

# Swiss Police Arrest Assassins Of Murdered G.P.U. Man, Reiss

## Documents Reveal Tortures Used To Get Confessions from Innocent Victims of Moscow Purges and Framed-Up Trials

By Leon Trotsky

I have already described the assassination of Ignace Reiss, an important foreign agent of the G.P.U. and the Comintern, near Lausanne, Switzerland. The assassination was plotted by another G.P.U. agent stationed at Rome, Mrs. Gertrude Schildbach. The reason for the assassination: Disgusted by the Moscow trials, Ignace Reiss wrote a letter on July 17, 1937, to the Central Committee in Moscow, proclaiming his definite rupture with them. When I gave you this information, it must have seemed

to the causal onlooker to consist of unwarranted assertions impossible of proof. Now the whole matter has become public. On October 2, two of the assassins of Reiss were arrested in Paris. The Swiss police, which is not tied by diplomatic interests, seem to have done a good job. The police have established that the Chevrolet car in which Reiss was killed had been rented to a Swiss woman, Renata Steiner. She was immediately arrested and after several days questioning, she confessed to have been an agent of the G.P.U. for some years. She named all the members of the G.P.U. gang. Of the two arrested in Paris, one is a White Russian, Dmitry Smirensky, and the other a French photographer, Pierre Ducommet.

### Assassins Arrested

The identities of others have been established. They are: a former White Russian officer, Kondratieff, and another White Russian, Pierre Schwarzenburg, and an enigmatic person named "Rossi." It is possible that as I relate this, they have already been arrested. Gertrude Schildbach is also being hunted by the police. In her hotel room a box of chocolates, which is now in the hands of the Swiss police, was found treated with strychnine. Even the French press is now forced to recognize that the assassination was committed on orders from Moscow.

The active utilization of White Guard officers has become a general method of the G.P.U. abroad. The White military organization is almost entirely in the hands of the G.P.U. The kidnapping of General Mueller was committed in order to replace him with General Skoblin, an old agent of the G.P.U., and in this way to have the free disposition of the whole Union of the White Army.

The arrested and the hunted are professional murderers in the service of the G.P.U. A series of crimes will be disclosed. Not without interest is the fact that in the bloody Chevrolet abandoned by he assassins on the road, the police found a new overcoat with a Madrid label. It seems very probable that the owner participated in the kidnapping and assassination of Andres Nin, Erwin Wolf, and other revolutionaries in Spain and was, as a high specialist in this work, urgently summoned by Schildbach to Switzerland.

### Stalinist Press Silent

The European "communist" press, as for example the French L'Humanite and Ce Soir, seem to be totally paralyzed. They seem to have lost the use of their tongues: it is not easy for them

to write about the Trotskyite "terrorists."

In the next period we will thus have in Switzerland a trial of a G.P.U. gang, one of the most sensational trials of our time. I suppose that Mrs. Reiss, the widow of the assassinated, will appear before the court as a witness. There is no doubt that a powerful light will be thrown on the Moscow trials.

In connection with the assassination of Ignace Reiss and the discovery of his assassins, I disclose very important information coming for the most part from the papers of Reiss himself but also from other sources. It would be premature to make it all public at the present time but I can communicate some of it to you. I must warn the G.P.U. that new assassinations will not prevent this exposure, since the documents are at different points and in safe hands.

(1) You know that a part of my archives was stolen in November 1936 from a scientific institute in Paris. There is no doubt that the theft was committed by the G.P.U. in connection with the Moscow trial. Now it seems more than probable that one of the organizers of the theft was the arrested Smirensky. It appears that he was living in the house next to the one where my son, Leon Sedov, lived, with the purpose of having him under his close surveillance. I don't doubt that Smirensky and company were preparing to assassinate Leon Sedov, who is inscribed with red ink on the list of the G.P.U.

### Denounced to Police

(2) On August 26, scarcely more than a week before the assassination of Reiss, the French police received an anonymous denunciation from Switzerland against Reiss, alleging him to be an international financial swindler. All the names under which he lived in Europe were indicated and these names were known only to the G.P.U., which fabricated false passports for him. On an international scale the denunciation of political adversaries to foreign police with false accusations is one of the preferred methods of the G.P.U.

(3) The G.P.U. thus denounced as an agent of the Gestapo an old German revolutionary Grylewicz, now an emigre in Czechoslovakia. The affair was directed by Yezhov, the new chief of the G.P.U. Slutzky, the representative of the G.P.U. in France, expressed many times his indignation at the slowness of the Czechoslovakian police. Finally, Slutzky and his collaborators succeeded in securing the arrest of Grylewicz, but after several months of imprisonment the authorities gave Grylewicz his freedom because the denunciation proved to be false.

This same Slutzky, in the presence of witnesses, described the questioning of Mrachkovsky, a famous general of the civil war and one of the defendants shot in August 1936, as having lasted ninety hours without interruption. This was one of the methods of extracting confessions.

### Challenges Fischer

The search of the police in the home of Rakovsky (former head of the Ukrainian government, member of the Central Committee, ambassador to London and to Paris) lasted eighteen hours without food or rest for the sixty-seven year old man. The wife of Rakovsky tried to serve him tea. The G.P.U. opposed this on the pretext that she might poison him. It was the preparation of Rakovsky for the first questioning. The story is well known by Mr. Louis Fischer, the semi-official Soviet spokesman. I am wondering if he will try to deny it.

The G.P.U. has an order from Stalin to organize Trotskyist trials abroad at any price in order to confirm before world public opinion at least a part of the accusations in the Moscow trials. The most important agents are engaged in this work. Tremendous sums of money are being spent for this purpose, especially in Spain, France, Mexico, United States, but also in Czechoslovakia and Austria. I hope to give you more detailed information about this in the

## An Emergency

forces us to make this urgent appeal for funds. The whole program of revolutionary socialism in the United States is being seriously handicapped by the fact that the Socialist Appeal has not yet been in a position to finance its own expansion. Now it is not only a matter of expansion—but ordinary weekly printing and overhead expenses which must be paid.

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near future.

The G.P.U. made and is making all efforts to stage a Rykov-Bukharin trial in order to counteract hostile public opinion with new confessions. In May, Rykov, the former head of the Soviet government, and Bukharin, the former head of the Comintern, were brought from prison to a meeting of the Central Committee of the party. They refused to confess to alleged treason, terrorism, and so on. Stalin shouted out, "Back to prison with them! Let them defend themselves there!" A series of

provisional confessions of the alleged members of the right opposition (Rykov-Bukharin) are aimed to break down the two most important defendants and to oblige them to play their role according to the script of the G.P.U. in a new trial.

A characteristic detail concerning Gertrude Schildbach, who organized the assassination of Reiss: She remains a German citizen born in Alsace. She asked for a substantial sum of money from the G.P.U. in order to become a French citizen. She received the money but she never took corresponding steps before the French authorities.

That is enough for today. Other things not less important will follow. In spite of our sufficiently turbulent times, the question of the activities of the G.P.U. gang merits, I believe, some attention. October 19, 1937.

## Group Denounce The Kidnapping Of Wolf, Rein

Men and women prominent in American liberal and labor circles issued a statement today, protesting the abduction of Erwin Wolf, well-known labor journalist and former secretary of Leon Trotsky, by Stalin's G. P. U. in Spain. The statement, signed by such outstanding figures as James T. Farrell, Ernest Sutherland Bates, Anita Brenner, L o r i n e Pruette among others, directs its protest to the Catalanian Generalidad, the Valencia Government, Ambassador De Los Rios and the Czechoslovakian Ambassador.

### Hit Rein Abduction

It protests not only the action taken against Wolf, but the similar action taken by the G.P.U. in the case of Mark Rein, correspondent of the Copenhagen Sozialdemokraten and son of the Russian Menshevik leader, Raphael Abramovich, a member of the Executive Committee of the Second International.

Wolf, a Czechoslovakian citi-

zen, was in Spain as the representative of the London News Chronicle. He was Trotsky's secretary at the time of Piatakov's alleged airplane trip to see Trotsky, when the latter was in Norway. Wolf published many statements since the second Moscow trial (the trial of Radek, Piatakov) regarding this trip in the course of his testimony and was an important witness in the investigation of the charges against Trotsky. The motives of the abduction are thus quite obvious.

Rein, in his capacity as editor of Sozialdemokraten, had made sensational relations concerning the activities of the Stalinists in Spain and in the Soviet Union. The source of his information, it appears, was someone high in the councils of the Communist Party of the U. S. S. R.

### Demand Investigation

"As supporters of the Spanish workers and peasants in their fight against fascism", the statement concludes, "and as friends of democratic rights, we, authors, fellow-journalists, including members of the American Newspaper Guild, protest against the secret seizure of Erwin Wolf and Mark Rein, demand that the Czechoslovakian Consul and the Spanish governmental authorities immediately investigate their whereabouts, and accord to these foreign journalists sympathetic to the struggle against Fascism, all the necessary legal guarantees for their personal safety. We hold the officials of the Spanish government responsible for their security."

The full list of signers to date, follows: Ernest Sutherland Bates, Anita Brenner, James P. Cannon, James Casey, Eleanor Clark, Max Eastman, James T. Farrell, Charles Yale Harrison, Sidney Hook, Eugene Lyons, Dwight MacDonald, Felix Morrow, George Novack, Liston M. Oak, Arthur Pincus, Lorine Pruette, Meyer Schapiro, Clara G. Stillman, Carlo Tresca and B. J. Widick.