

Trotsky "Trial"

In Russia last January a group of Communists, including Karl Radek, noted journalist, were convicted on their own confessions of plotting with Leon Trotsky, exiled Russian revolutionary, to overthrow the regime of Dictator Joseph Stalin. In Mexico City last week Trotsky continued to defend himself against charges that he directed and inspired terrorism, treason and counter-revolutionary activities in the Soviet. His defense was offered at a "trial" arranged by a group of liberals, mostly Americans, at Trotsky's request.

Conducting the hearings was a subcommittee of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, headed by Dr. John Dewey, 78-year-old educator and professor of philosophy at Columbia University. "Court" was the home of Diego Rivera, Mexican artist who arranged for Trotsky's haven in Mexico last January following the exile's dismissal from Norway.

Dominating the hearings for a whole week, the 60-year-old co-leader of Russia's Bolshevik revolution presented his side of the "case." He related with evident relish his story of his 40 years of revolutionary activities, his split and his long fight with Stalin. He told the widely-heralded "Court of Honor" that Moscow once tried to "buy my head." He termed the re-



Trotsky Shed Tears For His Children

cent trials in Moscow which led to his condemnation and the execution of 29 prominent Bolsheviki for alleged terrorism, sabotage and treason a "gigantic frame-up."

The exile produced evidence of many sorts, though not always complete, and scoffed at the idea of his having plotted with the "doomed regimes" of Japan and Germany against the Soviet Union. His specific defense was laid against the background of his public and private writings, by which he attempted to show in general that he has always opposed terrorism, favoring instead mass action. But the validity of much that he said was still to be tested in cross-examination by the committee's attorney.

Only tears of the "trial" came when the old Bolshevik brokenly told of how his three children have been punished for the "crimes" of their father. The tears filled the eyes of Natalia Trotsky, his wife seated behind him.

Just before Trotsky closed his defense last week, Carleton Beals, well-known American writer, resigned from the unofficial commission of liberals after a sharp dispute with the famous exile over the latter's Communistic activities in Mexico in 1919. In a letter to Chairman Dewey, Beals said: "I do not consider the proceedings a true and serious investigation of the charges . . ." He called the "trial" a "schoolboy joke." Trotsky countered by asking an investigation of Beals's conduct, saying he believed that such an inquiry would disclose a new plot to prevent Trotsky "from unmasking judicial crimes in Moscow."