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MEXICO CITY, Sept. 13 – A letter sent by Natalia Trotsky yesterday, thanking President Cardenas for a personal visit he and Mrs. Cardenas had made, was released today by the Presidential Palace and published in the press.

The text of the letter follows:

Mr. President: Permit me to offer to your wife and yourself my most profound appreciation for your visit, for your sincere sentiments, for your unalterable conviction in the honor of Leon Trotsky and for the contempt manifested by you toward calumny and lie. Calumny and lie are not weapons sufficient to assure a definitive victory to those who are using them. My meeting with you on August 24th constitutes for me a moral support for the rest of my life.

There has never been in history an epoch as overshadowed by lie, calumny, crime and inhumanity, as that today. Honorable fighters fall as victims. Their memory, nevertheless, will be eternal.

Unfortunately my husband could not know you personally. Our life, despite that, was linked with yours by the bonds of your generous disposition and by your aid in our days of difficulty, which were so frequent. In Norway, we found ourselves imminently menaced with death, and not a single country in the world ventured to aid the disinherited. The exception came from legendary Mexico, with its generous people, expansive and independent. You prolonged the life of Leon Trotsky for 43 months. I carry in my heart my gratitude for those 43 months. Not only I, but hundreds of thousands of incorruptible fighters, who struggle for the emancipation of humanity.

Your tender attention sustained us in the sorrowful moments of the loss of our son in February, 1938. And again you came to help us after the perfidious attack of our enemies against our house on May 24. Saturday (August 24) once more you proved your activity in favor of him who had from you the possibility of living on Mexican soil. Permit me, Mr. President, to repeat here the expression of my deepest gratitude to the people of Mexico, to its government and to you particularly.

Natalia S. Trotsky

(Natalia's Letter to Cardenas, from: Natalia Sedova Trotsky, to: Lazaro Cardenas, Written: 13 September 1940, Source: Socialist Appeal, [Vol. 4 No. 38](#), 21 September 1940, p. 1. Online Version: Natalia Sedova Internet Archive, August 2020. Marxists Internet Archive) <https://www.marxists.org/archive/sedova-natalia/1940/09/letter.htm>

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By 1938, the Communists had nearly 20,000 members, most of them industrial workers, teachers, peasants, students and government employees. The Communists represented a real force in the labor movement, though they sometimes collaborated with and at other times

Botz is a writer His
(‘The Mexican Communist Party: Founded 100 Years Ago – Gone Since 1981’, Dan La Botz, December 18, 2019) <https://danlabotz.medium.com/the-mexican-communist-party-83a3f5ffbca1>

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Leon Trotsky

Stalin Seeks My Death

Written: 24 May, 1940**First Published:** *The Fourth International*, [Vol. 2 No. 7](#), August 1941, pages 201-207**Translated:** By *The Fourth International***Transcription/HTML Markup:** David Walters**Copyright:** Leon Trotsky Internet Archive (www.marxists.org) 2008. Permission is granted to copy and/or distribute this document under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license](#). Please credit the Leon Trotsky Internet Archive and the transcribers & proofreaders above.]

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Leon Trotsky: Stalin Seeks My Death (1940)

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The Night of the Assault

The attack came at dawn, about 4 A. M. I was fast asleep, having taken a sleeping drug after a hard day's work. Awakened by the rattle of gun fire but feeling very hazy, I first imagined that a national holiday was being celebrated with fireworks outside our walls. But the explosions were too close, right here within the room, next to me and overhead. The odor of gunpowder became more acrid, more penetrating. Clearly, what we had always expected was now happening: we were under attack. Where were the police stationed outside the walls? Where the guards inside? Trussed up? Kidnapped? Killed? My wife had already jumped from her bed. The shooting continued incessantly. My wife later told me that she helped me to the floor, pushing me into the space between the bed and the wall. This was quite true. She had remained hovering over me, beside the wall, as if to shield me with her body. But by means of whispers and gestures I convinced her to lie flat on the floor. The shots came from all sides, it was difficult to tell just from where. At a certain time my wife, as she later told me, was able clearly to distinguish spurts of fire from a gun: consequently, the shooting was being done right here in the room although we could not see anybody. My impression is that altogether some two hundred shots were fired, of which about one hundred fell right here, near us. Splinters of glass from windowpanes and chips from walls flew in all directions. A little later I felt that my right leg, had been slightly wounded in two places.

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My wife and I were convinced on the next day that the assailants had fired only through the windows and doors and that no one had entered our bedroom—however, an analysis of the trajectory of the bullets proves irrefutably that eight shots which struck the wall at the head of the two beds and which left holes in four places in both mattresses, as well as traces in the floor underneath the beds could have been fired only inside the bedroom itself. Empty cartridges found on the floor, and the lining of a blanket singed in two places testify to the same thing.

When did the terrorist enter our bedroom? Was it during the first part of their operation before we had yet awakened? Or was it, on the contrary, during the last moments when we were lying on the floor? I incline toward the latter supposition. Having fired through the doors and windows several scores of bullets aimed at the beds and not hearing any outcries or groans, the assailants had every reason to conclude that they had accomplished their work successfully. One of them might have at the last moment entered the room for a final check. Possibly the bed clothes and pillows still retained the form of human bodies. At four o'clock in the morning the room was in darkness. My wife and I remained motionless and silent on the floor. Before leaving our bedroom the terrorist who came in for verification deeming that the task had been already accomplished might have fired a few shots into our beds "to clear his conscience."

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Why were these two members of the guard arrested and not the others? Because Otto and Charles served as liaison agents with the authorities and with our few friends in the city. Preparing the blow against me, the investigating magistrates decided first of all to isolate our house completely. On the same day a Mexican, S., and a Czech, B., our young friends who had visited us to express their sympathy, were placed under arrest. The aim of the arrests was obviously the same: to cut off our connections with the outside world. The arrested members of the guard were confronted with a demand that they confess in "a quarter of an hour" that it was I who had ordered them to carry out the "self-assault." I am not at all inclined to exaggerate the importance of these episodes or to invest them with a tragic meaning. They interest me solely from the standpoint of the possibility of exposing those behind-the-scenes forces that were able in the course of 24 hours to bring about an almost magical turn in the direction of the investigation. These forces continue even today to exert an influence on the course of the investigation.

On Thursday May 30 when B. was questioned in Via Madera, all the police agents proceeded from the theory of self-assault, and conducted themselves insolently with me, my wife and my collaborators. During his incarceration for four days, S. had the opportunity to listen to quite a few conversations between the police agents.

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The Theory of "Self-Assault"

The pressure of interested circles must have assumed truly irresistible proportions in order to compel the representatives of the investigation to take a serious attitude toward the absurd idea of self-assault.

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"El Nacional"

In contradistinction to all other newspapers of the capital, *El Nacional* did not even mention the attempt in the first section of its issue for May 25. In the second section it carried a dispatch under the heading "Trotsky Subjected to a Theatrical (!) Attempt in His Home." On what basis the paper reached its appraisal remained unknown. I am, unfortunately, compelled to assert that in several prior instances the paper attempted to ascribe to me reprehensible actions without a shadow of justification.

It is worthy of the most diligent attention that on the same day on which *El Nacional* called the attempt "theatrical," *El Popular* wrote, "The attempt against Trotsky is an attempt against Mexico." At first sight it might appear as if *El Nacional* displayed a much more hostile attitude toward the victim of the assault than did *El Popular*. As a matter of fact that is not the case. By its conduct *El Nacional* merely revealed that it is much further removed than *El Popular* from the sources of Stalinism, and consequently the source of the assault. *El Nacional* has editors who strive to do all they can to please the Stalinists. They know that the simplest way is to utter some sort of suspicion towards me. When the editors received news of the assault against my home, one of the editors placed in circulation the first ironical formula that came into his head. This very fact shows that the editors of *El Nacional*, in contrast to the editors of *El Popular*, know not of what they write.

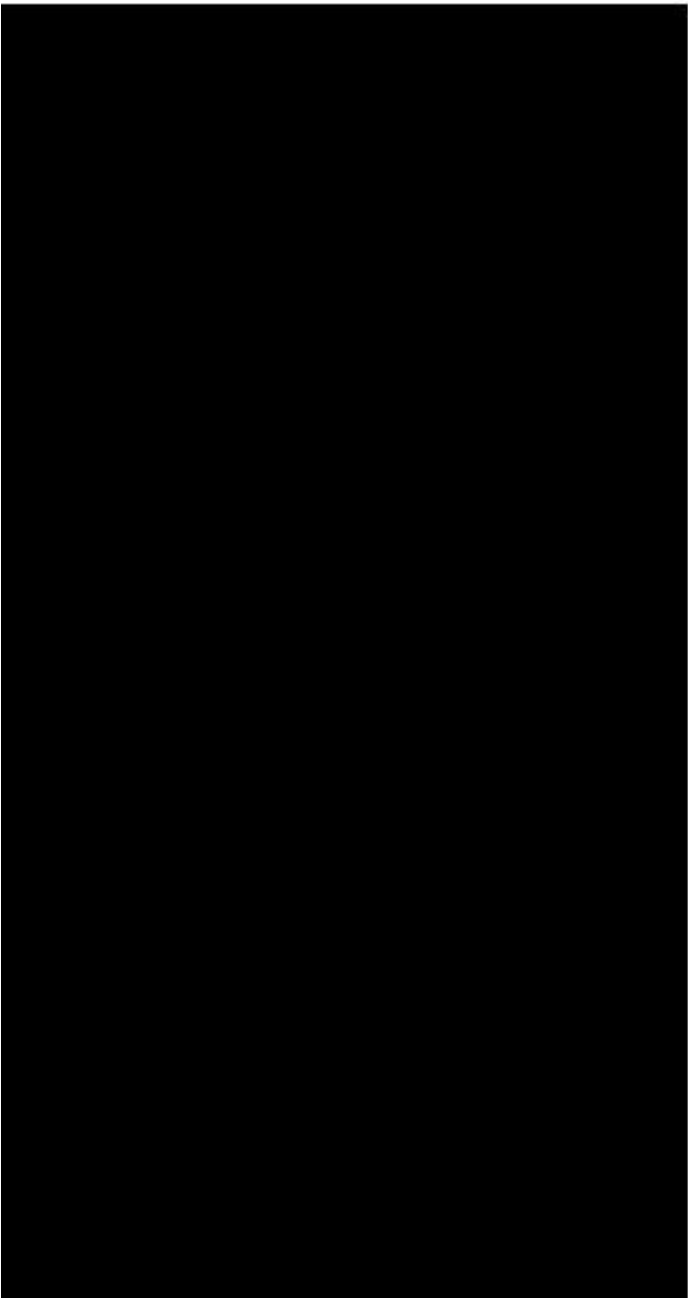
In the following days there is to be observed, however, a drawing together of the lines of these two publications. *El Nacional*, gathering from the conduct of *El Popular* that it blurted out very incautiously its hypothesis of a "theatrical" attempt, beat a hasty retreat and assumed a more guarded position. For its part, *El Popular*, becoming convinced that none of the participants of the attempt had been arrested, began to pass over to the position of a "theatrical" attempt. The story of May 27 "Mr. Trotsky Contradicts Himself" was also carried by *El Nacional*. On the basis of an analysis of the articles in *El Popular* and a comparison between them and the articles in *El Nacional* it is thus possible to state with certainty that Toledano knew in advance of the preparations for the attempt, even if in the most general way. The GPU simultaneously prepared along different channels the conspiratorial plot, the political defense and the disinformation of the investigation. During the critical days *El Popular* received instructions, undoubtedly, from Toledano himself. It is quite probable that none other than he is the author of the article of May 25. In other words, Lombardo Toledano took moral part in the preparation of the attempt and in covering up its traces.

The Expelled Members of the Communist Party

In its official declarations the Communist Party reiterates that individual terror does not enter into its system of actions, etc. No one supposes that the assault was organized by the Communist Party. The GPU makes use of the Communist Party but is not at all merged with the Communist Party.

(Stalin Seeks My Death, Leon Trotsky, Written: 24 May, 1940, First Published: The Fourth International, Vol. 2 No. 7, August 1941, pp. 201-207, Translated: By The Fourth International, Marxists Internet Archive) <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1940/05/stalin.htm>

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THE DIES COMMITTEE¹¹⁶

December 7, 1939

In the Mexican press yesterday, dispatches from the United States reported that I might appear as a witness before the Dies Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States and make depositions concerning the activities of the Mexican and Latin American Communists, particularly in connection with the oil question.¹¹⁷ These dispatches are so worded as to imply that for several years I have turned documents over to the agents of this committee, that I was visited in Mexico by the committee's representatives, and so on. These implications represent a pure invention from beginning to end.

On October 12, I received the following telegram from the committee:

"Leon Trotsky, Mexico City,
"Dies Committee of the United States House of Representatives invites you to appear as witness before it in the city of Austin, Texas. City designated with view to your personal convenience. . . . The Committee desires to have a complete record of the history of Stalinism and invites you to answer questions which can be submitted to you in advance if you so desire. Your name has been mentioned frequently by such witnesses as Browder and Foster.¹¹⁸ This Committee will accord you opportunity to answer their charges. . . .
"J. B. Matthews, Chief Investigator, Special Committee on Un-American Activities."

Independently of the political tendency of the chairman of this committee, I could not find it permissible to avoid appearing as a witness in a public investigation. My answer was:

"I accept your invitation as a political duty. . . ."
It was a matter thus of my testimony about the "history of Stalinism" but in no case about the inner life of the Latin

(The Dies Committee, Leon Trotsky, December 7, 1939, p. 1. In: Leon Trotsky Collected Writings, 1939-1940. In: archive.org) <https://archive.org/details/leon-trotsky-collected-writings-1938-1939/leon-trotsky-collected-writings-1939-1940/page/n129/mode/1up>