

Leon Trotsky, Narkom (People's Commissar) for Military & Naval Affairs of the Soviet Union, typed document, boldly notated & signed on the front page in red pencil 20 October 1920.

Four-page typed document, measures 9 ½" x 14 ¼". The first page features typographically printed letterhead of the Commander of the Dnieper Naval Flotilla, dated 9 October 1920, and the archival stamp of the Secretariat of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council dated 14 October 1920. The wide left margin bears Trotsky's handwritten resolution directing the Commander and Chief Political Officer to familiarize themselves with the document. The resolution is signed and dated 20 October 1920. The 4th page is signed by the Commander of the Dnieper Flotilla. According to some sources, the commander was A. Polupanov, a former Black Sea Fleet sailor, but the handwriting is too indistinct to be absolutely certain it is indeed Polupanov's signature.

In good condition. All the printed, typed, and handwritten text is clear, perfectly legible and absolutely unaffected by wear to the paper. Each page features an added 2"-wide paper strip for filing. Removal of the document from the file resulted in minor rips and staple holes to these added strips. Page 1 shows a few short rips at the bottom and right side. Two of them reach the text but do not affect its readability. Pages 2 through 4 are in a much better state, just mildly wrinkled and with a small rip at the bottom right corner of page 4.

Leon Trotsky, born Lev Davidovich Bronstein (Лев Давыдович Бронштейн, 1879 - 1940) was the 5th child in a wealthy Jewish family who became a zealous and militant revolutionary, reaching the highest echelons of Bolshevik power, first as Supreme Commander of the Red Army, and then as People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs.

Red Terror was the foundation of his modus operandi. To Trotsky belongs the initiative and implementation of the use of punitive barrier troops, which continued to be used throughout the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars, executing on the spot soldiers who lagged behind during attacks for any reason. He was also the initiator of concentration camps, mandatory labor camps, and proposed turning the entire working population of the country into a Labor Army, with "iron" discipline and complete rejection of individual freedoms. What Trotsky himself called "War Communism". Many practices that Trotsky introduced "blossomed" under Stalin's reign, including summary executions.

Greatly charismatic and very popular, Trotsky's dissent from Lenin's and Stalin's ideas and plans for the young republic was a serious threat to their seat on the Soviet throne. After Lenin's death, much political struggle ensued which resulted in Trotsky's exile to Kazakhstan in 1928. A year later he was expelled from the Soviet Union to Turkey. From there, he continued his path to France, followed by Norway, and finally, Mexico in 1937.

Stalin, however, continued to consider Trotsky a big enough threat to earn the latter an ice axe in his head by the hand of NKVD. Very ironically, shortly before that Trotsky, who had high blood pressure, expressed his fear that he might suffer a cerebral hemorrhage.

After Trotsky's exile, his name became anathema and was thoroughly purged from all public places, publications, and even archival records. That is why it is extremely rare to find his signature on a Soviet period document.

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