**Leon Trotsky**

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| **Leon Trotsky** | |
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| [**People's Commissar for Army and Navy Affairs**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_Defence_of_Soviet_Union) | |
| **In office** March 13, 1918 – January 15, 1925 | |
| **Deputy** | [Ephraim Sklyansky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephraim_Sklyansky) |
| **Preceded by** | [Nikolai Podvoisky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Podvoisky) |
| **Succeeded by** | [Mikhail Frunze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Frunze) |
| [**People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Minister_of_Russia) | |
| **In office** November 8, 1917 – March 13, 1918 | |
| **Deputy** | [Georgy Chicherin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgy_Chicherin) |
| **Preceded by** | [Mikhail Tereshchenko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Tereshchenko) |
| **Succeeded by** | [Georgy Chicherin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgy_Chicherin) |
| [**President**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chairman) **of the** [**Petrograd Soviet**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrograd_Soviet) | |
| **In office** October 8, 1917 – November 8, 1917 | |
|  | |
| **Born** | November 7, 1879(1879-11-07) [Kherson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kherson_Oblast), [Russian Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Empire) |
| **Died** | August 21, 1940 (aged 60) [Coyoacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyoac%C3%A1n), [DF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Federal_District), [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) |
| **Citizenship** | [Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet) |
| **Political party** | [RSDLP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Social_Democratic_Labour_Party), [SDPS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_of_Switzerland), [Communist Party of the Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_the_Soviet_Union), [Left Opposition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Opposition), [IV International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IV_International) |
| **Spouse(s)** | [Aleksandra Sokolovskaya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandra_Sokolovskaya), [Natalia Sedova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalia_Sedova) |
| **Profession** | [Statesman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statesman), [editor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editing) |
| **Religion** | [Atheist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheist) |
| **Signature** |  |

**Leon Trotsky** ([Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language): [Лев Давидович Трóцкий](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a2/Ru-Leon_Trotsky.ogg) ([help](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Media_help)·[info](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ru-Leon_Trotsky.ogg)), [Ukrainian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_language): Лев Давидович Троцький (*Lev Davidovich Trotsky*, also transliterated *Leo*, *Lyev*, *Trotski*, *Trotskij*, *Trockij* and *Trotzky*) November 7, [[O.S.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Style_and_New_Style_dates) October 26] 1879 – August 21, 1940), born **Lev Davidovich Bronstein** ([Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language): Лев Давидович Бронштéйн), was a [Bolshevik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshevik) revolutionary and [Marxist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism) theorist. He was one of the leaders of the Russian [October Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_Revolution), second only to [Lenin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenin). During the early days of the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), he served first as [People's Commissar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Commissar) for Foreign Affairs and later as the founder and commander of the [Red Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Army) and People's Commissar of War. He was also among the first members of the [Politburo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politburo_of_the_CPSU_Central_Committee).



After leading a failed struggle of the [Left Opposition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Opposition) against the policies and rise of [Joseph Stalin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin) in the 1920s and the increasing role of bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, Trotsky was expelled from the [Communist Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_the_Soviet_Union) and deported from the Soviet Union. An early advocate of Red Army intervention against European [fascism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism), Trotsky also opposed Stalin's [peace agreements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet%E2%80%93German_relations_before_1941) with [Adolf Hitler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolf_Hitler) in the 1930s. As the head of the [Fourth International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International), Trotsky continued in exile to oppose the Stalinist [bureaucracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureaucracy) in the Soviet Union, and was eventually assassinated in [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) by [Ramón Mercader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ram%C3%B3n_Mercader), a Soviet agent. Trotsky's ideas form the basis of [Trotskyism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trotskyism), a term coined as early as 1905 by his opponents in order to separate it from [Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism). Trotsky’s ideas remain a major school of [Marxist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxist) thought that is opposed to the theories of [Stalinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalinism). He was one of the few Soviet political figures who was never [rehabilitated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rehabilitation_(Soviet)) by the Soviet administration.

**Before the 1917 Revolution**

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| Part of [the Politics series](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Politics) on |
| [Trotskyism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trotskyism) |
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| **Leon Trotsky** [**Fourth International**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International) |
| [**Marxism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism)[**Leninism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leninism)[**Russian Revolution**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_Revolution) |
| **Concepts** |
| [Deformed workers' state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deformed_workers%27_state) [Degenerated workers' state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Degenerated_workers%27_state) [French Turn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Turn) [Permanent revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_revolution) [Political revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_revolution) [Social revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_revolution) [United front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_front) [World revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_revolution) |
| **Trotskyists** |
| [James P. Cannon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_P._Cannon) [Tony Cliff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Cliff) [Pierre Frank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Frank) [Ted Grant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Grant) [Joseph Hansen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Hansen_(socialist)) [Gerry Healy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerry_Healy) [C.L.R. James](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._L._R._James) [Pierre Lambert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Lambert) [Guillermo Lora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillermo_Lora) [Livio Maitan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livio_Maitan) [Ernest Mandel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Mandel) [Nahuel Moreno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahuel_Moreno) [Max Shachtman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Shachtman) |
| [**Internationals**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Trotskyist_internationals) |
| [FI Centre of Reconstruction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International_(ICR)) [Fourth International (Post-Reunification)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International_(Post-Reunification)) [FI International Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Committee_of_the_Fourth_International) [International Workers' League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Workers_League_(Fourth_International))  [Committee for a Workers' International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Committee_for_a_Workers%27_International)  [International Marxist Tendency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Marxist_Tendency)  [International Socialist Tendency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Socialist_Tendency) |
| **Branches** |
| [Orthodox Trotskyism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Trotskyism) [Third camp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_camp) |
| [**Communism Portal**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Communism) |
|  |



8 years old Lev Davidovich Bronstein, 1888



Lev Davidovich Bronstein , 1897

**Childhood and family (1879–1896)**

Leon Trotsky was born Lev Davidovich Bronstein on November 7, 1879, in [Yanovka](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bereslavka&action=edit&redlink=1), [Kherson Province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kherson_Province) of the [Russian Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Empire) (today's [Kirovohrad Oblast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirovohrad_Oblast), [Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine)), a small village 15 miles (24 km) from the nearest post office. He was the fifth child of a well-to-do farmer, David Leontyevich Bronstein (1847–1922) and Anna Bronstein (d. 1910). The family was [Jewish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish), although it was not religious. The languages spoken in his home were [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language) and [Ukrainian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_language) instead of [Yiddish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiddish_language). Trotsky's younger sister, [Olga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olga_Kameneva), married [Lev Kamenev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Kamenev), a leading Bolshevik.

When Trotsky was nine, his father sent him to [Odessa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odessa) to be educated and he was enrolled in a historically [German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_people) school, which became Russified during his years in Odessa, consequent to the Imperial government's policy of [Russification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russification). As [Isaac Deutscher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Deutscher) points out in his biography of Trotsky, Odessa was then a bustling cosmopolitan port city, very unlike the typical Russian city of the time. This environment contributed to the development of the young man's international outlook.

Although it is stated in his autobiography [*My Life*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Life_(Leon_Trotsky_autobiography)) that he was never perfectly fluent in any language but Russian and Ukrainian, [Raymond Molinier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raymond_Molinier) wrote that Trotsky spoke fluent French.

**Revolutionary activity and exile (1896–1902)**

Trotsky became involved in revolutionary activities in 1896 after moving to Nikolayev (now [Mykolaiv](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mykolaiv)). At first a [*narodnik*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narodnik) (revolutionary [populist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Populism)), he was introduced to [Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism) later that year and was originally opposed to it. But during periods of exile and imprisonment he gradually became a Marxist. Instead of pursuing a [mathematics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathematics) degree, Trotsky helped organize the South Russian Workers' Union in Nikolayev in early 1897. Using the name 'Lvov', he wrote and printed leaflets and proclamations, distributed revolutionary pamphlets and popularized socialist ideas among industrial workers and revolutionary students.

In January 1898, over 200 members of the union, including Trotsky, were arrested, and he spent the next two years in prison awaiting trial. Two months after his imprisonment, the first Congress of the newly formed [Russian Social Democratic Labor Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Social_Democratic_Labor_Party) (RSDLP) was held, and from then on Trotsky considered himself a member of the party. While in prison, he married fellow Marxist [Aleksandra Sokolovskaya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandra_Sokolovskaya). While serving his sentence he studied philosophy. In 1900 he was sentenced to four years in exile in [Ust-Kut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ust-Kut) and Verkholensk (see [map](http://www.supertravelnet.com/maps/?country=241_690_8&language=1)) in the [Irkutsk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irkutsk) region of [Siberia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia), where his first two daughters, Nina Nevelson and [Zinaida Volkova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zinaida_Volkova), were born.

In Siberia, Trotsky became aware of the differences within the party, which had been decimated by arrests in 1898 and 1899. Some social democrats known as "economists" argued that the party should focus on helping industrial workers improve their lot in life. Others argued that overthrowing the monarchy was more important and that a well-organized and disciplined revolutionary party was essential. The latter were led by the [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London)-based newspaper [*Iskra*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iskra), which was founded in 1900. Trotsky quickly sided with the *Iskra* position.

**First emigration and second marriage (1902–1903)**

Trotsky escaped from Siberia in the summer of [1902](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1902). It is said he adopted the name of a jailer of the Odessa prison in which he had earlier been held, and this became his primary revolutionary pseudonym. Once abroad, he moved to London to join [Georgy Plekhanov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgy_Plekhanov), [Vladimir Lenin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Lenin), [Julius Martov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Martov) and other editors of [*Iskra*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iskra). Under the [pen name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pen_name) *Pero* ("feather" or "pen" in Russian), Trotsky soon became one of the paper's leading authors.

Unknown to Trotsky, the six editors of *Iskra* were evenly split between the "old guard" led by Plekhanov and the "new guard" led by Lenin and Martov. Not only were Plekhanov's supporters older (in their 40s and 50s), but they had also spent the previous 20 years in European exile together. Members of the new guard were in their early 30s and had only recently come from Russia. Lenin, who was trying to establish a permanent majority against Plekhanov within *Iskra*, expected Trotsky, then 23, to side with the new guard and wrote in March 1903:

I suggest to all the members of the editorial board that they co-opt 'Pero' as a member of the board on the same basis as other members. We very much need a seventh member, both as a convenience in voting (six being an even number), and as an addition to our forces. 'Pero' has been contributing to every issue for several months now; he works in general most energetically for the Iskra; he gives lectures (in which he has been very successful). In the section of articles and notes on the events of the day, he will not only be very useful, but absolutely necessary. Unquestionably a man of rare abilities, he has conviction and energy, and he will go much farther.

Because of Plekhanov's opposition, Trotsky did not become a full member of the board, but from then on participated in its meetings in an advisory capacity, which earned him Plekhanov's enmity.

In late 1902, Trotsky met [Natalia Sedova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalia_Sedova), who soon became his companion and, from 1903 until his death, his wife. They had two children together, [Lev Sedov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Sedov) (b. 1906) and [Sergei Sedov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei_Sedov) (b. 1908). As Trotsky later explained, after the 1917 revolution:

In order not to oblige my sons to change their name, I, for "citizenship" requirements, took on the name of my wife.

But the name change remained a technicality and he never used the name "Sedov" either privately or publicly. Natalia Sedova sometimes signed her name "Sedova-Trotskaya". Trotsky and his first wife, Aleksandra Sokolovskaya, maintained a friendly relationship until she disappeared in 1935 during the [Great Purges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Purge).

**Split with Lenin (1903–1904)**

In the meantime, after a period of secret police repression and internal confusion that followed the first party Congress in 1898, *Iskra* succeeded in convening the party's 2nd congress in London in August 1903, Trotsky and other *Iskra* editors attended. The first congress went as planned, with *Iskra* supporters handily defeating the few "economist" delegates. Then the congress discussed the position of the [Jewish Bund](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Jewish_Labour_Bund_in_Lithuania,_Poland_and_Russia), which had co-founded the RSDLP in 1898 but wanted to remain autonomous within the party.

Shortly thereafter, pro-*Iskra* delegates unexpectedly split into two factions. Lenin and his supporters (known as [Bolsheviks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshevik)) argued for a smaller but highly organized party. Martov and his supporters (known as [Mensheviks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menshevik)) argued for a larger and less disciplined party. In a surprise development, Trotsky and most of the *Iskra* editors supported Martov and the Mensheviks while Plekhanov supported Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

During 1903 and 1904, many members changed sides in the factions. Plekhanov soon parted ways with the Bolsheviks. Trotsky left the Mensheviks in September 1904 over their insistence on an alliance with Russian liberals and their opposition to a reconciliation with Lenin and the Bolsheviks. From then until 1917 he described himself as a "non-factional social democrat".

Trotsky spent much of his time between 1904 and 1917 trying to reconcile different groups within the party, which resulted in many clashes with Lenin and other prominent party members. Trotsky later conceded he had been wrong in opposing Lenin on the issue of the party. During these years Trotsky began developing his theory of [permanent revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_revolution), which led to a close working relationship with [Alexander Parvus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Parvus) in 1904–1907.

**1905 revolution and trial (1905–1906)**

After the events of [Bloody Sunday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloody_Sunday_(1905)), Trotsky secretly returned to Russia in February 1905. At first he wrote leaflets for an underground printing press in [Kiev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiev), but soon moved to the capital, [Saint Petersburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg). There he worked with both [Bolsheviks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshevik) like Central Committee member [Leonid Krasin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonid_Krasin), and the local [Menshevik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menshevik) committee which he pushed in a more radical direction. But the latter was betrayed by a secret police agent in May, and Trotsky had to flee to rural [Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Finland). There he worked on fleshing out his theory of permanent revolution until October, when a nationwide strike made it possible for him to return to St. Petersburg.

After returning to the capital, Trotsky and [Parvus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parvus) took over the newspaper *Russian Gazette* and increased its circulation to 500,000. Trotsky also co-founded *Nachalo* ("The Beginning") with Parvus and the Mensheviks, which proved to be very successful.

Just before Trotsky's return, the Mensheviks had independently come up with the same idea that Trotsky had—an elected non-party revolutionary organization representing the capital's workers, the first [Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_(council)) ("Council") of Workers. By the time of Trotsky's arrival, the [St. Petersburg Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Petersburg_Soviet) was already functioning headed by [Khrustalyov-Nosar](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Khrustalyov-Nosar&action=edit&redlink=1) (Georgy Nosar, alias Pyotr Khrustalyov), a compromise figure, and proved to be very popular with the workers in spite of the Bolsheviks' original opposition. Trotsky joined the Soviet under the name "Yanovsky" (after the village he was born in, Yanovka) and was elected vice-Chairman. He did much of the actual work at the Soviet and, after Khrustalev-Nosar's arrest on November 26, was elected its chairman. On December 2, the Soviet issued a proclamation which included the following statement about the Tsarist government and its foreign debts:

The autocracy never enjoyed the confidence of the people and was never granted any authority by the people. We have therefore decided not to allow the repayment of such loans as have been made by the Tsarist government when openly engaged in a war with the entire people.

The following day, December 3, the Soviet was surrounded by troops loyal to the government and the deputies were arrested.

Trotsky and other Soviet leaders were tried in 1906 on charges of supporting an armed rebellion. At the trial, Trotsky delivered some of the best speeches of his life and solidified his reputation as an effective public speaker, which he confirmed in 1917–1920. He was convicted and sentenced to deportation.

**Second emigration (1907–1914)**

En route to deportation to Siberia in January 1907, Trotsky escaped and once again made his way to [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), where he attended the 5th Congress of the [RSDLP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSDLP). In October, he moved to [Vienna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna) where he often took part in the activities of the [Austrian Social Democratic Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austrian_Social_Democratic_Party) and, occasionally, of the [German Social Democratic Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Social_Democratic_Party), for seven years.

In Vienna, Trotsky became close to [Adolph Joffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolph_Joffe), his friend for the next 20 years, who introduced him to psychoanalysis. In October 1908 he started a bi-weekly Russian language Social Democratic paper aimed at Russian workers called [*Pravda*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pravda) ("Truth"), which he co-edited with Joffe, [Matvey Skobelev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matvey_Skobelev) and [Victor Kopp](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Victor_Kopp&action=edit&redlink=1) and which was smuggled into Russia. The paper avoided factional politics and proved popular with Russian industrial workers. Both the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks split multiple times after the failure of the 1905–1907 revolution. When various Bolshevik and Menshevik factions tried to re-unite at the January 1910 RSDLP Central Committee meeting in [Paris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris) over Lenin's objections, Trotsky's *Pravda* was made a party-financed 'central organ'. [Lev Kamenev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Kamenev), Trotsky's brother-in-law, was added to the editorial board from the Bolsheviks, but the unification attempts failed in August 1910 when Kamenev resigned from the board amid mutual recriminations. Trotsky continued publishing *Pravda* for another two years until it finally folded in April 1912.

The Bolsheviks started a new workers-oriented newspaper in St. Petersburg on April 22, 1912, and also called it *Pravda*. Trotsky was so upset by what he saw as a usurpation of his newspaper's name that in April 1913 he wrote a letter to [Nikolay Chkheidze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolay_Chkheidze), a Menshevik leader, bitterly denouncing Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Though he quickly got over the disagreement, the letter was intercepted by the police, and a copy was put into their archives. Shortly after Lenin's death in 1924, the letter was pulled out of the archives and made public by his opponents within the Communist Party, and was used to paint him as Lenin's enemy.

This was a period of heightened tension within the RSDLP and led to numerous frictions between Trotsky, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The most serious disagreement that Trotsky and the Mensheviks had with Lenin at the time was over the issue of "expropriations", i.e., armed robberies of banks and other companies by Bolshevik groups to procure money for the Party, which had been banned by the 5th Congress, but continued by the Bolsheviks.

In January 1912, the majority of the Bolshevik faction led by Lenin and a few Mensheviks held a conference in [Prague](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prague) and expelled their opponents from the party. In response, Trotsky organized a "unification" conference of social democratic factions in Vienna in August 1912 (a.k.a. "The August Bloc") and tried to re-unite the party. The attempt was generally unsuccessful.

In Vienna, Trotsky continuously published articles in radical Russian and Ukrainian newspapers like *Kievskaya Mysl* under a variety of pseudonyms, often "Antid Oto". In September 1912, *Kievskaya Mysl* sent him to the Balkans as its war correspondent, where he covered the two [Balkan Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkan_Wars) for the next year and became a close friend of [Christian Rakovsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Rakovsky), later a leading Soviet politician and Trotsky's ally in the Soviet Communist Party.

On August 3, 1914, at the outbreak of [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) which pitted Austria-Hungary against the Russian empire, Trotsky was forced to flee Vienna for neutral [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) to avoid arrest as a Russian [émigré](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89migr%C3%A9).

**World War I (1914–1917)**

The outbreak of WWI caused a sudden realignment within the RSDLP and other European social democratic parties over the issues of war, revolution, pacifism and internationalism. Within the RSDLP, Lenin, Trotsky and Martov advocated various internationalist anti-war positions, while Plekhanov and other social democrats (both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) supported the Russian government to some extent.

In Switzerland, Trotsky briefly worked within the [Swiss Socialist Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_Socialist_Party), prompting it to adopt an internationalist resolution, and wrote a book against the war, [*The War and the International*](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1914-war/index.htm). The thrust of the book was against the pro-war position taken by the European social democratic parties, primarily the German party.



Leon Trotsky with his daughter Nina

Trotsky moved to France on November 19, 1914, as a war correspondent for the *Kievskaya Mysl*. In January 1915 he began editing (at first with Martov, who soon resigned as the paper moved to the Left) *Nashe Slovo* ("Our Word"), an internationalist socialist newspaper, in Paris. He adopted the slogan of "peace without indemnities or annexations, peace without conquerors or conquered", which didn't go quite as far as Lenin, who advocated Russia's defeat in the war and demanded a complete break with the [Second International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_International).

Trotsky attended the [Zimmerwald Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zimmerwald_Conference) of anti-war socialists in September 1915 and advocated a middle course between those who, like Martov, would stay within the Second International at any cost and those who, like Lenin, would break with the Second International and form a [Third International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_International). The conference adopted the middle line proposed by Trotsky. At first opposed to it, in the end Lenin voted for Trotsky's resolution to avoid a split among anti-war socialists.

In March 31, Trotsky was deported from France to [Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain) for his anti-war activities. Spanish authorities did not let him stay and he was deported to the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) on December 25, 1916. He arrived in [New York City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City) on January 13, 1917. In New York, he wrote articles for the local Russian language socialist newspaper [*Novy Mir*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novy_Mir_(New_York)) and the Yiddish language daily [*Der Forverts* (*The Forward*)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Forward) in translation and made speeches to Russian émigrés.

Trotsky was living in New York City when the [February Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_Revolution) of 1917 overthrew [Tsar Nicholas II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_II_of_Russia). He left New York on March 27, but his ship was intercepted by [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) naval officials in [Halifax](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_Halifax), [Nova Scotia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nova_Scotia) and he spent a month detained at [Amherst, Nova Scotia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amherst,_Nova_Scotia). After initial hesitation, the Russian foreign minister [Pavel Milyukov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pavel_Milyukov) was forced to demand that Trotsky be released, and the British government freed Trotsky on April 29. He finally made his way back to Russia on May 4.

Upon his return, Trotsky was in substantive agreement with the [Bolshevik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshevik) position, but did not join them right away. Russian social democrats were split into at least 6 groups and the Bolsheviks were waiting for the next party Congress to determine which factions to merge with. Trotsky temporarily joined the [Mezhraiontsy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mezhraiontsy), a regional social democratic organization in St. Petersburg, and became one of its leaders. At the First [Congress of Soviets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_of_Soviets) in June, he was elected a member of the first [All-Russian Central Executive Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All-Russian_Central_Executive_Committee) ("VTsIK") from the Mezhraiontsy faction.

After an unsuccessful pro-Bolshevik uprising in Petrograd, Trotsky was arrested on August 7, 1917, but was released 40 days later in the aftermath of the failed counter-revolutionary [uprising by Lavr Kornilov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kornilov_Affair). After the Bolsheviks gained a majority in the [Petrograd Soviet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrograd_Soviet), Trotsky was elected Chairman on October 8. He sided with Lenin against [Grigory Zinoviev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grigory_Zinoviev) and [Lev Kamenev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Kamenev) when the Bolshevik Central Committee discussed staging an armed uprising and he led the efforts to overthrow the [Provisional Government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Provisional_Government,_1917) headed by [Aleksandr Kerensky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Kerensky).



Leon Trotsky in 1918.

The following summary of Trotsky's Role in 1917 was written by Stalin in *Pravda*, November 10, 1918. (Although this passage was quoted in Stalin's book "The October Revolution" issued in 1934, it was expunged in Stalin's Works released in 1949.)

All practical work in connection with the organization of the uprising was done under the immediate direction of Comrade Trotsky, the President of the Petrograd Soviet. It can be stated with certainty that the Party is indebted primarily and principally to Comrade Trotsky for the rapid going over of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the efficient manner in which the work of the [Military Revolutionary Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Revolutionary_Committee) was organized.

After the success of the uprising on 7–8 November, Trotsky led the efforts to repel a [counter-attack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerensky-Krasnov_uprising) by [Cossacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cossacks) under General [Pyotr Krasnov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyotr_Krasnov) and other troops still loyal to the overthrown Provisional Government at [Gatchina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatchina). Allied with Lenin, he successfully defeated attempts by other Bolshevik Central Committee members (Zinoviev, Kamenev, [Alexei Rykov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexei_Rykov), etc.) to share power with other socialist parties.

By the end of 1917, Trotsky was unquestionably the second man in the Bolshevik Party after Lenin, overshadowing the ambitious Zinoviev, who had been Lenin's top lieutenant over the previous decade, but whose star appeared to be fading. This turnaround led to enmity between the two Bolshevik leaders which lasted until 1926 and did much to destroy them both.

**After the Russian Revolution**



Trotsky with troops at the Polish front, 1919.

**Commissar for Foreign Affairs and Brest-Litovsk (1917–1918)**

After the Bolsheviks came to power, Trotsky became the [People's Commissar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Commissar) for Foreign Affairs and published the secret treaties previously signed by the [Triple Entente](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_Entente) that detailed plans for post-war reallocation of colonies and redrawing state borders.

Trotsky led the Soviet delegation during the peace negotiations in [Brest-Litovsk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brest-Litovsk) from December 22, 1917 to February 10, 1918. At that time the Soviet government was split on the issue. [Left Communists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Communism), led by [Nikolai Bukharin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Bukharin), continued to believe that there could be no peace between a Soviet republic and a capitalist country and that only a revolutionary war leading to a pan-European Soviet republic would bring a durable peace. They cited the successes of the newly formed (January 15, 1918) voluntary [Red Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Army) against Polish forces of Gen. [Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%B3zef_Dowbor-Mu%C5%9Bnicki) in [Belarus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belarus), [White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_movement) forces in the [Don](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_River,_Russia) region, and newly independent [Ukrainian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine) forces as proof that the Red Army could repel German forces, especially if [propaganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda) and [asymmetrical warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asymmetrical_warfare) were used. They did not mind holding talks with the Germans as a means of exposing German imperial ambitions (territorial gains, [reparations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_reparations), etc) in hopes of accelerating the hoped−for Soviet revolution in the West, but they were dead set against signing any peace treaty. In case of a German ultimatum, they advocated proclaiming a revolutionary war against Germany in order to inspire Russian and European workers to fight for socialism. This opinion was shared by [Left Socialist Revolutionaries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Socialist_Revolutionaries), who were then the Bolsheviks' junior partners in a coalition government.



1918 Bolshevik propaganda poster depicting [Trotsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trotsky) as [St. George](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._George) slaying the reactionary dragon. The image of St. George and the dragon comes from the [Moscow Coat of Arms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_Arms_of_Moscow).

Lenin, who had earlier hoped for a speedy Soviet revolution in Germany and other parts of Europe, quickly decided that the imperial government of Germany was still firmly in control and that, without a strong Russian military, an armed conflict with Germany would lead to a collapse of the Soviet government in Russia. He agreed with the Left Communists that ultimately a pan-European Soviet revolution would solve all problems, but until then the Bolsheviks had to stay in power. Lenin did not mind prolonging the negotiating process for maximum propaganda effect, but, from January 1918 on, advocated signing a separate peace treaty if faced with a German ultimatum.

Trotsky's position was between these two Bolshevik factions. Like Lenin, he admitted that the old Russian military, inherited from the monarchy and the Provisional Government and in advanced stages of decomposition, was unable to fight:

That we could no longer fight was perfectly clear to me and that the newly formed [Red Guard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Guard) and Red Army detachments were too small and poorly trained to resist the Germans.

But he agreed with the Left Communists that a separate peace treaty with an imperialist power would be a terrible moral and material blow to the Soviet government, negate all its military and political successes of 1917 and 1918, resurrect the notion that the Bolsheviks secretly allied with the German government, and cause an upsurge of internal resistance. He argued that any German ultimatum should be refused, and that this may well lead to an uprising in Germany, or at least inspire German soldiers to disobey their officers since any German offensive would be a naked grab for territories. He wrote in 1925:

We began peace negotiations in the hope of arousing the workmen's party of Germany and Austria-Hungary as well as of the Entente countries. For this reason we were obliged to delay the negotiations as long as possible to give the European workman time to understand the main fact of the Soviet revolution itself and particularly its peace policy.  
But there was the other question: Can the Germans still fight? Are they in a position to begin an attack on the revolution that will explain the cessation of the war? How can we find out the state of mind of the German soldiers, how to fathom it?



[White Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_movement) propaganda poster. The caption reads, "Peace and Liberty in [Sovdepiya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovdepiya)".

Throughout January and February 1918, Lenin's position was supported by 7 members of the Bolshevik Central Committee and Bukharin's by 4. Trotsky had 4 votes (his own, [Felix Dzerzhinsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felix_Dzerzhinsky)'s, [Nikolai Krestinsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Krestinsky)'s and [Adolph Joffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolph_Joffe)'s) and, since he held the balance of power, he was able to pursue his policy in Brest-Litovsk. When he could no longer delay the negotiations, he withdrew from the talks on February 10, 1918, refusing to sign on Germany's harsh terms. After a brief hiatus, the [Central Powers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Powers) notified the Soviet government that they would no longer observe the truce after February 17. At this point Lenin again argued that the Soviet government had done all it could to explain its position to Western workers and that it was time to accept the terms. Trotsky refused to support Lenin since he was waiting to see whether German workers would rebel and whether German soldiers would refuse to follow orders.

Germany resumed military operations on February 18. Within a day, it became clear that the German army was capable of conducting offensive operations and that Red Army detachments, which were relatively small, poorly organized and poorly led, were no match for it. In the evening of February 18, 1918, Trotsky and his supporters in the committee abstained and Lenin's proposal was accepted 7-4. The Soviet government sent a [telegram](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telegram) to the German side accepting the final Brest-Litovsk peace terms.

Germany did not respond for three days, and continued its offensive encountering little resistance. The response arrived on February 21, but the proposed terms were so harsh that even Lenin briefly thought that the Soviet government had no choice but to fight. But in the end, the committee again voted 7-4 on February 23, 1918; the [Treaty of Brest-Litovsk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Brest-Litovsk) was signed on March 3 and ratified on March 15, 1918. Since he was so closely associated with the policy previously followed by the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk, Trotsky resigned from his position as Commissar for Foreign Affairs in order to remove a potential obstacle to the new policy.

**Head of the Red Army (spring 1918)**



Trotsky with [Lenin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenin) and soldiers in [Petrograd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrograd) in 1921

The failure of the recently formed Red Army to resist the German offensive in February 1918 revealed its weaknesses: insufficient numbers, lack of knowledgeable officers, and near absence of coordination and subordination. Celebrated and feared [Baltic Fleet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltic_Fleet) sailors, one of the bastions of the new regime led by [Pavel Dybenko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pavel_Dybenko), shamefully fled from the German army at [Narva](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narva). The notion that the Soviet state could have an effective voluntary or [militia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militia) type military was seriously undermined.

Trotsky was one of the first Bolshevik leaders to recognize the problem and he pushed for the formation of a military council of former Russian generals that would function as an advisory body. Lenin and the Bolshevik Central Committee agreed on March 4 to create the [Supreme Military Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Military_Council), headed by former chief of the imperial General Staff [Mikhail Bonch-Bruevich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Bonch-Bruevich). But the entire Bolshevik leadership of the Red Army, including People's Commissar (defense minister) [Nikolai Podvoisky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Podvoisky) and commander-in-chief [Nikolai Krylenko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Krylenko), protested vigorously and eventually resigned. They believed that the Red Army should consist only of dedicated revolutionaries, rely on propaganda and force, and have elected officers. They viewed former imperial officers and generals as potential traitors who should be kept out of the new military, much less put in charge of it. Their views continued to be popular with many Bolsheviks throughout most of the [Russian Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Civil_War) and their supporters, including Podvoisky, who became one of Trotsky's deputies, were a constant thorn in Trotsky's side. The discontent with Trotsky's policies of strict discipline, conscription and reliance on carefully supervised non-Communist military experts eventually led to the [Military Opposition](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Military_Opposition&action=edit&redlink=1), which was active within the Communist Party in late 1918–1919.

On March 13, 1918, Trotsky's resignation as Commissar for Foreign Affairs was officially accepted and he was appointed People's Commissar of Army and Navy Affairs - in place of Podvoisky - and chairman of the Supreme Military Council. The post of commander-in-chief was abolished, and Trotsky gained full control of the Red Army, responsible only to the Communist Party leadership, whose Left Socialist Revolutionary allies had left the government over Brest-Litovsk. With the help of his faithful deputy [Ephraim Sklyansky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephraim_Sklyansky), Trotsky spent the rest of the Civil War transforming the Red Army from a ragtag network of small and fiercely independent detachments into a large and disciplined military machine, through forced conscription, party controlled blocking squads, compulsory obedience and officers chosen by the leadership instead of the rank and file. He defended these positions throughout his life.

**Civil War (1918–1920)**

Main article: [Russian Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Civil_War)

**1918**

Trotsky's managerial and organization-building skills with the Soviet military were soon tested in many ways. In May–June 1918, the [Czechoslovak Legions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czechoslovak_Legions) en route from European Russia to [Vladivostok](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladivostok) rose against the Soviet government. This left the Bolsheviks with the loss of most of the country's territory, an increasingly well organized resistance by Russian anti-Communist forces (usually referred to as the [White Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Movement) after their best known component) and widespread defection by the military experts that Trotsky relied on.

Trotsky and the government responded with a full-fledged [mobilization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobilization), which increased the size of the Red Army from less than 300,000 in May 1918 to one million in October, and an introduction of [political commissars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_commissar) into the army. The latter were responsible for ensuring the loyalty of military experts (who were mostly former officers in the imperial army) and co-signing their orders.

Trotsky claimed that the Red Army's organization was built on the ideas of the October Revolution. As he later wrote in his autobiography:

An army cannot be built without reprisals. Masses of men cannot be led to death unless the army command has the death-penalty in its arsenal. So long as those malicious tailless apes that are so proud of their technical achievements—the animals that we call men—will build armies and wage wars, the command will always be obliged to place the soldiers between the possible death in the front and the inevitable one in the rear. And yet armies are not built on fear. The Tsar’s army fell to pieces not because of any lack of reprisals. In his attempt to save it by restoring the death-penalty, Kerensky only finished it. Upon the ashes of the great war, the Bolsheviks created a new army. These facts demand no explanation for anyone who has even the slightest knowledge of the language of history. The strongest cement in the new army was the ideas of the October revolution, and the train supplied the front with this cement.

In dealing with deserters, Trotsky often appealed to them politically; arousing them with the ideas of the Revolution.

In the provinces of Kaluga, Voronezh, and Ryazan, tens of thousands of young peasants had failed to answer the first recruiting summons by the Soviets … The war commissariat of Ryazan succeeded in gathering in some fifteen thousand of such deserters. While passing through Ryazan, I decided to take a look at them. Some of our men tried to dissuade me. “Something might happen,” they warned me. But everything went off beautifully. The men were called out of their barracks. “Comrade-deserters – come to the meeting. Comrade Trotsky has come to speak to you.” They ran out excited, boisterous, as curious as schoolboys. I had imagined them much worse, and they had imagined me as more terrible. In a few minutes, I was surrounded by a huge crowd of unbridled, utterly undisciplined, but not at all hostile men. The “comrade-deserters” were looking at me with such curiosity that it seemed as if their eyes would pop out of their heads. I climbed on a table there in the yard, and spoke to them for about an hour and a half. It was a most responsive audience. I tried to raise them in their own eyes; concluding, I asked them to lift their hands in token of their loyalty to the revolution. The new ideas infected them before my very eyes. They were genuinely enthusiastic; they followed me to the automobile, devoured me with their eyes, not fearfully, as before, but rapturously, and shouted at the tops of their voices. They would hardly let me go. I learned afterward, with some pride, that one of the best ways to educate them was to remind them: “What did you promise Comrade Trotsky?” Later on, regiments of Ryazan “deserters” fought well at the fronts.

Given the lack of man power and the invading 16 foreign armies, Trotsky also insisted that former [Tsar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsar) officers should be used as military specialists within the Red Army, with a combination of Bolshevik political commissars to ensure the revolutionary nature of the Red Army. Lenin commented on this:

When Comrade Trotsky recently informed me that in our military department the officers are numbered in tens of thousands, I gained a concrete conception of what constitutes the secret of making proper use of our enemy ... of how to build communism out of the bricks that the capitalists had gathered to use against us.

In September 1918, the government, facing continuous military difficulties, declared what amounted to martial law and reorganized the Red Army. The Supreme Military Council was abolished and the position of commander-in-chief was restored, filled by the commander of the [Latvian Riflemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvian_Riflemen) [Ioakim Vatsetis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ioakim_Vatsetis) (aka Jukums Vācietis), who had formerly led the Eastern Front against the Czechoslovak Legions. Vatsetis was put in charge of day-to-day operations of the army while Trotsky became chairman of the newly formed [Revolutionary Military Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_Military_Council) of the Republic and retained overall control of the military. Trotsky and Vatsetis had clashed earlier in 1918 while Vatsetis and Trotsky's adviser Mikhail Bonch-Bruevich were also on unfriendly terms. Nevertheless, Trotsky eventually established a working relationship with the often prickly Vatsetis.

The reorganization caused yet another conflict between Trotsky and Stalin in late September. Trotsky appointed former imperial general [Pavel Sytin](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pavel_Sytin&action=edit&redlink=1) to command the Southern Front, but in early October 1918 Stalin refused to accept him and so was recalled from the front. Lenin and [Yakov Sverdlov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakov_Sverdlov) tried to make Trotsky and Stalin reconcile, but their meeting was unsuccessful.

**1919**

Throughout late 1918 and early 1919, there were a number of attacks on Trotsky's leadership of the Red Army, including veiled accusations in newspaper articles inspired by Stalin and a direct attack by the Military Opposition at the VIIIth Party Congress in March 1919. On the surface, he weathered them successfully and was elected one of only five full members of the first [Politburo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politburo) after the Congress. But he later wrote:

It is no wonder that my military work created so many enemies for me. I did not look to the side, I elbowed away those who interfered with military success, or in the haste of the work trod on the toes of the unheeding and was too busy even to apologize. Some people remember such things. The dissatisfied and those whose feelings had been hurt found their way to Stalin or Zinoviev, for these two also nourished hurts.

In mid-1919 the dissatisfied had an opportunity to mount a serious challenge to Trotsky's leadership. The Red Army had defeated the White Army's spring offensive in the east and was about to cross the [Ural Mountains](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ural_Mountains) and enter Siberia in pursuit of Admiral [Alexander Kolchak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Kolchak)'s forces. But in the south, General [Anton Denikin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_Denikin)'s White Russian forces advanced, and the situation deteriorated rapidly. On June 6 commander-in-chief Vatsetis ordered the Eastern Front to stop the offensive so that he could use its forces in the south. But the leadership of the Eastern Front, including its commander Sergei Kamenev (a colonel in the imperial army, not to be confused with the Politburo member Lev Kamenev), and Eastern Front Revolutionary Military Council members [Ivar Smilga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivar_Smilga), [Mikhail Lashevich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Lashevich) and [Sergei Gusev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei_Gusev) vigorously protested and wanted to keep emphasis on the Eastern Front. They insisted that it was vital to capture Siberia before the onset of winter and that once Kolchak's forces were broken, many more divisions would be freed up for the Southern Front. Trotsky, who had earlier had conflicts with the leadership of the Eastern Front, including a temporary removal of Kamenev in May 1919, supported Vatsetis.

At the 3-July 4 Central Committee meeting, after a heated exchange the majority supported Kamenev and Smilga against Vatsetis and Trotsky. Trotsky's plan was rejected and he was much criticized for various alleged shortcomings in his leadership style, much of it of a personal nature. Stalin used this opportunity to pressure Lenin to dismiss Trotsky from his post. But when, on July 5, Trotsky offered his resignation, the Politburo and the [Orgburo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orgburo) of the Central Committee unanimously rejected it.

Yet, a number of significant changes to the leadership of the Red Army were made. Trotsky was temporarily sent to the Southern Front, while the work in Moscow was informally coordinated by Smilga. Most members of the bloated Revolutionary Military Council who were not involved in its day to day operations, were relieved of their duties on July 8, while new members including Smilga were added. The same day, while Trotsky was already in the south, Vatsetis was suddenly arrested by the [Cheka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheka) on suspicion of involvement in an anti-Soviet plot, and replaced by Sergei Kamenev.

After a few weeks in the south, Trotsky returned to Moscow and resumed control of the Red Army. A year later, Smilga and [Tukhachevsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tukhachevsky) were defeated during the [Battle of Warsaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Warsaw_(1920)), but Trotsky refused this opportunity to pay Smilga back, which earned him Smilga's friendship and later support during the intra-Party battles of the 1920s.

By October 1919 the government was in the worst crisis of the Civil War: Denikin's troops approached [Tula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tula,_Russia) and Moscow from the south, and General [Nikolay Yudenich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolay_Yudenich)'s troops approached Petrograd from the west. Lenin decided that since it was more important to defend Moscow, Petrograd would have to be abandoned. Trotsky argued that Petrograd needed to be defended, at least in part to prevent [Estonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonia) and [Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland) from intervening. In a rare reversal, Trotsky was supported by Stalin and Zinoviev and prevailed against Lenin in the Central Committee. He immediately went to Petrograd, whose leadership headed by Zinoviev he found demoralized, and organized its defense, sometimes personally stopping fleeing soldiers. By October 22 the Red Army was on the offensive and in early November Yudenich's troops were driven back to Estonia, where they were disarmed and interned. Trotsky was awarded the [Order of the Red Banner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_the_Red_Banner) for his actions in Petrograd.

**1920**

With the defeat of Denikin and Yudenich in late 1919, the Soviet government's emphasis shifted to economic work and Trotsky spent the winter of 1919–1920 in the Urals region trying to re-start its economy. Based on his experiences there, he proposed abandoning the policies of [War Communism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_Communism), which included confiscating grain from peasants, and partially restoring the grain market. But Lenin was still committed to War Communism and the proposal was rejected. Instead, Trotsky was put in charge of the country's railroads (while retaining overall control of the Red Army), which he tried to militarize in the spirit of War Communism. It wasn't until early 1921 that economic collapse and uprisings would force Lenin and the rest of the Bolshevik leadership to abandon War Communism in favor of the [New Economic Policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Economic_Policy).

Meanwhile, in early 1920 Soviet-Polish tensions eventually led to the [Polish-Soviet War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish-Soviet_War). In the run-up and during the war, Trotsky argued that the Red Army was exhausted and the Soviet government should sign a peace treaty with Poland as soon as possible. He also did not believe that the Red Army would find much support in Poland proper. Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders thought that the Red Army's successes in the Russian Civil War and against the Poles meant that, as Lenin said later:

The defensive period of the war with worldwide imperialism was over, and we could, and had the obligation to, exploit the military situation to launch an offensive war.

But the Red Army offensive was turned back during the [Battle of Warsaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Warsaw_(1920)) in August 1920, in part because of Stalin's failure to obey Trotsky's orders in the run-up to the decisive engagements. Back in Moscow, Trotsky again argued for a peace treaty and this time prevailed.

**Trade union debate (1920–1921)**



[Serrati](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacinto_Menotti_Serrati) and Trotsky.

In late 1920, after the Bolsheviks won the Civil War and before the Eighth and Ninth Congress of Soviets, the Communist Party had a heated and increasingly acrimonious debate over the role of [trade unions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_union) in the Soviet state. The discussion split the party into many "platforms" (factions), including Lenin's, Trotsky's and Bukharin's; Bukharin eventually merged his with Trotsky's. Smaller, more radical factions like the [Workers' Opposition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workers%27_Opposition) (headed by [Alexander Shlyapnikov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Shlyapnikov)) and the [Group of Democratic Centralism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_of_Democratic_Centralism) were particularly active.

Trotsky's position formed while he led a special commission on the Soviet transportation system, Tsektran. He was appointed there to rebuild the rail system ruined by the Civil War. Being the Commissar of War and a revolutionary military leader, he saw a need to create a militarized "production atmosphere" by incorporating trade unions directly into the State apparatus. His unyielding stance was that in a worker's state the workers should have nothing to fear from the state, and the State should fully control the unions. In the Ninth Party Congress he argued for "such a regime under which each worker feels himself to be a soldier of labor who cannot freely dispose of himself; if he is ordered transferred, he must execute that order; if he does not do so, he will be a deserter who should be punished. Who will execute this? The trade union. It will create a new regime. That is the militarization of the working class."

Lenin sharply criticized Trotsky and accused him of "bureaucratically nagging the trade unions" and of staging "factional attacks." His view did not focus on State control as much as the concern that a new relationship was needed between the State and the rank-and-file workers. He said, "Introduction of genuine labor discipline is conceived only if the whole mass of participants in productions take a conscious part in the fulfillment of these tasks. This cannot be achieved by bureaucratic methods and orders from above." This was a debate that Lenin thought the party could not afford. His frustration with Trotsky was used by Stalin and Zinoviev with their support for Lenin's position, to improve their standing within the Bolshevik leadership at Trotsky's expense.

Disagreements threatened to get out of hand and many Bolsheviks, including Lenin, feared that the party would splinter. The Central Committee was split almost evenly between Lenin's and Trotsky's supporters, with all three Secretaries of the Central Committee (Krestinky, [Yevgeny Preobrazhensky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yevgeny_Preobrazhensky) and [Leonid Serebryakov](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Leonid_Serebryakov&action=edit&redlink=1)) supporting Trotsky.

At a meeting of his faction at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, Lenin's faction won a decisive victory and a number of Trotsky's supporters (including all three secretaries of the Central Committee) lost their leadership positions. Krestinsky was replaced as a member of the Politburo by Zinoviev, who had supported Lenin. Krestinsky's place in the secretariat was taken by [Vyacheslav Molotov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vyacheslav_Molotov). The congress also adopted a secret resolution on "Party unity", which banned factions within the Party except during pre-Congress discussions. The resolution was later published and used by Stalin against Trotsky and other opponents.

At the end of the Tenth Congress, after peace negotiations had failed, Trotsky gave the order for the suppression of the [Kronstadt Rebellion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kronstadt_rebellion), the last major revolt against Bolshevik rule. Years later, [Anarchist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchism) [Emma Goldman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Goldman) and others criticized Trotsky's actions as Commissar for War for his role in the suppression of the rebellion, and argued that he ordered unjustified incarcerations and executions of political opponents such as anarchists, although Trotsky did not participate in the actual suppression. Some Trotskyists, most notably Abbie Bakan have argued that the claim that the Kronstadt rebels were "counterrevolutionary" has been supported by evidence of White army and French government support for the Kronstadt sailors' March rebellion.. Other historians, most notably Paul Avrich, claimed the evidence did not point towards this conclusion, and that the Kronstadt Rebellion was spontaneous.

**Lenin's illness (1922–1923)**

In late 1921 Lenin's health deteriorated, he was absent from Moscow for even longer periods, and eventually had three strokes between May 26, 1922 and March 10, 1923, which caused paralysis, loss of speech and finally death on January 21, 1924. With Lenin increasingly sidelined throughout 1922, Stalin (elevated to the newly created position of the Central Committee [General Secretary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Secretary_of_the_Communist_Party_of_the_Soviet_Union) earlier in the year), Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev formed a [*troika*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troika) (triumvirate) to ensure that Trotsky, publicly the number two man in the country and Lenin's [heir presumptive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heir_presumptive), would not succeed Lenin.

The rest of the recently expanded Politburo (Rykov, [Mikhail Tomsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Tomsky), Bukharin) was at first uncommitted, but eventually joined the *troika*. Stalin's power of patronage in his capacity as General Secretary clearly played a role, but Trotsky and his supporters later concluded that a more fundamental reason was the process of slow bureaucratization of the Soviet regime once the extreme conditions of the Civil War were over: much of the Bolshevik elite wanted 'normalcy' while Trotsky was personally and politically personified as representing a turbulent revolutionary period that they would much rather leave behind.

Although the exact sequence of events is unclear, evidence suggests that at first the *troika* nominated Trotsky to head second rate government departments (e.g., Gokhran, the State Depository for Valuables) and then, when Trotsky predictably refused, tried using it as an excuse to oust him.

When, in mid-July 1922, Kamenev wrote a letter to the recovering Lenin to the effect that "(the Central Committee) is throwing or is ready to throw a good cannon overboard", Lenin was shocked and responded:

Throwing Trotsky overboard - surely you are hinting at that, it is impossible to interpret it otherwise - is the height of stupidity. If you do not consider me already hopelessly foolish, how can you think of that????

From then until his final stroke, Lenin spent much of his time trying to devise a way to prevent a split within the Communist Party leadership, which was reflected in [Lenin's Testament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenin%27s_Testament). As part of this effort, on September 11, 1922 Lenin proposed that Trotsky become his deputy at the [Sovnarkom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovnarkom). The Politburo approved the proposal, but Trotsky "categorically refused".

In late 1922, Lenin's relationship with Stalin deteriorated over Stalin's heavy-handed and [chauvinistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chauvinism) handling of the issue of merging Soviet republics into one federal state, the [USSR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USSR). At that point, according to Trotsky's autobiography, Lenin offered Trotsky an alliance against Soviet bureaucracy in general and Stalin in particular. The alliance proved effective on the issue of foreign trade, but it was complicated by Lenin's progressing illness. In January 1923 the relationship between Lenin and Stalin completely broke down when Stalin rudely insulted Lenin's wife, [Nadezhda Krupskaya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadezhda_Krupskaya). At that point Lenin amended his Testament suggesting that Stalin should be replaced as the party's General Secretary, although the thrust of his argument was somewhat weakened by the fact that he also mildly criticized other Bolshevik leaders, including Trotsky. In March 1923, days before his third stroke, Lenin prepared a frontal assault on Stalin's "Great-Russian nationalistic campaign" against the [Georgian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_(country)) Communist Party (the so-called [Georgian Affair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_Affair)) and asked Trotsky to deliver the blow at the XIIth Party Congress. With Lenin no longer active, Trotsky did not raise the issue at the Congress.

At the XIIth Party Congress in April 1923, just after Lenin's final stroke, the key Central Committee reports on organizational and nationalities questions were delivered by Stalin and not by Trotsky, while Zinoviev delivered the political report of the Central Committee, traditionally Lenin's prerogative. Stalin's power of appointment had allowed him to gradually replace local party secretaries with loyal functionaries and thus control most regional delegations at the congress, which enabled him to pack the Central Committee with his supporters, mostly at the expense of Zinoviev and Kamenev's backers.

At the congress, Trotsky made a speech about intra-party democracy, among other things, but avoided a direct confrontation with the *troika*. The delegates, most of whom were unaware of the divisions within the Politburo, gave Trotsky a [standing ovation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_ovation), which couldn't help but upset the *troika*. The *troika* was further infuriated by [Karl Radek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Radek)'s article *Leon Trotsky — Organizer of Victory* published in [*Pravda*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pravda) on March 14, 1923, which seemed to anoint Trotsky as Lenin's successor.

The resolutions adopted by the XIIth Congress called, in general terms, for greater democracy within the Party, but were vague and remained unimplemented. In an important test of strength in mid-1923, the *troika* was able to neutralize Trotsky's friend and supporter [Christian Rakovsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Rakovsky) by removing him from his post as head of the Ukrainian government (*Sovnarkom*) and sending him to London as Soviet ambassador. When regional Party secretaries in Ukraine protested against Rakovsky's reassignment, they too were reassigned to various posts all over the Soviet Union.

**Left opposition (1923–1924)**

Starting in mid-1923, the Soviet economy ran into significant difficulties, which led to numerous strikes countrywide. Two secret groups within the Communist Party, [*Workers' Truth*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Workers%27_Truth&action=edit&redlink=1) and [*Workers' Group*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Workers%27_Group&action=edit&redlink=1), were uncovered and suppressed by the Soviet secret police.

On [October 8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_8), 1923 Trotsky sent a letter to the Central Committee and the [Central Control Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Control_Commission), attributing these difficulties to lack of intra-Party democracy. Trotsky wrote:

In the fiercest moment of War Communism, the system of appointment within the party did not have one tenth of the extent that it has now. Appointment of the secretaries of provincial committees is now the rule. That creates for the secretary a position essentially independent of the local organization. The bureaucratization of the party apparatus has developed to unheard-of proportions by means of the method of secretarial selection. There has been created a very broad stratum of party workers, entering into the apparatus of the government of the party, who completely renounce their own party opinion, at least the open expression of it, as though assuming that the secretarial hierarchy is the apparatus which creates party opinion and party decisions. Beneath this stratum, abstaining from their own opinions, there lays the broad mass of the party, before whom every decision stands in the form of a summons or a command.

Other senior communists who had similar concerns sent [*The Declaration of 46*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Declaration_of_46) to the Central Committee on October 15, in which they wrote:

We observe an ever progressing, barely disguised division of the party into a secretarial hierarchy and into "laymen", into professional party functionaries, chosen from above, and the other party masses, who take no part in social life. Free discussion within the party has virtually disappeared, party public opinion has been stifled. It is the secretarial hierarchy, the party hierarchy which to an ever greater degree chooses the delegates to the conferences and congresses, which to an ever greater degree are becoming the executive conferences of this hierarchy.

Although the text of these letters remained secret at the time, they had a significant effect on the Party leadership and prompted a partial retreat by the *troika* and its supporters on the issue of intra-Party democracy, notably in Zinoviev's *Pravda* article published on November 7. Throughout November, the *troika* tried to come up with a compromise to placate, or at least temporarily neutralize, Trotsky and his supporters. (Their task was made easier by the fact that Trotsky was sick in November and December.) The first draft of the resolution was rejected by Trotsky, which led to the formation of a special group consisting of Stalin, Trotsky and Kamenev, which was charged with drafting a mutually acceptable compromise. On December 5, the Politburo and the Central Control Commission unanimously adopted the group's final draft as its resolution.

On December 8, Trotsky published an open letter, in which he expounded on the recently adopted resolution's ideas. The *troika* used his letter as an excuse to launch a campaign against Trotsky, accusing him of factionalism, setting "the youth against the fundamental generation of old revolutionary Bolsheviks" and other sins. Trotsky defended his position in a series of seven letters which were collected as *The New Course* in January 1924. The illusion of a "monolithic Bolshevik leadership" was thus shattered and a lively intra-Party discussion ensued, both in local Party organizations and in the pages of *Pravda*. The discussion lasted most of December and January until the XIIIth Party Conference of January 16, 17 and 18, 1924. Those who opposed the Central Committee's position in the debate were thereafter referred to as members of the [Left Opposition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Opposition).

Since the *troika* controlled the Party apparatus through Stalin's Secretariat as well as *Pravda* through its editor Bukharin, it was able to direct the discussion and the process of delegate selection. Although Trotsky's position prevailed within the Red Army and Moscow universities and received about half the votes in the Moscow Party organization, it was defeated elsewhere, and the Conference was packed with pro-*troika* delegates. In the end, only three delegates voted for Trotsky's position and the Conference denounced "Trotskyism" as a "petty bourgeois deviation". After the Conference, a number of Trotsky's supporters, especially in the Red Army's Political Directorate, were removed from leading positions or reassigned. Nonetheless, Trotsky kept all of his posts and the *troika* was careful to emphasize that the debate was limited to Trotsky's "mistakes" and that removing Trotsky from the leadership was out of the question. In reality, Trotsky had already been cut off from the decision making process.

Immediately after the Conference, Trotsky left for a [Caucasian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caucasus_(geographic_region)) resort to recover from his prolonged illness. On his way, he learned about Lenin's death on January 21, 1924. He was about to return when a follow up telegram from Stalin arrived, giving an incorrect date of the scheduled funeral, which would have made it impossible for Trotsky to return in time. Many commentators speculated after the fact that Trotsky's absence from Moscow in the days following Lenin's death contributed to his eventual loss to Stalin, although Trotsky generally discounted the significance of his absence.

**After Lenin's death (1924)**

There was little overt political disagreement within the Soviet leadership throughout most of 1924. On the surface, Trotsky remained the most prominent and popular Bolshevik leader, although his "mistakes" were often alluded to by *troika* partisans. Behind the scenes, he was completely cut off from the decision making process. Politburo meetings were pure formalities since all key decisions were made ahead of time by the *troika* and its supporters. Trotsky's control over the military was undermined by reassigning his deputy, Ephraim Sklyansky, and appointing [Mikhail Frunze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Frunze), who was being groomed to take Trotsky's place.

At the XIIIth Party Congress in May, Trotsky delivered a conciliatory speech:

None of us desires or is able to dispute the will of the Party. Clearly, the Party is always right.... We can only be right with and by the Party, for history has provided no other way of being in the right. The English have a saying, "My country, right or wrong," whether it is in the right or in the wrong, it is my country. We have much better historical justification in saying whether it is right or wrong in certain individual concrete cases, it is my party.... And if the Party adopts a decision which one or other of us thinks unjust, he will say, just or unjust, it is my party, and I shall support the consequences of the decision to the end.

The attempt at reconciliation, however, did not stop *troika* supporters from taking potshots at him.

In the meantime, the Left Opposition, which had coagulated somewhat unexpectedly in late 1923 and lacked a definite platform aside from general dissatisfaction with the intra-Party "regime", began to crystallize. It lost some less dedicated members to the harassment by the *troika*, but it also began formulating a program. Economically, the Left Opposition and its theoretician Yevgeny Preobrazhensky came out against further development of capitalist elements in the Soviet economy and in favor of faster industrialization. That put them at odds with Bukharin and Rykov, the "Right" group within the Party, who supported *troika* at the time. On the question of world revolution, Trotsky and Karl Radek saw a period of stability in Europe while Stalin and Zinoviev confidently predicted an "acceleration" of revolution in Western Europe in 1924. On the theoretical plane, Trotsky remained committed to the Bolshevik idea that the Soviet Union could not create a true socialist society in the absence of the world revolution, while Stalin gradually came up with a policy of building '[Socialism in One Country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism_in_One_Country)'. These ideological divisions provided much of the intellectual basis for the political divide between Trotsky and the Left Opposition on the one hand and Stalin and his allies on the other.

At the XIIIth Congress Kamenev and Zinoviev helped Stalin defuse Lenin's Testament, which belatedly came to the surface. But just after the congress, the *troika*, always an alliance of convenience, showed signs of weakness. Stalin began making poorly veiled accusations about Zinoviev and Kamenev. Yet in October 1924, Trotsky published *The Lessons of October*, an extensive summary of the events of the 1917 revolution. In it, he described Zinoviev's and Kamenev's opposition to the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917, something that the two would have preferred left unmentioned. This started a new round of intra-party struggle, which became known as the *Literary Discussion*, with Zinoviev and Kamenev again allied with Stalin against Trotsky. Their criticism of Trotsky was concentrated in three areas:

* Trotsky's disagreements and conflicts with Lenin and the Bolsheviks prior to 1917.
* Trotsky's alleged distortion of the events of 1917 in order to emphasize his role and diminish the roles played by other Bolsheviks.
* Trotsky's harsh treatment of his subordinates and other alleged mistakes during the Russian Civil War.

Trotsky was again sick and unable to respond while his opponents mobilized all of their resources to denounce him. They succeeded in damaging his military reputation so much that he was forced to resign as People's Commissar of Army and Fleet Affairs and Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council on January 6, 1925. Zinoviev demanded Trotsky's expulsion from the Communist Party, but Stalin refused to go along and skillfully played the role of a moderate. Trotsky kept his Politburo seat, but was effectively put on probation.

**A year in the wilderness (1925)**

1925 was a difficult year for Trotsky. After the bruising *Literary Discussion* and losing his Red Army posts, he was effectively unemployed throughout the winter and spring. In May 1925, he was given three posts: chairman of the Concessions Committee, head of the electro-technical board, and chairman of the scientific-technical board of industry. Trotsky wrote in *My Life* that he "was taking a rest from politics" and "naturally plunged into his new line of work up to my ears", but some contemporary accounts paint a picture of a remote and distracted man. Later in the year, Trotsky resigned his two technical positions (claiming Stalin-instigated interference and sabotage) and concentrated on his work in the Concessions Committee.

In one of the few political developments that affected Trotsky in 1925, the circumstances surrounding the controversy around Lenin's Testament were described by American Marxist [Max Eastman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Eastman) in his book *Since Lenin Died* (1925). The Soviet leadership denounced Eastman's account and used [party discipline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_discipline) to force Trotsky to write an article denying Eastman's version of the events.

In the meantime, the *troika* finally broke up. Bukharin and Rykov sided with Stalin while Krupskaya and Soviet Commissar of Finance [Grigory Sokolnikov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grigory_Sokolnikov) aligned with Zinoviev and Kamenev. The struggle became open at the September 1925 meeting of the Central Committee and came to a head at the XIVth Party Congress in December 1925. With only the Leningrad Party organization behind them, Zinoviev and Kamenev, dubbed *The New Opposition*, were thoroughly defeated while Trotsky refused to get involved in the fight and didn't speak at the Congress.

**United opposition (1926–1927)**

During a lull in the intra-party fighting in the spring of 1926, Zinoviev, Kamenev and their supporters in the *New Opposition* gravitated closer to Trotsky's supporters and the two groups soon formed an alliance, which also incorporated some smaller opposition groups within the Communist Party. The alliance became known as the United Opposition.

The United Opposition was repeatedly threatened with sanctions by the Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party and Trotsky had to agree to tactical retreats, mostly to preserve his alliance with Zinoviev and Kamenev. The opposition remained united against Stalin throughout 1926 and 1927, especially on the issue of the [Chinese Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Revolution). The methods used by the Stalinists against the Opposition became more and more extreme. At the XVth Party Conference in October 1926 Trotsky could barely speak because of interruptions and catcalls, and at the end of the Conference he lost his Politburo seat. In 1927 Stalin started using the [GPU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gosudarstvennoye_Politicheskoye_Upravlenie) (Soviet secret police) to infiltrate and discredit the opposition. Rank and file oppositionists were increasingly harassed, sometimes expelled from the Party and even arrested.

**Defeat and exile (1927–1928)**

In October 1927, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Central Committee. When the United Opposition tried to organize independent demonstrations commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Bolshevik seizure of power in November 1927, the demonstrators were dispersed by force and Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Communist Party on November 12. Their leading supporters, from Kamenev down, were expelled in December 1927 by the XVth Party Congress, which paved the way for mass expulsions of rank and file oppositionists as well as internal exile of opposition leaders in early 1928.

When the XVth Party Congress made Opposition views incompatible with membership in the Communist Party, Zinoviev, Kamenev and their supporters capitulated and renounced their alliance with the Left Opposition. Trotsky and most of his followers, on the other hand, refused to surrender and stayed the course.



Trotsky's house on the island of [Büyükada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%BCy%C3%BCkada), [Istanbul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istanbul), [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey), as it appears today.

Trotsky was exiled to [Alma Ata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almaty) (now in [Kazakhstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan)) on January 31, 1928. He was expelled from the Soviet Union to [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) in February 1929, accompanied by his wife [Natalia Sedova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalia_Sedova) and his son [Lev Sedov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Sedov).

After Trotsky's expulsion from the country, exiled Trotskyists began to waver and, between 1929 and 1934, most of the leading members of the Opposition surrendered to Stalin, "admitted their mistakes" and were reinstated in the Communist Party. [Christian Rakovsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Rakovsky), who served as an inspiration for Trotsky between 1929 and 1934 while he was in Siberian exile, was the last prominent Trotskyist to capitulate. Almost all of them perished in the [Great Purges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Purge) just a few years later.

**Exile (1929–1940)**



Trotsky reading [*The Militant*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Militant).

Trotsky was deported from the Soviet Union in February 1929. His first station in exile was at [Büyükada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%BCy%C3%BCkada) off the coast of [Istanbul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istanbul), [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) where he stayed for the next four years. There were many former White Army officers in Istanbul, which put Trotsky's life in danger, but a number of Trotsky's European supporters volunteered to serve as bodyguards and assured his safety.

In 1933 Trotsky was offered asylum in [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) by [Daladier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89douard_Daladier). He stayed first at [Royan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royan), then at [Barbizon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbizon). He was not allowed to visit [Paris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris). In 1935 he was given to understand he was no longer welcome in France. After weighing alternatives, he moved to [Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway). Having gotten permission from then-Justice Minister [Trygve Lie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trygve_Lie) to enter the country, Trotsky became a guest of [Konrad Knudsen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konrad_Knudsen) near [Oslo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo). After two years – allegedly under influence from the Soviet Union – he was put under house arrest. His transfer to [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) on a freighter was arranged after consultations with Norwegian officials. Mexican President [Lázaro Cárdenas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%C3%A1zaro_C%C3%A1rdenas) welcomed him warmly, even arranging for a special train to bring him to [Mexico City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City) from the port of [Tampico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tampico).

Trotsky lived in the [Coyoacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyoac%C3%A1n) area of Mexico City at the home (The Blue House) of the painter [Diego Rivera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diego_Rivera) and Rivera's wife & fellow painter, [Frida Kahlo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frida_Kahlo) (with whom he had an affair). His final move was a few blocks away to a residence on Avenida Vienna in May 1939, following a break with Rivera.

He remained a prolific writer in exile, penning several key works, including his [*History of the Russian Revolution*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Russian_Revolution) (1930) and [*The Revolution Betrayed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Revolution_Betrayed) (1936), a critique of the Soviet Union under [Stalinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalinism). Trotsky argued that the Soviet state had become a [*degenerated workers' state*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Degenerated_workers%27_state) controlled by an undemocratic bureaucracy, which would eventually either be overthrown via a [political revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_revolution) establishing workers' democracy, or degenerate into a capitalist class.



Trotsky with American comrades, including [Harry DeBoer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_DeBoer) (left) in [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico), shortly before his assassination, 1940.

While in Mexico, Trotsky also worked closely with [James P. Cannon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_P._Cannon), [Joseph Hansen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Hansen_(socialist)), and [Farrell Dobbs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farrell_Dobbs) of the [Socialist Workers Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Workers_Party_(US)) of the United States, and other supporters.

Cannon, a long-time leading member of the American communist movement, had supported Trotsky in the struggle against [Stalinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalinism) since he first read Trotsky's criticisms of the Soviet Union in 1928. Trotsky's critique of the Stalinist regime, though banned, was distributed to leaders of the Comintern. Among his other supporters was [Chen Duxiu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chen_Duxiu), founder of the Chinese Communist party.

**Moscow show trials**

In August 1936, the first [Moscow show trial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow_Trials) of the so-called "Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Center" was staged in front of an international audience. During the trial, Zinoviev, Kamenev and 14 other accused, most of them prominent Old Bolsheviks, confessed to having plotted with Trotsky to kill Stalin and other members of the Soviet leadership. The court found everybody guilty and sentenced the defendants to death, Trotsky [in absentia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_absentia). The second show trial of [Karl Radek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Radek), [Grigory Sokolnikov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grigory_Sokolnikov), [Yuri Pyatakov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuri_Pyatakov) and 14 others took place in January 1937, with even more alleged conspiracies and crimes linked to Trotsky. In April 1937, an independent "Commission of Inquiry" into the charges made against Trotsky and others at the "Moscow Trials" was held in Coyoacan, with [John Dewey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dewey) as chairman. The findings were published in the book *Not Guilty*.

**Fourth International**

Main article: [Fourth International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International)



[James Cannon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_P._Cannon) and [Felix Morrow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felix_Morrow), with a bust of Trotsky.

At first Trotsky was opposed to the idea of establishing parallel Communist Parties or a parallel international Communist organization that would compete with the [Third International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_International) for fear of splitting the Communist movement. However, he changed his mind in mid-1933 after the [Nazi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazism) takeover in Germany and the Comintern's response to it, when he proclaimed that:

An organization which was not roused by the thunder of fascism and which submits docilely to such outrageous acts of the bureaucracy demonstrates thereby that it is dead and that nothing can ever revive it. ... In all our subsequent work it is necessary to take as our point of departure the historical collapse of the official Communist International.

In 1938, Trotsky and his supporters founded the [Fourth International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International), which was intended to be a revolutionary and internationalist alternative to the Stalinist Comintern.

**Dies Committee**

Towards the end of 1939 Trotsky agreed to go to the United States to appear as a witness before the [Dies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Dies,_Jr.) Committee of the House of Representatives, a forerunner of the [House Un-American Activities Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_Un-American_Activities_Committee). Representative [Martin Dies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Dies), chairman of the committee, demanded the suppression of the [American Communist Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_USA). Trotsky intended to use the forum to expose the [NKVD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NKVD)'s activities against him and his followers. He made it clear that he also intended to argue against the suppression of the American Communist Party, and to use the committee as a platform for a call to transform the world war into a world revolution. Many of his supporters argued against his appearance. When the committee learned the nature of the testimony Trotsky intended to present, it refused to hear him, and he was denied a visa to enter the United States. On hearing about it, the Stalinists immediately accused Trotsky of being in the pay of the oil magnates and the [FBI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FBI).

**Final months**

After quarreling with Diego Rivera, Trotsky moved to his final residence on Avenida Vienna. He was ill, suffering from [high blood pressure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypertension), and feared that he would suffer a [cerebral hemorrhage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerebral_hemorrhage). He even prepared himself for the possibility of ending his life through suicide.

On February 27, 1940, Trotsky wrote a document known as "Trotsky's Testament", in which he expressed his final thoughts and feelings for posterity. After forcefully denying Stalin's accusations that he had betrayed the [working class](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Working_class), he thanked his friends, and above all his wife and dear companion, [Natalia Sedova](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalia_Sedova), for their loyal support:

In addition to the happiness of being a fighter for the cause of socialism, fate gave me the happiness of being her husband. During the almost forty years of our life together she remained an inexhaustible source of love, magnanimity, and tenderness. She underwent great sufferings, especially in the last period of our lives. But I find some comfort in the fact that she also knew days of happiness.  
For forty-three years of my conscious life I have remained a revolutionist; for forty-two of them I have fought under the banner of Marxism. If I had to begin all over again I would of course try to avoid this or that mistake, but the main course of my life would remain unchanged. I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a [dialectical materialist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectical_materialism), and, consequently, an irreconcilable [atheist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism). My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth.  
Natasha has just come up to the window from the courtyard and opened it wider so that the air may enter more freely into my room. I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence, and enjoy it to the full.  
L. Trotsky  
February 27, 1940  
Coiyoacan.

On May 24, 1940, Trotsky survived a raid on his home by Stalinist assassins led by [GPU](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Political_Directorate) agent [Iosif Grigulevich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iosif_Romualdovich_Grigulevich), Mexican painter and Stalinist [David Alfaro Siqueiros](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Alfaro_Siqueiros), and [Vittorio Vidale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vittorio_Vidale).

**Assassination**



Study where the attack on Leon Trotsky took place.

On August 20, 1940, Trotsky was attacked in his home in [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) by a [NKVD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NKVD) agent, [Ramón Mercader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ram%C3%B3n_Mercader), who buried the pick of an [ice axe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice_axe) into Trotsky's skull.

The blow was poorly delivered and failed to kill Trotsky instantly, as Mercader had intended. Witnesses stated that Trotsky spat on Mercader and began struggling fiercely with him. Hearing the commotion, Trotsky's bodyguards burst into the room and nearly killed Mercader, but Trotsky stopped them, laboriously stating that the assassin should be made to answer questions. Trotsky was taken to a hospital, operated on, and survived for more than a day, dying at the age of 60 on August 21, 1940 as a result of severe brain damage. Mercader later testified at his trial:

I laid my raincoat on the table in such a way as to be able to remove the ice axe which was in the pocket. I decided not to miss the wonderful opportunity that presented itself. The moment Trotsky began reading the article, he gave me my chance; I took out the ice axe from the raincoat, gripped it in my hand and, with my eyes closed, dealt him a terrible blow on the head.

According to [James P. Cannon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_P._Cannon), the secretary of the [Socialist Workers Party (USA)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Workers_Party_(United_States)), Trotsky's last words were "I will not survive this attack. [Stalin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin) has finally accomplished the task he attempted unsuccessfully before."



Leon Trotsky's grave in [Coyoacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyoac%C3%A1n), where his ashes are buried.

**Epilogue**

Trotsky's house in [Coyoacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyoac%C3%A1n) was preserved in much the same condition as it was on the day of the assassination and is now a museum run by a board which includes his grandson Esteban Volkov. The current director of the museum is Dr. [Carlos Ramirez Sandoval](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos_Ramirez_Sandoval) under whose supervision the museum has improved considerably after years of neglect. Trotsky's grave is located on its grounds.

Trotsky was never formally rehabilitated by the Soviet government, despite the [Glasnost](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glasnost)-era rehabilitation of most other [Old Bolsheviks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Bolshevik) killed during the Great Purges. In 1987, under [President Gorbachev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Gorbachev), Trotsky was referred to as "a hero and martyr." His son, [Sergei Sedov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei_Sedov), killed in 1937, was rehabilitated in 1988, as was [Nikolai Bukharin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Bukharin). Above all, beginning in 1989, Trotsky's books, forbidden until 1987, were finally published in the Soviet Union.

Trotsky's grandson Vsievolod Platonovich "Esteban" Volkov (born 1926) is an active promoter of his grandfather and is close to the [International Marxist Tendency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Marxist_Tendency) founded by [Ted Grant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Grant).

Trotsky's great-granddaughter, [Nora Volkow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nora_Volkow) (daughter of Esteban Volkov), is currently head of the U.S. [National Institute on Drug Abuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Institute_on_Drug_Abuse).

**Contributions to theory**

Main article: [Trotskyism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trotskyism)

Trotsky considered himself a "Bolshevik-Leninist", arguing for the establishment of a [vanguard party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanguard_party). He considered himself an advocate of orthodox Marxism. His politics differed in many respects from those of Stalin or [Mao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao), most importantly in his rejection of the theory of [Socialism in One Country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism_in_One_Country) and his declaring the need for an international "[permanent revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_revolution)". Numerous [Fourth Internationalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International) groups around the world continue to describe themselves as Trotskyist and see themselves as standing in this tradition, although they have different interpretations of the conclusions to be drawn from this. Supporters of the Fourth International echo Trotsky's opposition to Stalinist [totalitarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Totalitarianism), advocating [political revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_revolution), arguing that [socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism) cannot sustain itself without [democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy).

**Permanent Revolution**

Main article: [Permanent Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_Revolution)

Permanent Revolution is the theory that the [bourgeois](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourgeois) [democratic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy) tasks in countries with delayed bourgeois democratic development can only be accomplished through the establishment of a workers' state, and that the creation of a workers' state would inevitably involve inroads against [capitalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalist) property. Thus, the accomplishment of bourgeois democratic tasks passes over into [proletarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proletarian) tasks.

Although most closely associated with Leon Trotsky, the call for Permanent Revolution is first found in the writings of [Karl Marx](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx) and [Friedrich Engels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Engels) in March 1850, in the aftermath of the [1848 Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1848_Revolution), in their [Address](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/communist-league/1850-ad1.htm) of the Central Committee to the [Communist League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_League):

It is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent until all the more or less propertied classes have been driven from their ruling positions, until the proletariat has conquered state power and until the association of the proletarians has progressed sufficiently far - not only in one country but in all the leading countries of the world - that competition between the proletarians of these countries ceases and at least the decisive forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the workers. ... Their battle-cry must be: "The Permanent Revolution".

Trotsky's conception of Permanent Revolution is based on his understanding, drawing on the work of the founder of Russian Marxism [Georgy Plekhanov](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgy_Plekhanov), that in 'backward' countries the tasks of the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution could not be achieved by the bourgeoisie itself. This conception was first developed by Trotsky in collaboration with [Alexander Parvus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Parvus) in late 1904–1905. The relevant articles were later collected in Trotsky's books *1905* and in *Permanent Revolution*, which also contains his essay "Results and Prospects".

According to Trotskyists, the October Revolution (which Trotsky directed) was the first example of a successful Permanent Revolution. The proletarian, socialist October Revolution took place precisely because the bourgeoisie, which took power in February, had not been able to solve any of the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. It had not given the land to the peasants (which the Bolsheviks did on October 25), nor given freedom to the oppressed minority nations, nor emancipated Russia from foreign domination by ending the war which, at that point, was fought mainly to please the English and French creditors. Trotskyists today argue that the state of the Third World shows that capitalism offers no way forward for underdeveloped countries, thus again proving the central tenet of the theory. In contrast, Stalinist policy in the former colonial countries has been characterized by the so-called Two-Stage Theory, which argues that the working class must fight for "progressive capitalism" along with the "progressive national bourgeoisie" before any attempts at socialism can be made.

**The United Front**

Main article: [United Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Front)

Trotsky was a central figure in the [Comintern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comintern) during its first four congresses. During this time he helped to generalize the strategy and tactics of the Bolsheviks to newly formed Communist parties across Europe and further afield. From 1921 onwards the [united front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_front), a method of uniting revolutionaries and reformists in common struggle while winning some of the workers to revolution, was the central strategy put forward by the Comintern.

After he was exiled and politically marginalized by Stalinism, Trotsky continued to argue for a united front against fascism in Germany and Spain. His articles on the united front represent an important part of his political legacy.

**Trotsky in art**

* Trotsky was admired by Mexican muralist [Diego Rivera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diego_Rivera), a husband of [Frida Kahlo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frida_Kahlo). Rivera twice painted Trotsky's face as part of a montage of Communist figures, in *Communist Unity Panel* (1933) and again in [*Man at the Crossroads*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man_at_the_Crossroads) (1933). After the destruction of the latter, it was re-created as [*Man, Controller of the Universe*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man,_Controller_of_the_Universe) (1934).
* Trotsky's death was dramatized in the 1972 film [*The Assassination of Trotsky*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Assassination_of_Trotsky), directed by [Joseph Losey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Losey) and starring [Richard Burton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Burton) as Trotsky. It was also the subject of a 1993 short play, [*Variations on the Death of Trotsky*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variations_on_the_Death_of_Trotsky), written by [David Ives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Ives). In the 2002 film [*Frida*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frida), Trotsky was portrayed by [Geoffrey Rush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Rush).
* The character [Snowball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowball_(Animal_Farm)) in [George Orwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Orwell)'s novella, [*Animal Farm*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_Farm), is based on Trotsky, as is [Emmanuel Goldstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmanuel_Goldstein) in [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineteen_Eighty-Four).
* In the [*Seinfeld*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seinfeld) episode "[The Race](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Race_(Seinfeld))" Elaine's boyfriend Ned is a communist who resembles Trotsky.
* Trotsky is a well-regarded political figure within Bolano's *The Savage Detectives*.
* Trotsky is a major character in [Robert Bolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Bolt)'s play [*State of Revolution*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Revolution), which deals with the Russian Revolution and its aftermath.
* The album [*Permanent Revolution*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_Revolution_(album)) by New Jersey [ska punk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ska_punk) band [Catch 22](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catch_22) is based on the life on Leon Trotsky, with the album title referring to a theory he created.
* A Spanish language documentary, *El Asesinato de Trotsky* (The Murder of Trotsky) was co-produced in 2006 by The History Channel and Anima Films, and directed by Argentinian director Matías Gueilburt.
* In the 2009 novel "The Lacuna" by Barbara Kingsolver, the protagonist, Harrison William Shepherd, works as a secretary to the exiled Leon Trotsky in Mexico.

**Selected works**

* [1905](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1905/index.htm)
* [Autobiography, 1879–1917.](http://web.mit.edu/fjk/Public/essays/Trotsky-bio.html)
* [Between Red and White](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1922-rw/index.htm)
* [Fascism What It Is and How To Fight It](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm)
* [History of the Russian Revolution](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1930-hrr/index.htm)
* [In Defence of Marxism](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1942-dm/index.htm)
* [In Defence of October](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1932/1932-oct.htm)
* [Literature and Revolution](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1924/lit_revo/index.htm)
* [My Life](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1930-lif/index.htm)
* [Permanent Revolution & Results and Prospects](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1931-tpv/index.htm)
* [Platform of the Joint Opposition](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1927/opposition/index.htm)
* [Problems of the Chinese Revolution](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1932/pcr/index.htm)
* [Terrorism and Communism](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1920/dictatorvs/index.htm)
* [The Case of Leon Trotsky](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1937/dewey/index.htm)
* [The First Five Years of the Communist International, Volume 1](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1924/ffyci-1/index.htm)
* [The First Five Years of the Communist International, Volume 2](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1924/ffyci-2/index.htm)
* [The Lessons of October](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1924/1924-les.htm)
* [The New Course](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1923-nc/index.htm)
* [The Revolution Betrayed](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1936-rev/index.htm)
* [The Stalin School of Falsification](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1937-st2/index.htm)
* [The Third International After Lenin](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1928-3rd/index.htm)
* [The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/index.htm)
* [Their Morals and Ours](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1938/1938-mor.htm)
* [Trotsky's Military Writings, Volume 3](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1920-mil/index.htm)
* [Trotsky's Military Writings, Volume 4](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1921-mil/index.htm)
* [Trotsky's Military Writings, Volume 5](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1922-mil/index.htm)
* [War and the International](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1914-war/index.htm)
* [Works by Leon Trotsky](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Leon+Trotzky) at [Project Gutenberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Gutenberg)

**See also**

* [Bolsheviks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolsheviks)
* [Fourth International](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_International)
* [Group of Democratic Centralism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_of_Democratic_Centralism)
* [History of Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Russia), a series of articles.
* [Labor army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_army)
* [List of Trotskyist internationals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Trotskyist_internationals)
* [Marxism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism)
* [*My Life*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Life_(Leon_Trotsky_autobiography)), Trotsky's autobiography.
* [Stalinism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalinism)
* [Trotskyism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trotskyism)
* [Variations on the Death of Trotsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variations_on_the_Death_of_Trotsky)
* [Vladimir Lenin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Lenin)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [**Persondata**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Persondata) | |
| NAME | Bronstein, Lew Dawidowitsch |
| ALTERNATIVE NAMES | Lew Dawidowitsch Trotzki |
| SHORT DESCRIPTION | [Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine)-[Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) [revolutionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary), [politician](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politician) and founder of the [Red Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Army) |
| DATE OF BIRTH | November 7, 1879(1879-11-07) |
| PLACE OF BIRTH | [Janowka](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Janowka,_Russia&action=edit&redlink=1), [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) (now in [Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine)) |
| DATE OF DEATH | August 21, 1940 |
| PLACE OF DEATH | [Coyoacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyoac%C3%A1n), [Mexico City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City), [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) |

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