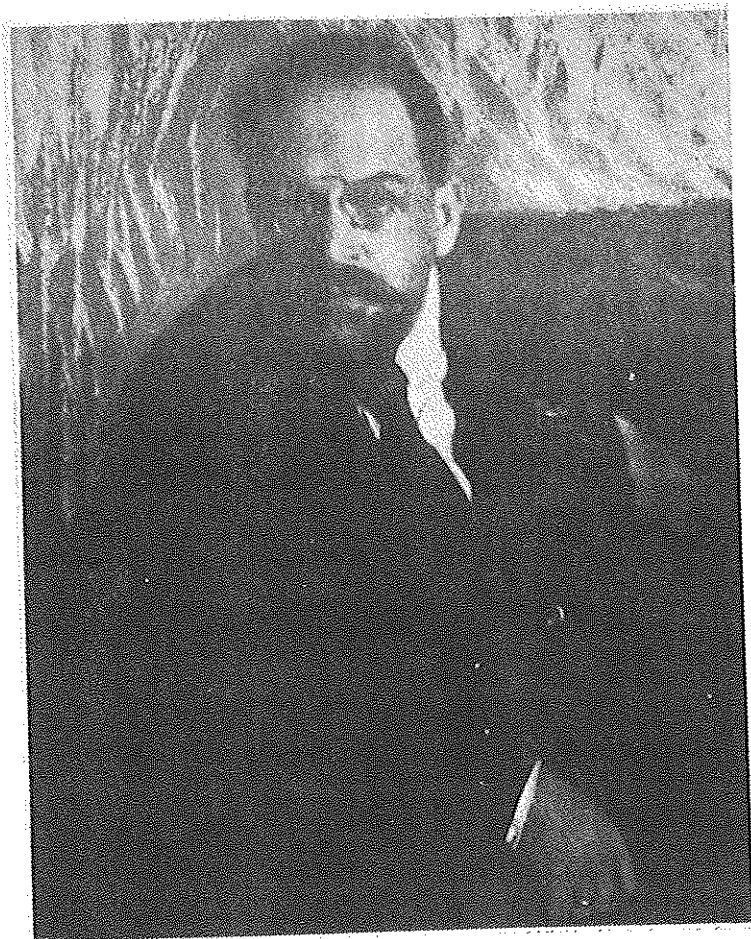


Adolph Goffe

1883 - 1927



I did not die in vain

In the October revolution, he played one of the most active parts. The personal bravery of this very sick man was really magnificent. I can still see him in the autumn of 1919 - as clearly as if it were today - with his rather thick set figure on the shell-ridden field below St Petersburg. In the immaculate dress of a diplomat, with a gentle smile on his calm face and a cane in his hand, as if he were merely walking along Unter den Linden, Joffe watched the shells exploding near by, curiously, without speeding or slowing his steps. He was a good speaker, thoughtful and earnest in appeal, and he showed the same qualities as a writer. In everything he did, he paid the most exacting attention to detail - a quality that not many revolutionaries have. Lenin had a very high opinion of his diplomatic work. For a great many years I was bound to him more closely than anyone else. His loyalty to friendship as well as to principle was unequalled. Joffe ended his life tragically. Grave hereditary diseases were undermining his health. Just as seriously, too, he was being undermined by the unbridled baiting of Marxists led by the epigones. Deprived of the chance of fighting his illness, and so deprived of the political struggle, Joffe committed suicide in the autumn of 1927. The letter he wrote me before his death was stolen from his dressing-table by Stalin's agents. Lines intended for the eyes of a friend were torn from their context, distorted and belied by Yaroslavsky and others intrinsically demoralized. But this will not prevent Joffe from being inscribed as one of the noblest names in the book of the revolution.

Leon Trotsky My Life

ADOLPH ABRAMOVICH JOFFE
1883 - 1927

1986 SAW THE 50th anniversary of the notorious Moscow trials -- the systematic, cynical removal by the Stalinist bureaucracy of the last vestiges of the Old Bolshevik leadership of the Soviet Union. The main accused at these trials was not present; Leon Trotsky was already in exile, driven from Soviet Union by Stalin and his henchmen.

Others accused in spirit were also not present. Among them was Adolph Abramovich Joffe. Hounded by the Stalinists, suffering from ill health, he had committed suicide in 1927. To commemorate his life and his struggles, on the 60th anniversary of his death, we are re-publishing his last words, written on his death bed to his closest friend and collaborator, Leon Trotsky.

Joffe was born into a bourgeois family in 1883, yet broke soon from that environment and turned his back on the wealth and privileges of his background. He joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party before 1900, and became a supporter of the Bolshheviks following the 1903 Conference; from that time, he was an active and dedicated revolutionary, participating in some of the most momentous events of the twentieth century.

From his earliest days, he was a friend and collaborator of Trotsky. In his *My Life*, Trotsky tells how he commenced publication of *Pravda (The Truth)* in Vienna in the October of 1908, from where it was smuggled into Russia. His chief collaborator on the paper was Joffe, and it was in connection with his revolutionary work on the paper that Joffe went back into Russia, only to be arrested in Odessa. He spent the next years of his life, like thousands of revolutionary youth, in prison, until he was freed by the revolution of February 1917.

In his younger days, Joffe suffered from a neurotic illness, and it was through him that Trotsky came in contact with the relatively new ideas of psychoanalysis - although Trotsky was later to say that *"The revolution healed Joffe better than psychoanalysis of all his complexes"*.

Joffe was a member of the Inter-District group - an organisation of over 4,000 workers within Petrograd alone, that stood outside both the Bolshevik and Menshevik groups, under the leadership of Trotsky, and that included in it many later leaders of the revolution itself and of the opposition to Stalin. In practice it was fundamentally opposed to Menshevism; its differences with the Bolsheviks were to disappear with the events of 1917, and it was during August 1917, the most difficult period for the Bolsheviks, that the two groups joined.

Joffe was elected onto the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks, and was later elected Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee in Petrograd. He was also, during the days before the November revolution, involved with the Bolshevik's municipal work, part of their municipal group, along with people like **Krupskaya**, **Lunacharsky** and **Sverdlov**, and became editor of the Bolshevik's municipal journal.

It was as the ambassador of the revolution that Joffe played his major roles. He was the Soviet ambassador to Germany in 1918, and also the fraternal delegate to the first Congress of German Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies during the German revolution. His most famous contribution was during the negotiations at Brest Litovsk. German imperialism was threatening the destruction of the new socialist state. At the same time, the Bolsheviks knew that it was only with the successful revolution in Germany that the Russian revolution itself could be saved. The Central Committee of the Bolsheviks was wrought with dissension over the way forward: should they sign the peace treaty at any cost in order to give the revolution time to prepare for the inevitable revolutionary war that was to come; should they refuse to sign for as long as possible in the expectation of German and Austrian revolutionary uprisings; should they refuse to sign and prepare to go

forward to revolutionary war immediately. Joffe himself was resolutely opposed to the signing of the peace treaty -- an incorrect policy, as history proved. Yet, it was typical of him that, having voted against the position of the CC on the issue, he refused to campaign in the Party against what he saw as being a fundamental mistake, in order to maintain the unity of the Party.

This same episode also highlights another aspect of the attitude of the Bolsheviks, in stark contrast to the distortions of history of the Stalinists. To them, everything is in black and white; those who opposed Lenin were enemies of the revolution, to vote against Lenin was the greatest of all possible crimes. Yet, here Joffe votes against Lenin on a crucial question, even offers to resign on the issue -- and yet Lenin insisted that he form part of the delegation to sign the treaty, as political consultant to the delegation! Again, Joffe disagreed with this -- yet went in order to maintain unity in the face of the German imperialists and the needs of the revolution and the Party.

Joffe later became the Soviet ambassador to China in 1922, during the vital days of the first Chinese revolution. He later became ambassador to Austria in 1924, and took up his last diplomatic post as ambassador to Japan - sent there partly as part of Stalin's policy of removing Oppositionists from the struggle in the Party in Russia, but also because of his real abilities.

It was from Tokyo that he was brought back at the beginning of 1927 suffering from tuberculosis and polyneuritis, the nervous illness that had plagued him most of his life. The Soviet Union he returned to was one where the campaign against the Opposition was entering its most vicious stages, with a campaign of lies and slanders against those who had sacrificed all in the interests of the Russian masses. Joffe became actively involved, along with his wife Maria, in the work of the Opposition. Maria was herself later to spend years in Stalin's prison camps, never again to see the young son mentioned in the letter, torn from her by the agents of the bureaucracy so that only a photo remained of his memory.

Tragically, in 1927 Joffe suffered two attacks of thrombosis and became bed-ridden. With the increased ferocity of the attacks from the Stalinists, with the expulsion of Trotsky from the Party, he felt that a massive struggle against the regime of Stalin was necessary -- yet his illness, he felt, prevented him from participating in that struggle. He appealed to the leadership of the Party to let him go abroad, as his doctors recommended, for the treatment that would enable him to participate in the fight that was looming. Trotsky approached the Commissar for Health and the Politbureau on his behalf, but they refused to send him abroad on account of the cost: 1,000 dollars. Joffe's bitterness at this is not the reaction of a bureaucrat pettishly demanding money, but the hurt and anger of some-one who has devoted his life to the revolution being spurned in the hour of the revolution's triumph and his greatest need by a group of petty bureaucratic usurpers of that revolution. Joffe offered to go at his own expense - he had been offered \$20,000 by an American publisher for his memoirs - yet Stalin refused permission for him to publish these memoirs, refused an exit visa, isolated him from medical help. This refusal -- in Trotsky's words, "*The Stalinists were now preparing to send the Oppositionists in quite a different direction*" -- convinced him that the only way he could demonstrate his protest at the actions of Stalin and the bureaucracy was by taking his own life, and on November 16 1927, he shot himself.

During the night of his death, thousands of oppositionists visited his home; the official representatives of the Party were lost in the crowd of oppositionists. The bureaucracy did all they could to prevent his friends from mourning his death. They fixed the time for the funeral for 2 pm on a working day -- hoping to make it impossible for the workers to attend. In the event, his friends managed to delay the funeral until 4, by which time over 10,000 marched in funeral procession, led by opposition banners, with Trotsky, Smirnov and Rakovsky at their head, to the Novo-Devichyi cemetery. There, they found their way barred by Party officials, police and GPU. Victor Serge, in his *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, describes how the opposition-

ist Sapronov attempted to keep the crowd disciplined in the face of official provocation: "A man who organised the Moscow rising of 1917 was now organising this painful struggle at the cemetery". Rakovsky gave a funeral address:

"This flag - we will follow it - like you - right to the end - on your tomb - we swear it".

Even the letter left by Joffe for Trotsky was stolen by the agents of Stalin, reprinted and vilified by them. In the words of Isaac Deutcher:

"Joffe's farewell letter is important not only for the light it throws on his attitude to Trotsky -- it is also unique as a human and political document and a statement of revolutionary morality. Having thus expressed in the Marxist idiom and in an atheistic spirit the ancient human longing for immortality, the immortality of mankind and of its genius, Joffe went on to say that for twenty seven years his life had its full significance; he had lived for socialism; he had not wasted a single day, for even while in prison he had used every day to study and prepare himself for future struggles."

The letter is printed here in full, as it demonstrates Joffe's revolutionary dedication, his humanitarianism, his despair, and the horrors of Stalinism. The inspiration to be gained from Joffe is not in the manner of his death, but in the manner of his life. From his teens onwards, he fought in the Russian revolutionary movement, in every area that the movement needed his skills and abilities. In this respect, he stands as an inspiration to the youth of today.

In the Opposition publication, *Material for Discussion* of November 19th 1927, they wrote:

The suicide of Joffe...is a phenomenon of social optimism. If our deceased comrade had not believed in the working class and its Party, if he had not believed in our future,

he would not have departed this life merely because he had no longer the strength to carry on the fight.

As Joffe died, only revolutionaries can die who place not their personal interests, but the interests of the class before all else. Joffe died, so as to induce others to do what he himself had not the strength to do -- to carry on an uninterrupted fight for the sake of the future. That is really a death in the name of life and of the fight. That is a decided protest against the danger of backsliding, against the danger of contentment with what has been attained. Such a death can arouse neither discouragement nor pessimism among the fighters; on the contrary it stimulates, it elevates, it leads us forwards. Joffe did not throw aside the flag in dying; he died under the old flag in the name of the flag of Lenin, in the name of Communism, in the name of the great cause of the international proletariat. Verily, the flag of Joffe is the flag of Marx and of Lenin.

We shall carry this flag forward, we shall carry it on to the end.

The last words should lie with his closest friend and political co-worker, Leon Trotsky, spoken at his grave-side:

Comrades, let me say this - and it is a consideration I believe corresponds in full to Adolph Abramovich's last thoughts and last testament - such an action, withdrawing from life by one's own decision, has a contagious power. Let no one presume to follow the example of this old fighter in his death. No. Follow him in his life. Joffe left us, not because he did not wish to fight, but because he lacked the physical strength for fighting. He feared to become a burden on those engaged in the struggle. His life, not his suicide, should serve as a model to those who are left behind.

MY DEAR LEV DAVIDOVITCH,

I have maintained all my life that the revolutionary politician, or any person in a public position, must understand when to retire from life, and that it is better to do so too soon than too late. When, long ago, the suicide of Paul Lafargue and his wife Laura Marx created a great stir in the various socialist parties, I, inexperienced youth as I then was, emphatically championed the rightness in principle of their standpoint, and, as I still remember, I very vehemently replied to August Bebel, who was greatly incensed at the suicide, that even though there might be objections to the age limit set by Lafargue and his wife, since it was here not a question of years but of the possible usefulness of a politician, the principle could by no means be attacked of the retirement of a politician from life as soon as he was convinced that he could be of no further use to the cause to which he has devoted all his efforts.

More than thirty years ago I embraced the view that human life has sense only in so far as it is spent in the service of the infinite -- and for us, mankind is the infinite. Seeing that all else is finite, to work for any finite purpose is senseless; whereas humanity, though possibly not absolutely infinite, is not likely to meet with its end for such a long time to come, that it may be considered as infinite. And anyone who believes in progress as I believe in it can well picture that, when the time comes for our planet to perish, mankind will by then have found the means to migrate and settle on other, younger planets.

Mankind will thus continue to exist, and consequently, anything accomplished in our time for mankind's benefit will leave its traces in those distant epochs of the future, thus imparting to existence its only possible sense and purpose. Here, and here only, can I recognise the sense in my own life, 27 years of which I have passed in the ranks of our Party. I believe I have the right to say that throughout my conscious life, I have been true to my philosophy, that is to say, I have lived my life

purposefully, because I have lived it in fighting for the good of mankind.

Even the years of imprisonment and penal servitude, during which a man is separated from immediate participation in the fight and work for humanity, cannot be deducted from the number of purposeful years of his existence, since they served, as years of self-cultivation and self-education, for the improvement of later work, so that they too can be counted to the years of work in the service of mankind -- that is, to the purposefully spent years of a man's life. In this sense of the word, I believe I can safely affirm that I have not spent a single day of my life wastefully.

Now, however, the moment in obviously approaching in which my life will lose its sense and in which I shall consequently be faced with the duty of retiring from it -- that is to say, of ending my existence.

The present leaders of our Party -- in keeping with their general policy of not giving the members of the Opposition any work -- have refrained for some years from employing me on any work, either in the Party or on the Soviets, of such a character or extent as would enable me to exploit by abilities to their maximum usefulness. For the last year, as you know, the Political Bureau has removed me, as an Oppositionist, from all Party or Soviet activity.

On the other hand, partly perhaps as a result of my illness and partly for reasons that you will know better than I do, I have for the past year taken hardly any part in the practical oppositional struggle or in the work of the Opposition.

After great struggles with myself and with extreme reluctance, I turned to that area of work to which I had thought I would only have to turn when completely invalidated, and devoted myself wholly and entirely to scientific, educational and literary matters. Hard as I found this at first, I gradually dug deeper into it and

began to hope that, even in this direction, my life would find that necessary inner usefulness of which I spoke above and which, according to my standpoint, alone can justify my life.

But my state of health grew worse and worse.

Around the 20th of September I was -- for reasons unknown to me -- invited to a consultation with specialists by the Medical Commission of the Central Committee. The Commission diagnosed an active tuberculosis of both lungs, myocarditis (inflammation of the cardiac muscles), chronic inflammation of the bladder, chronic inflammation of the intestines and appendix, and chronic polyneuritis. The examining professors told me categorically that my condition was much worse than I had imagined, and that I could not resume my course at the high schools (Moscow State University and the Institute for Oriental Research) -- indeed, that it would be much more sensible to give up such activity.

Furthermore, they stated that I could no longer stay in Moscow, should not delay a moment in getting treatment, but that I should go abroad at once to a suitable sanatorium. Since such a journey would take a few days, a certain treatment in the polyclinic of the Kremlin was prescribed for me meanwhile. In answer to my direct question as to what prospects of recovery I had abroad, and whether I could possibly be cured in Russia without giving up my activity as a teacher, the Medical Commission declared, in the presence of the Chief Physician of the Central Committee, of another Communist doctor and of A.J. Konnelly, Chief Physician of the Kremlin Hospital, that the Russian sanatoria could by no means help me, but that I could hope to be cured abroad, seeing that before I had never been treated abroad for more than two or three months at a time, whereas now they insisted on a hospital treatment of at least six months, without setting any maximum time limit; in these circumstances they had no doubts that, while a total cure was not definite, I could at least expect to be restored to sufficient health to be able to work again for some considerable time.

Some two months after this consultation, the Medical Commission of the Central Committee, which had itself invited me to this discussion, had not yet taken a single step, either with regard to my journey abroad or in connection with my treatment here. On the contrary, the Kremlin pharmacy, which had previously made up my prescriptions free of charge, had been forbidden to do so any more, so that I was deprived of the medication I had been accustomed to use, and was thus forced to get them at my own expense from the city chemists. Obviously, the leading group in our Party had, about this time, begun to fulfil their threat of 'hitting the Opposition a blow in the stomach', a threat also applying to other members of the Opposition.

As long as I was still healthy enough to work, I did not worry too much about this. But, as I grew worse and worse, my wife started taking steps with a view to having me sent abroad, and applied not only to the Medical Commission of the Central Committee, but also to N.A.Semashko in person, who had always been loud in advocating the principle of 'preserving the Old Guard'. The question, however, was shelved again and again, and the only thing my wife could attain was that she was given the medical diagnosis in writing. This diagnosis listed my chronic diseases and pointed out that the council of doctors insisted on my going abroad 'to a sanatorium of the type of Professor Friedlander's for a stay of about one year'.

In the meantime, I have now been in bed for about nine days, since all my chronic ailments have become aggravated and increased, as I suppose is only natural, and, worse than all of this, my old inflammation of the nerves has entered into an acute stage, so that I suffer excruciating pain and can no longer walk.

As a matter of fact, I have been without any medical assistance at all during these nine days, despite the fact that the question of my going abroad is being discussed. Of the doctors of the Central Committee, not a single one has been to see me. Professor Davodenko and Dr Levin, who

visited me, prescribed some trifles, which were, naturally, of no use, but they themselves confessed that they 'could do nothing' and that it was essential that I should go abroad without delay. Dr Levin explained to my wife that the matter was presumably being delayed in the Medical Commission for the reason that it was under the impression that my wife would accompany me and that that 'would naturally cost very much'. If non-oppositional comrades fall ill they, and also sometimes their wives, are sent abroad accompanied by our doctors or professors; I know myself of many such cases, and must also admit that, when I first contracted my nervous disease, I was myself sent abroad, together with my wife and child, accompanied by Dr Kannabich. But at that time these newly-introduced customs were unknown in the Party.

My wife replied that, however serious my condition might be, she by no means claimed that either she or any other relative should be sent along with me, whereupon Dr Levin assured her that, as that was the case, the matter could be settled far more quickly.

My condition was going from bad to worse, and the pains grew so atrocious that I was finally obliged to ask the doctors for relief of some kind. Today, Dr Levin was here and repeated that they could do nothing for me and that the only hope for me lay in a speedy departure abroad.

In the evening my wife heard from Comrade Potemkin, the doctor of the Central Committee, that the Medical Council of the Committee had resolved not to send me abroad. Rather, they would treat me in Russia, seeing that the specialists insisted on a more protracted treatment and considered a short treatment useless. On the other hand, the Central Committee was prepared to spend about \$1000 (2000 roubles!) for this purpose; more than that could not be granted.

As you well know, I have more than once given our Party 1000 roubles in the past, certainly more than I have cost the Party, since I gave to the Revolution all my finances and I could no longer pay for my own treatment.

Anglo-American publishers have frequently suggested to me that I should publish extracts from my memoirs, at my own direction and with the sole condition that the period of the Brest negotiations be included, for \$20,000. The Political Bureau know that I am too experienced a diplomat and journalist to publish anything that might harm our Party or our State. I have frequently acted as censor, both for the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and for the Chief Concessionary Committee, and as a political representative I had to censor all Russian press matter appearing in the respective countries. A few years ago, I applied for permission to publish some such memoirs, with the undertaking to hand over the entire proceeds to the Party, since I was loth to take money from the Party for my treatment.

In reply, I received a direct resolution on the part of the Political Bureau to the effect that 'diplomats or comrades engaged in diplomatic work are expressly forbidden to publish their memoirs abroad, or selections therefrom, without a previous examination of the manuscript by the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and the Political Bureau of the Central Committee'. I know how such a double censorship can be protracted and how vaguely it can be rendered, so that no arrangements can be made with publishers abroad, and I therefore refused the said offer in 1924.

Subsequently, when I was abroad again, a similar offer was made to me, with the guarantee of an honorarium of \$20,000. But as I know that the history of the Revolution and the history of our Party are now being forged, and as I would not lend my hand to such forgeries, I do not consider it possible to publish my memoirs abroad without directly infringing on the prohibition issued by the Political Bureau. At the same time, I have no doubt that the whole censorship by the Political Bureau consists in not permitting any true characterisation either of the one side or of the other -- that is to say, neither of the actual revolutionary leaders or of the so-called leaders who have also been harnessed to the sledge, whereas it is just on the personal characteristics of the persons mentioned in

the memoirs that foreign publishers insist. I therefore see no possibility of undergoing medical treatment, since I receive no money from the Central Committee, which after twenty seven years of revolutionary work on my part does not value my life and my health at more than 2000 roubles.

In the state at which I am at present, it is naturally impossible for me to do any work. Even if I were strong enough to continue my lectures in spite of the violent pain I suffer, I should require considerable assistance. I would have to be taken about in a bath-chair and should require help to get the necessary books and materials in the library and from the files. When I was ill previously, the entire staff of the Embassy was at my disposal. Now, however, since my rank is no higher than that of a simple 'secretary', I am no longer entitled to such assistance; indeed, in view of the inattention paid recently to all my ailments (as in the present case, where I have remained with practically no medical assistance for nine days and have not even received the electrical bed-warmer prescribed for me by Dr Davidovitch), I can not even hope for such trifles as the loan of a bath-chair.

And even if I were treated and sent abroad for the necessary time, my position would remain highly precarious. On the last occasion I contracted an inflammation of the nerves, I lay immovable for two weeks, though at the time I had no illness other than the nervous complaint. Now I have half a dozen others, and even if I could devote as much time as necessary to my health, I should hardly have the right to expect to be really well even for quite a short space of time after this cure.

Now that it is not thought possible for me to be actually cured (for a treatment in Russia is hopeless in the opinion of the doctors, and even a longer treatment abroad would hardly get better results), my life has lost all sense. Even were I not to start from the philosophical standpoint mentioned above, a person who is condemned to lie immovable without the possibility of doing any work could hardly be expected to want to live.

I therefore repeat that the moment has come to put an end to this life. I know the adverse attitude of the Party in regard to suicide, but I hardly think that anyone who considers my position in the circumstances will seriously blame me.

Besides, Professor Davidenko assumes that the excitement experienced in recent times is the reason for my relapse into my former serious nervous state. If I were healthy, I should find sufficient strength and energy to struggle against the position which has developed within the Party. But in my present condition this state of affairs is insupportable to me. Your exclusion from the Party has been passed over in complete silence, though I do not doubt in the least that sooner or later there will be a revulsion in the Party which will force it to shake off those who have led it into this shameful act. In this sense, my death will be the protest of a fighter, who is not in a position to respond to this shameful act in any other way.

If I may be permitted to compare a small thing with a big one, I should like to say that the great significance of the historical fact of the exclusion from the Party of yourself and Zinoviev, which must inevitably be looked on as the beginning of the Thermidorian period of our revolution, and the circumstance that after 27 years of revolutionary activity in responsible Party positions, I have been placed in a position which leaves me no choice but to put a bullet through my head -- that these two facts are manifestations of one and the same Party policy; and most probably these two facts, the small one and the great one alike, will prove to be destined to give the Party that impulse which is required to hold it back from the path of Thermidorian error. I should be happy could I persuade myself of the fact that things will develop thus, for then I should know that I should not have died in vain. But though I am firmly convinced that the moment will come when the Party's eyes will be opened, I cannot persuade myself that moment is near at hand. Nevertheless, I do not doubt that my death will now be more useful than a continuation of my life could be.

With you, my dear Leo Davidovitch, I am connected by decades of common work and, I venture to hope, personal friendship. This gives me the right to tell you in parting what faults I find in you.

I have never doubted that the way pointed out by you was the right way, and you know that I have been going the same way as you for more than twenty years, since the beginning of the 'permanent revolution'.

But I have always been of the opinion that you lack the inflexibility and firmness of Lenin, that determination to stick to the path recognised as right, even if wholly isolated, trusting in a future majority and a future recognition of the entire rectitude of your way.

Politically, you have always been right, ever since 1905. And I have repeatedly told you that I heard, with my own ears, how Lenin admitted that you and not he was right in 1905. In the face of death, men do not lie; and I repeat the same again. But you have often renounced your own truth in favour of an agreement, a compromise which you over-estimated. That was a mistake. I repeat, politically you were right. And now more than ever. Once the Party will come to recognise this, and history will appreciate it as it deserves. Therefore, fear nothing if many turn from you at present, and still less so if there are not many that turn to you now as quickly as we all wished. You are in the right. But the guarantee of the victory of your truth lies in a great firmness, in strict adherence to the line of action, in the repudiation of all compromise, just as this was always the secret of the victory of Lenin.

I have often wished to tell you this, but it is only now, in taking leave of you, that I could make up my mind to do so.

Still, a few words of a personal character. I leave behind me a wife who is unused to independence, a small boy, and a sick daughter. I know you can do nothing for them at present, and from the present Party leaders I expect absolutely nothing in this regard. But I do not

doubt that the moment is not so far distant when you will again resume the position in the Party which is yours by right. Do not then forget my wife and my children.

I wish you no smaller degree of energy and courage than you have demonstrated up to the present, and a speedy victory. I embrace you. Farewell.

Your A. Joffe

Moscow, November 16th 1927

This letter I wrote from the 15th to the 16th. Today Maria Michailovna went to the Medical Commission, to ask for me to be sent abroad, if only for one or two months. She was again told that, in the opinion of the specialists, a stay abroad for a short time was altogether useless, and that the Medical Commission of the Central Committee had determined to have me transported at once to the Kremlin Hospital. Thus, even a short journey abroad for my health was denied me; though, at the same time, my doctors themselves admitted that my treatment in Russia was senseless and could lead to no result.

My dear Leo Davidovitch, I greatly regret that I could not see you again. Not that I doubt the rightness of my resolution and hoped that you might persuade me otherwise. No, I do not doubt in the least that this is the most correct and most reasonable of all resolutions I could possibly arrive at. But I have some misgivings as to this letter of mine, for such a letter cannot help but be subjective. And in view of such subjectivity, the criterion of objectivity may be lost sight of. And any wrongly expressed phrase might distort the whole impression of the letter. Meanwhile, I naturally hope you will make full use of this letter, since it is only thus that the step I am about to take can be useful.

I therefore not only give you complete authority to revise my letter, but also request you most urgently to omit from it anything that appears superfluous to you and to add anything you consider essential.

Forgive me, my dear friend. Be strong. You have still plenty of strength and energy at your disposal. And remember me without bitterness.



Trotsky at Joffe's funeral

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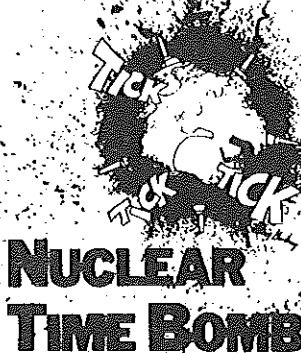
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