings daily reached out to him in Paris. Together with our boy has died everything that still remained young within us.

Good-by, Leon, good-by dear and incomparable friend. Your mother and I never thought, never expected that destiny would impose on us this terrible task of writing your obituary. We lived in firm conviction that long after we were gone you would be the continuer of our common cause. But we were not able to protect you. Good-by, Leon! We bequeath your irreproachable memory to the younger generation of the workers of the world. You will rightly live in the hearts of all those who work, suffer and struggle for a better world. Revolutionary youth of all countries! Accept from us the memory of our Leon, adopt him as your son—he is worthy of it—and let him henceforth participate invisibly in your battles, since destiny has denied him the happiness of participating in your final victory.

G L O S S A R Y

"OUR LAST EMIGRATION"—Began in 1928 when Trotsky was sent to Alma Ata subsequent to his expulsion from the Bolshevik party in November, 1927. Deported to Prinkipo (Turkey) in 1929; went to France in 1933, Norway in 1935, Mexico in December, 1936.

"OUR SECOND EMIGRATION"—Following a period of imprisonment after the defeat of the 1905 revolution, Trotsky was successively expelled from Austria, France and Spain during the war. He was in New York when the February revolution broke out.

KREMLIN—Building in Moscow which houses the departments of the government. Since the revolution the highest government officials have lived there, as Stalin does today.

"RED SATURDAYS"—Days of voluntary labor mobilization initiated during the civil war (1918-1921), when Red partisans worked at transportation, building, vital production, etc., without pay.

THE OPPOSITION—Section of the Bolshevik party headed by Trotsky which began in 1923 to struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy and policies. "**The police massacre of the Opposition**" refers to the mass arrests and persecutions of the Opposition which reached a high point in the winter of 1927, in preparation for the 15th party congress.

SIXTH WORLD CONGRESS—Of the Communist International, held in July, 1928, at which the Stalin-Bukharin program, criticized by Trotsky in his **Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern** (available in **The Third International after Lenin**), was adopted.

G. P. U.—Stalin's secret police, also known as the O.G.P.U. Recently incorporated into the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, the N.K.V.D.

“THERMIDORIAN FALSIFICATION”—Refers to the lies, misquotations and distortions of history employed in the struggle against the Opposition (see Trotsky’s **The Stalin School of Falsification**). The reaction which overthrew the revolutionary regime of Robespierre in the French revolution on the 9th of Thermidor (July 27, 1794) employed the same techniques.

PRAVDA—“Truth,” official newspaper of the Bolshevik party since 1912, now Stalin’s chief organ.

INTERNATIONAL LEFT OPPOSITION—Organization of the groups expelled from the sections of the Communist International for their support of the Russian Opposition. Since 1933 known as the movement for the **Fourth International**. The **International Secretariat** is a resident body in Europe which co-ordinates the work of the international movement, under the direction of the delegated **Bureau for the Fourth International**.

IGNACE REISS—G.P.U. agent who broke with Stalin in the Summer of 1937 and joined the Fourth Internationalists. Murdered by G.P.U. agents near Lausanne, Switzerland, on Sept. 4, 1937.

MOSCOW TRIALS—Series of judicial frame-ups of Old Bolsheviks following the assassination of Kirov in December, 1934. Most important of these are: Trial of the Sixteen (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, etc.) in August, 1936; Trial of the Seventeen (Pyatakov, Radek, etc.) in January, 1937; Trial of the Generals (Tukhachevsky Gamarnik, etc.) in May, 1937; Trial of the Twenty-One (Rakovsky, Bukharin, Rykov, etc.) in March, 1938.

STAKHANOVIST MOVEMENT—Special system of speed-up and rationalization of production introduced in the Soviet Union in 1935, which led to great wage disparities and widespread discontent among masses of workers.

“In 1905... A GUST OF LIBERALISM”—In October, 1905, the Czar, frightened by the strike movement, issued a Consti-

tutional Manifesto and made certain liberal gestures to stem the rising revolution.

KADETS—Constitutional Democrats (K.D.'s), party of progressive landlords and middle bourgeoisie, headed by Professor Miukov, standing for constitutional monarchy and ultimately a republic.

S. R.'s—Social Revolutionaries, peasant socialist party representing small landholders; split into Left S. R.'s, who participated for a time in the Bolshevik government, and the Right S. R.'s, who supported the provisional Kerensky government.

MENSHEVIKS—Russian right-wing Social Democrats, calling themselves Marxists but advocating alliance between workers and liberal bourgeoisie to establish a democratic republic.

KERENSKY-TSERETELLI—Designation given to Provisional Government overthrown by the Bolsheviks. It was supported by a "popular front" of Kadets, Mensheviks and S. R.'s. Kerensky, an S. R., was Minister-President, while Tseretelli was a Menshevik leader of the Soviets.

SERGEI—Leon's brother, Trotsky's youngest son.

"LENIN WAS—A GERMAN SPY"—The Allied forces and the Kerensky government continually accused Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks of being agents of the German General Staff because of their agitation against the war.

"THE TRIAL IN SWITZERLAND"—A reference to the trial of G.P.U. agents involved in the murder of Ignace Reiss, held in October, 1937.

"CAIN DJUGASHVILI"—Stalin's real name is Joseph Djugashvili. Cain is the Biblical character who murdered his brother, Abel.

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