

# PM

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1940

## Death Comes to Trotsky, Builder of a Nation, Fugitive of the World

### 'I Am Sure of Victory ... Go Ahead' ... Were His Final Words

MEXICO CITY, Aug. 22.—Leon Trotsky, defeated giant of the Russian Revolution, died last night, slain by a man who posed as his friend.

Twenty persons were said to be detained for questioning in the case.

Before he slipped into a coma, from which he could not be rallied, he murmured:

"This time they succeeded. Jackson (the assassin) was a member of either the OGPU or a Fascist—most likely the OGPU."

In the same breath with his accusation came the final word for his disciples:

"I am sure of victory for the Fourth Internationale. Go forward."

### Assailant Lives

Thus, at 9:25 last night, ended the life of the man who with Lenin brought about the world's most profound revolution and with his death ended the bitterest of modern feuds—Trotsky against Stalin.

In another room in Green Cross Emergency Hospital lay his assailant, Jaques Mornard van den Dreschd, Persian-born son of Belgian parents, known as Frank Jackson. His blonde companion, Sylvia Ageloff, 30, of 50 Livingston St., Brooklyn, was held for questioning under police guard. Her father or one of her brothers was expected to fly here today.

Dresched reportedly told police that Trotsky had refused to let him marry Miss Ageloff and had demanded that he go to the Soviet Union as a saboteur.

President Lazaro Cardenas ordered that funeral expenses should be borne by the government. It was reported that the body would be taken to the United States.

### Wife at Bedside

Trotsky's wife, two bodyguards and hospital aids were at Trotsky's bedside when he died. Mrs. Trotsky was crouching on a cushion on the floor beside Trotsky's bed. She rose every few minutes to touch his legs to see if they were still warm. His last words to his secretary had been of his wife:

"Take care of her. She has been with me many years." Trotsky was quoted as saying.

"Jackson (as Trotsky knew Dreschd) shot me with a revolver. I am seriously wounded . . . I feel that this time it is the end . . . I am close to death from the blow of a political assassin . . . We had entered the room to talk French statistics. . . ."—UP.

### A Man of Destiny

Obscured in blind and savage invective, in the bitter confusion of doctrinaire battles that had a world at stake, Trotsky's career will wait long for a just appraisal of its contribution to history. But in his 61 years, spanning the long fight of Russia's intellectuals to free their country from feudal bondage, he shaped the course of history as have only a few of the world's great leaders.

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Two operations could not save Trotsky, despite his stubborn fight against 10 to 1 odds.

Born Lev Davidovich Bronstein, in November, 1879, son of a prosperous Jewish farmer, his childhood coincided with Tsarism's bloody suppression of the Nihilists, heroic terrorist revolutionaries of the early '80's. A Jew in a land where racial discrimination reached its height of sadistic refinement, a middle class intellectual in a world of medievalism and privilege, Trotsky inevitably joined the forces opposing the existing regime.

In 1898 when nine delegates of the Russian revolutionary movements met in Minsk to found the Social Democratic Labor Party, germ of the later Bolshevik Party, Trotsky was already engaged in underground political activity. The efficiency of the Tsarist police put him in jail for two and a half years, and banished him for four years in the frozen wastes of Siberia.

### **The 1905 Revolution**

In 1902 when he escaped to London, then the intellectual center of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, he was welcomed by revolutionaries like Lenin and contributed brilliantly to the party organ *Iskra*.

In 1905, when the top-heavy Tsarist Empire began to crumble from within, Trotsky was the first of the exiled revolutionary leaders to return to Russia. There he became the soul of the first Petrograd Soviet. There in intervals of hiding and imprisonment he worked out his famous theory of Permanent Revolution, which, 12 years before the 1917 Revolution, foresaw a social revolution following in the wake of an anti-Tsarist democratic revolution, and thereafter spreading to all the countries of western Europe.

### **Lenin and Trotsky**

Between 1905 and 1917 Trotsky was again an exile, a free-lance journalist. The World War drove him from one country to another. Three months before the outbreak of the March 1917 Revolution he set sail for the U. S. A. Ten weeks later he was on his way back to Petrograd. There, with Lenin in hiding in Finland, he joined the Bolshevik Party, and played a leading and able role in directing preparations for the Bolshevik revolt.

Lenin made Trotsky his first Commissar of Foreign Affairs, upon his shoulders placed the responsibility of concluding peace with Germany. Stalinist textbooks now give Trotsky a weasel role in the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, accuse him of "provoking a fresh assault on the unarmed land of the Soviet." The territorial losses of a treaty more punishing than Versailles they attribute to Trotsky's treachery.

But Lenin at the time said: "I would give up Petrograd for a breathing spell of 20 days."

Trotsky's next job was to organize, out of Russia's exhausted, unarmed and starving millions, a Red Army. In the wars which the Bolsheviks fought on 14 fronts for more

## Trotsky

than four years, Trotsky, as Commissar of War and leader of the Red Army, must be credited with at least a measure of their spectacular successes.

### The Split-Up

Trotsky was on his way to the Caucasus when Lenin died. His failure to return for Lenin's funeral marked his political death. After Lenin's death the Bolsheviks split into factional groups.

In a period of social change tearing through the fabric of an entire nation, of homeric problems requiring daily decisions affecting the lives of millions, each group thought itself the only true instrument of the Revolution, denounced its opponents as corrupters of the Revolution's ideals, falsifiers of history, unfaithful to Lenin.

Trotsky was exiled in November, 1927, and sentenced to permanent banishment two years later and went to Constantinople.

Driven in the years since then from the Turkish island of Prinkipo to various parts of Europe and finally to Mexico, he has been accused of participation in lurid conspiracies, fantastic plots. He wrote his great *History of the Russian Revolution*.

His years of exile have been lonely, bitter and barren—the price a great Revolution exacted from one of its Titans.—T. P.

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