

For Members Only

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A.H.

# INTERNAL

# BULLETIN

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Psychoanalysis and Marxism

Certain comrades, or former comrades, such as Bruno R., having forgotten the past discussions and decisions of the Fourth International, attempt to explain my personal estimate of the Soviet State psychoanalytically. "Since Trotsky participated in the Russian revolution, it is difficult for him to lay aside the idea of the workers' state inasmuch as he would have to renounce his whole life's cause," etc. I think that the old Freud, who was very perspicacious, would have cuffed a little the ears of psychoanalysts of this ilk. Naturally I would never risk taking such action myself. Nevertheless I dare assure my critics that subjectivity and sentimentality are not on my side but on theirs.

Moscow's conduct, which has passed all bounds of abjectness and cynicism, calls forth an easy revolt within every proletarian revolutionary. Revolt engenders need for rejection. When the forces for immediate action are absent, impatient revolutionaries are inclined to resort to artificial methods. Thus arises, for example, the tactic of individual terror. More frequently resort is taken to strong expressions, to insults, and to imprecation. In the case which concerns us certain comrades are manifestly inclined to seek compensation through "terminological" terror. However, even from this point of view the mere fact of qualifying the bureaucracy as a class is worthless. If the Bonapartist riffraff is a class this means that it is not an abortion but a viable child of history. If its marauding parasitism is "exploitation" in the scientific sense of the term, this means that the bureaucracy possesses a historical future as the ruling class indispensable to the given system of economy. Here we have the end to which impatient revolt leads when it cuts itself loose from Marxist discipline!

When an emotional mechanic considers an automobile in which, let us say, gangsters have escaped from police pursuit over a bad road, and find the frame bent, the wheels out of line, and the motor partially damaged, he might quite justifiably say: "It is not an automobile -- devil knows what it is!" Such an estimate would lack any technical and scientific value, but it would express the legitimate revolt of the mechanic at the work of the gangsters. Let us suppose, however, that this same mechanic must recondition the object which he named "devil-knows-what-it-is." In this case he will start with the recognition that it is a damaged automobile before him. He will determine what parts are still good and what are beyond repair in order to decide how to begin work. The class-conscious worker will have a similar attitude toward the U.S.S.R. He has full right to say that the gangsters of the bureaucracy have transformed the workers' state into "devil-knows-what-it-is." But when he passes from this explosion of revolt to the solution of the political problem, he is forced to recognize that it is a damaged workers' state before him, in which the motor of economy is damaged, but which still continues to run and which can be completely reconditioned with the replacement of some parts. Of course this is only an analogy. Nevertheless it is worth reflecting over.

"A Counter-Revolutionary Workers' State"

Some voices cry out: "If we continue to recognize the U.S.S.R. as a workers' state, we will have to establish a new category:-- the counter-revolutionary workers' state." This argument attempts to shock our imagination by opposing a good programmatic norm to a miserable mean, even repugnant reality. But haven't we observed from day to day since 1923 how the Soviet State has played a more and more counter-revolutionary role on the international arena? Have we forgotten the experience of the Chinese revolution, of the 1926 general strike in England, and finally the very fresh experience of the Spanish revolution? There are two completely counter-revolutionary workers' Internationals. These critics have apparently forgotten this "category." The trade-unions of France, Great Britain, the United States, and other countries support completely the counter-revolutionary politics of their bourgeoisie. This does not prevent us from labeling them trade-unions, from supporting their progressive steps, and from defending them against the bourgeoisie. Why is it impossible to employ the same method with the counter-revolutionary workers' state? In the last analysis a workers' state is a trade-union which has conquered power. The difference in attitude in these two cases is explainable by the simple fact that the trade-unions have a long history and we have become accustomed to consider them as realities and not simply as "categories" in our program. But, as regards the workers' state there is being evinced an inability to learn to approach it as a real historical fact which has not subordinated itself to our program.

"Imperialism?"

Can the present expansion of the Kremlin be termed imperialism? First of all we must establish what social content is included in this term. History has known the "imperialism" of the Roman state based on slave labor, the imperialism of feudal land ownership, the imperialism of commercial and industrial capital, the imperialism of the Czarist monarchy, etc. The driving force behind the Moscow bureaucracy is indubitably the tendency to expand its power, its prestige, its revenues. This is the element of "imperialism" in the widest sense of the word which was a property in the past of all monarchies, oligarchies, ruling castes, medieval estates and classes. However, in contemporary literature, at least Marxist literature, imperialism is understood to mean the expansionist policy of finance capital which has a very sharply defined economic content. To employ the term "imperialism" for the foreign policy of the Kremlin -- without elucidating exactly what this signifies, means simply to identify the policy of the Bonapartist bureaucracy with the policy of monopolistic capitalism on the basis that both one and the other utilize military force for expansion. Such an identification, capable of sowing only confusion, is much more proper to petty bourgeois democrats than to Marxists.

Continuation of the Policy of Czarist Imperialism

The Kremlin participates in a new division of Poland, the Kremlin lays hands upon the Baltic states, the Kremlin orients towards the Balkans, Persia, and Afghanistan; in other words, the Kremlin continues the policy of Czarist imperialism. Do we not have the

NOTE: Page 3, paragraph 3, first sentence should read as follows:  
But there is maneuvering and maneuvering. At Brest-Litovsk...  
etc.

right in this case to label the policy of the Kremlin itself imperialist? This historical-geographical argument is no more convincing than any of the others. The proletarian revolution, which occurred on the territory of the Czarist empire, attempted from the very beginning to conquer and for a time conquered the Baltic countries; attempted to penetrate Rumania and Persia and at one time led its armies up to Warsaw (1920). The lines of revolutionary expansion were the same as those of Czarism, since revolution does not change geographical conditions. That is precisely why the Mensheviks at that time already spoke of Bolshevik imperialism, as borrowed from the traditions of Czarist diplomacy. The petty bourgeois democracy willingly resorts to this argument even now. We have no reason, I repeat, for imitating them in this.

#### Agency of Imperialism?

However, aside from the manner in which to appraise the expansionist policy of the U.S.S.R. itself, there remains the question of the help which Moscow provides the imperialist policy of Berlin. Here first of all, it is necessary to establish that under certain conditions -- up to a certain degree and in a certain form -- the support of this or that imperialism would be inevitable even for a completely healthy workers' state -- in virtue of the impossibility of breaking away from the chains of world imperialist relations. The Brest-Litovsk peace without the least doubt temporarily reinforced German imperialism against France and England. An isolated workers' state cannot fail to maneuver between the hostile imperialist camps. Maneuvering means temporarily supporting one of them against the other. To know exactly which one of the two camps it is more advantageous or less dangerous to support at a certain moment is not a question of principle but of practical calculation and foresight. The inevitable disadvantage which is engendered as a consequence of this constrained support for one bourgeois state against another is more than covered by the fact that the isolated workers' state is thus given the possibility of continuing its existence.

But there is maneuvering. At Brest-Litovsk the Soviet government sacrificed the national independence of the Ukraine in order to salvage the workers' state. Nobody could speak of treason toward the Ukraine, since all the class-conscious workers understood the forced character of this sacrifice. It is completely different with Poland. The Kremlin has never and at no place represented the question as if it had been constrained to sacrifice Poland. On the contrary, it boasts cynically of its combination, which affronts, rightfully, the most elementary democratic feelings of the oppressed classes and peoples throughout the world and thus weakens extremely the international situation of the Soviet Union. The economic transformations in the occupied provinces do not compensate for this by even a tenth part!

The entire foreign policy of the Kremlin in general is based upon a scoundrelly embellishment of the "friendly" imperialism and thus leads to the sacrifice of the fundamental interests of the world workers' movement for secondary and unstable advantages. After five years of duping the workers with slogans for the "defense of the democracies" Moscow is now occupied with covering up Hitler's policy

of pillage. This in itself still does not change the U.S.S.R. into an imperialist state. But Stalin and his Comintern are now indubitably the most valuable agency of imperialism.

If we want to define the foreign policy of the Kremlin exactly, we must say that it is the policy of the Bonapartist bureaucracy of a degenerated workers' state in imperialist encirclement. This definition is not as short or as sonorous as "imperialist policy," but in return it is more precise.

### "The Lesser Evil"

The occupation of Eastern Poland by the Red Army is to be sure a "lesser evil" in comparison to the occupation of the same territory by Nazi troops. But this lesser evil was obtained because Hitler was assured of achieving a greater evil. If somebody sets, or helps to set a house on fire and afterward saves five out of ten of the occupants of the house in order to convert them into his own semi-slaves, that is to be sure a lesser evil than to have burned the entire ten. But it is dubious that this firebug merits a medal for the rescue. If nevertheless a medal were given to him he should be shot immediately after as in the case of the hero in one of Victor Hugo's novels.

### "Armed Missionaries"

Robespierre once said that people do not like missionaries with bayonets. By this he wished to say that it is impossible to impose revolutionary ideas and institutions on other peoples through military violence. This correct thought does not signify of course the inadmissibility of military intervention in other countries in order to cooperate in a revolution. But such an intervention, as part of a revolutionary international policy, must be understood by the international proletariat, must correspond to the desires of the toiling masses of the country on whose territory the revolutionary troops enter. The theory of socialism in one country is not capable, naturally, of creating this active international solidarity which alone can prepare and justify armed intervention. The Kremlin poses and resolves the question of military intervention, like all other questions of its policy, absolutely independently of the ideas and feelings of the international working class. Because of this, the latest diplomatic "successes" of the Kremlin monstrously compromise the U.S.S.R. and introduce extreme confusion into the ranks of the world proletariat.

### Insurrection on Two Fronts

But if the question thus shapes itself --some comrades say -- is it proper to speak of the defense of the U.S.S.R. and the occupied provinces? Is it not more correct to call upon the workers and peasants in both parts of former Poland to arise against Hitler as well as against Stalin? Naturally, this is very attractive. If revolution surges up simultaneously in Germany and in the U.S.S.R., including the newly occupied provinces, this would resolve many questions at one blow. But our policy cannot be based upon only the most favorable, the most happy combination of circumstances. The question is posed thus: What to do if Hitler, before he is crushed by revolution, attacks the Ukraine before revolution has smashed Stalin? Will

the partisans of the Fourth International in this case fight against the troops of Hitler as they fought in Spain in the ranks of the Republican troops against Franco? We are completely and wholeheartedly for an independent (of Hitler as well as of Stalin) Soviet Ukraine. But what to do if, before having obtained this independence, Hitler attempts to seize the Ukraine which is under the domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy? The Fourth International answers: Against Hitler we will defend this Ukraine enslaved by Stalin.

### "Unconditional Defense of the U.S.S.R."

What does "unconditional" defense of the U.S.S.R. mean? It means that we do not lay any conditions upon the bureaucracy. It means that independently of the motive and causes of the war we defend the social basis of the U.S.S.R., if it is menaced by danger on the part of imperialism.

Some comrades say: "And if the Red Army tomorrow invades India and begins to put down a revolutionary movement there shall we in this case support it?" Such a way of posing a question is not at all consistent. It is not clear above all why India is implicated. Is it not simple to ask: If the Red Army menaces workers' strikes or peasant protests against the bureaucracy in the U.S.S.R. shall we support it or not? Foreign policy is the continuation of the internal. We have never promised to support all the actions of the Red Army which is an instrument in the hands of the Bonapartist bureaucracy. We have promised to defend only the U.S.S.R. as a workers' state and solely those things within it which belong to a workers' state.

An adroit casuist can say: If the Red Army independently of the character of the "work" fulfilled by it, is beaten by the insurgent masses in India, this will weaken the U.S.S.R. To this we will answer: the crushing of a revolutionary movement in India, with the cooperation of the Red Army, would signify an incomparably greater danger to the social basis of the U.S.S.R. than an episodic defeat of counter-revolutionary detachments of the Red Army in India. In every case the Fourth International will know how to distinguish where and when the Red Army is acting solely as an instrument of the Bonapartist reaction and where it defends the social basis of the U.S.S.R.

A trade-union led by reactionary fakers organizes a strike against the admission of Negro workers into a certain branch of industry. Shall we support such a shameful strike? Of course not. But let us imagine that the bosses, utilizing the given strike, make an attempt to crush the trade-union and to make impossible in general the organized self-defense of the workers. In this case we will defend the trade-union as a matter of course in spite of its reactionary leadership. Why is not this same policy applicable to the U.S.S.R.?

### The Fundamental Rule

The Fourth International has established firmly that in all imperialist countries, independent of the fact as to whether they are in alliance with the U.S.S.R. or in a camp hostile to it, the proletarian parties during the war must develop the class struggle with the purpose of seizing power. At the same time the proletariat of the

imperialist countries must not lose sight of the interests of the U.S.S.R.'s defense (or of that of colonial revolutions) and in case of real necessity must resort to the most decisive action, for instance, strikes, acts of sabotage, etc. The groupings of the powers since the time the Fourth International formulated this rule have changed radically. But the rule itself retains all its validity. If England and France tomorrow menace Leningrad or Moscow, the British and French workers should take the most decisive measures in order to hinder the sending of soldiers and military supplies. If Hitler finds himself constrained by the logic of the situation to send Stalin military supplies, the German workers, on the contrary, would have no reason for resorting in this concrete case to strikes or sabotage. Nobody, I hope, will propose any other solution.

### "Revision of Marxism?"

Some comrades evidently were surprised that I spoke in my article ("The U.S.S.R. in the War") of the system of "bureaucratic collectivism" as a theoretical possibility. They discovered in this even a complete revision of Marxism. This is an apparent misunderstanding. The Marxist comprehension of historical necessity has nothing in common with fatalism. Socialism is not realizable "by itself," but as a result of the struggle of living forces, classes and their parties. The proletariat's decisive advantage in this struggle resides in the fact that it represents historical progress, while the bourgeoisie incarnates reaction and decline. Precisely in this is the source of our conviction in victory. But we have full right to ask ourselves: What character will society take if the forces of reaction conquer?

Marxists have formulated an incalculable number of times the alternative: Either socialism or return to barbarism. After the Italian "experience" we repeated thousands of times: either communism or fascism. The real passage to socialism cannot fail to appear incomparably more complicated, more heterogenous, more contradictory than was foreseen in the general historical scheme. Marx spoke about the dictatorship of the proletariat and its future withering away but said nothing about bureaucratic degeneration of the dictatorship. We have observed and analyzed for the first time in experience such a degeneration. Is this revision of Marxism?

The march of events has succeeded in demonstrating that the delay of the socialist revolution engenders the indubitable phenomena of barbarism -- chronic unemployment, pauperization of the petty bourgeoisie, fascism, finally wars of extermination which do not open up any new road. What social and political forms can the new "barbarism" take, if we admit theoretically that mankind should not be able to elevate itself to socialism? We have the possibility of expressing ourselves on this subject more concretely than Marx. Fascism on one hand, degeneration of the Soviet State on the other outline the social and political forms of a neo-barbarism. An alternative of this kind -- socialism or totalitarian servitude -- has not only theoretical interest, but also enormous importance in agitation, because in its light the necessity of socialist revolution appears most graphically.

If we are to speak of a revision of Marx, it is in reality the revision of those comrades who project a new type of state "non-bourgeois" and "non-worker." Because the alternative developed by me leads them to draw their own thoughts up to their logical conclusion, some of these critics, frightened by the conclusions of their own theory, accuse me...of revising Marxism. I prefer to think that it is simply a friendly jest.

### The Right of Revolutionary Optimism

I endeavored to demonstrate in my article "The U.S.S.R. in the War" that the perspective of a non-worker and non-bourgeois society of exploitation or "bureaucratic collectivism," is the perspective of complete defeat and decline of the international proletariat, the perspective of the most profound historical pessimism. Are there any genuine reasons for such a perspective? It is not superfluous to inquire about this among our class enemies.

In the weekly of the well-known newspaper Paris-Soir of August 31, 1939, an extremely instructive conversation is reported between the French ambassador Coulongre and Hitler on August 25, at the time of their last interview. (The source of the information is undoubtedly Coulongre himself.) Hitler sputters, boasts the pact which he concluded with Stalin ("a realistic pact") and "regrets" that German and French blood will be spilled.

"But, Coulongre objects, Stalin displayed great double-dealing. The real victor (in case of war) will be Trotsky. Have you thought this over?"

"I know," -- Der Fuehrer responds, "but why did France and Britain give Poland complete freedom of action?" etc.

These gentlemen like to give a personal name to the spectre of revolution. But this of course is not the essence of this dramatic conversation at the very moment when diplomatic relations were ruptured. "War will inevitably provoke revolution;" the representative of imperialist democracy, himself chilled to the marrow, frightens his adversary.

"I know," Hitler responds, as if it were a question decided long ago. "I know." Astonishing dialogue!

Both of them, Coulongre and Hitler, represent the barbarism which advances over Europe. At the same time neither of them doubt that their barbarism will be conquered by socialist revolution. Such is now the awareness of the ruling classes of all the capitalist countries of the world. Their complete demoralization is one of the most important elements in the relation of class forces. The proletariat has a young and still weak revolutionary leadership. But the leadership of the bourgeoisie rots on its feet. At the very outset of the war which they could not avert, these gentlemen are convinced in advance of the collapse of their regime. This fact alone, must be for us the source of invincible revolutionary optimism!

L. Trotsky

October 18, 1939



ON THE CHARACTER OF THE WAR, AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE  
FOURTH INTERNATIONALISTS

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By James Burnham

(Note: The following document by Comrade Burnham was introduced at the meeting of the Political Committee on September 5, and sent to all members of the National Committee as material for the Plenum. At the Plenum of the N.C. Comrade Burnham withdrew this document. It is published in the Internal Bulletin as part of the records of the party at the request of Downtown Branch, New York).

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SECTION I: THE NATURE OF THE WAR AS A WHOLE

1. The second World War, which has now begun, is, as a whole, imperialist and totalitarian in character. It is a war among the great powers for the re-division of the world; and is, from the point of view of both sides and of all participants in the conflict, directed against the interests of the masses.
2. In this war, "neutrality" is impossible for any nation. The nature of the war makes it certain that within a comparatively short time all nations will be compelled to line up with one side or the other: at the very least, economically; and in the case of most nations and of all of the great powers, with military means as well.
3. From the imperialist, totalitarian character of the war as a whole, and the involvement of all nations in the war, it follows that from no point of view or in any respect can it be regarded as being fought for "the defense of the independence of small nations", "the rights of subject nationalities", or for any other progressive purpose. The conflict as a whole is reactionary, and all secondary or isolated features are subordinated to its reactionary nature.
4. This war marks the end of bourgeois democracy as a historically possible form of government. Under the conditions of the war, the democratic and fascist imperialisms lose their structural differences and reach identity, in all essential respects, in the totalitarian war dictatorships. Whatever the outcome of the war, it will never be possible for them to return to a bourgeois democratic form of government. This conclusion holds for the United States, as for the other nations. The only possible exceptions - which would prove in any case only temporary - would be one or two of the smaller and unimportant nations; and even such exceptions are doubtful.
5. From the character of the war, it follows that the warring powers are incapable of concluding a just or even a workable peace.
6. A just and lasting peace can be concluded only by the overthrow of world imperialism as a whole.
7. The task of the masses, confronted with the war, is to stop the war. This task can be accomplished by the masses only by the overthrow, within each nation, of the war-makers: that is, of

their own rulers and oppressors.

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8. Within the advanced nations, this task must be carried out through the conquest of power by the working class in the socialist revolution.

9. The colonial peoples and the subject nationalities can carry out this task by the struggle for freedom and independence from "their own" imperialist oppressors. This struggle must be firmly supported by the international working class. The struggle for the freedom of the colonial peoples and subject nationalities can be carried to success, however, only if the working class maintains in supporting it a socialist policy wholly independent of the native bourgeois and bourgeois nationalists, and only if the working class gains leadership in the struggle and succeeds in transforming it into the struggle for the workers' revolution.

10. The perspective of the struggle of the masses against the war is summed up in that of the United Socialist States of Europe, the United Socialist States of the Americas, a free Asia, a free Africa, and the World Federation of Socialist republics.

## SECTION II: THE NATURE OF THE RUSSIAN STATE IN THE LIGHT OF THE WAR.

1. The signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact brought to a definitive climax the series of developments within the Soviet Union which began with the rise of Stalin and entered a stage of rapid transformation during the past five years.

2. Internally, the Soviet bureaucracy has carried through a political counter-revolution, which required for its achievement an undeclared but no less actual Civil War.

3. Within the Soviet Union, the present Soviet state has during the past period gone over to an imperialist or quasi-imperialist policy, in both political and economic relations, toward the minority nationalities within the Soviet borders.

4. During the past period, the Soviet Union has, partly through the destruction of the nationalized forms of economy and partly through the manipulation of them, assumed a definitely exploitative character in the economic realm. The ruling stratum of the population systematically exploits the masses of the people for its benefit.

5. It is impossible to regard the Soviet Union as a "workers' state" in any sense whatever.

6. The ruling stratum of the Soviet Union does not constitute a crystallized bourgeois class in the traditional sense, nor can it be predicted with assurance whether its evolution in the future -- even if unchecked -- will be toward such crystallization.

7. The de facto political and economic character of the present Soviet state, and the mode under which its oppression and exploitation is carried on, suggest the term "bureaucratic state" as its most adequate definition. Political and economic power and privilege, as well as the state apparatus, are the property of the bureaucracy and its affiliates.

8. This analysis is confirmed by an examination of the external policy of the present Soviet state. The armed and material intervention of the Soviet state externally, from having been revolutionary in its first period and what might be called passive or non-revolutionary in its middle period, has now become counter-revolutionary during the latest period.

9. The present Soviet state, as it functions both internally and externally, is no longer a bulwark, even partially or indirectly, of what remains of the socialized economy, but is exclusively a bulwark of the power and privilege of the bureaucracy, the interests of which are now in complete conflict with all progressive remains of the socialized economy.

10. In foreign relations generally, during the years since 1933, the policy of the present Soviet state, in serving the aims of the bureaucracy, has become wholly subordinated to one or another of the groups of imperialist powers - a development culminating in the pact with Hitler.

### SECTION III: THE QUESTION OF DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

1. The policy of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union was predicated upon the proletarian character of the Soviet state and the conception of four possible types of war in which that state might be involved: (1) A war of defense against imperialist intervention; (2) a civil war; (3) an external war of liberation, in which the Soviet forces aided the toilers and oppressed of some nation or nations against their rulers and oppressors; (4) a so-called "mixed war", in which the Soviet state would be compelled to join military forces with one or another group of contending imperialist powers. All of these types of war occurred, and the policy was upheld for all of them.

2. Conditions are now altogether changed. First: an external war of liberation is now excluded. The external military intervention of the present Soviet state could now be, not revolutionary in character - in support of the toilers against their oppressors, but counter-revolutionary - in support of one or another set of rulers against the masses. In such cases, therefore, defense of the Soviet Union is social-patriotism, and must be abandoned for a defeatist policy.

3. In the case of internal war, revolutionists are now committed to support, not of the present Soviet state, but of the revolutionary struggle of the Russian workers and peasants against that state, and of the struggle for freedom of subject nationalities from that state (e.g., as in the case of the struggle for a free Soviet Ukraine). Far from defending the Soviet state in such cases, we call upon the workers and peasants of Russia to overthrow and to re-establish their own socialist power; and we call on the subject peoples, joining with their brothers now under the rule of other nations, to fight for their freedom against both the rulers of these other nations and the rulers of the Soviet state.

4. The case of a "mixed war" is no longer abstract but concrete: it is the present war. The armed intervention of the Soviet Union in the present war is almost certain, and its political and

economic intervention has already taken place. This intervention will be wholly subordinated to the general imperialist character of the conflict as a whole; and will be in no sense a "defense" of the remains of the socialist economy but on the contrary the sure means toward the elimination of what progressive remains there still are. Under these circumstances, defense of the Soviet Union would be social-patriotism, and a major barrier also to revolutionary developments among the peoples of the other warring powers. Revolutionists must call upon the Russian workers and peasants to join hands with the workers and peasants of all the powers, of Poland and Germany and France and England and the United States, to stop the war and conclude a just peace by the overthrow of their own rulers and oppressors.

5. The one remaining case is that of combined imperialist intervention against an isolated Russia. To answer in advance what should be the policy of revolutionists in this instance is impossible, since the problem is abstract: the real war is not occurring in this manner, and an indefinite variety of changes might well occur before any such event took place, granted that there is any likelihood of it. If such an event had taken place yesterday, or took place today, the present Soviet state would occupy a role comparable to that of the local rulers of a semi-colonist or "comprador" nation, and, since the success of the imperialist interventionists would strengthen world imperialism and their defeat weakened it, material support of the Soviet state would be the mandatory policy.

#### SECTION IV: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

1. The United States cannot remain neutral in the war. From the diplomatic and economic standpoint, it is not neutral today; and it will have to intervene with military forces as well.

2. The main immediate object of U.S. imperialism is complete domination of Latin America, a free entry into the Far East, and protection of sources of such supplies as rubber. Its larger object is world ascendancy as the result of the present war.

3. These objects, while requiring military intervention in the end, also dictate some delay, until the warring powers have to some extent exhausted themselves. However, the influence of the Roosevelt administration, over and above general economic and imperialist factors, works to speed up the time of military entry.

4. From the point of view of the masses in the United States, as in other nations, the solution of the war crisis and the establishment of a just and lasting peace can be found only in the overthrow of U.S. imperialism and the achievement of workers' rule and socialism.

5. In the struggle of the masses of the U.S. against the war, the greatest importance attaches to the struggle for the freedom and independence of U.S. colonies and dependencies (especially Puerto Rico), and the struggle of the Latin American peoples against Yankee imperialism. These aims must be placed in the forefront of the fight against the war.

6. Similarly, the struggles of the Negroes of the United States for emancipation becomes an integral part of the struggle against the war.

7. In propaganda, the struggle against the war in the U.S. demands first of all constant education as to the true character of the war and of the role of the United States with respect to it, and as to the solution for it.

8. In particular, the revolutionists must direct their fire against the "democratic myth" which will be the main ideological means for dragging the people into the war.

9. In addition to propaganda and education, the party must carry on a constant specific agitation exposing the concrete steps whereby the U.S. is led into the war, and must carry on sharp, clear campaigns against these concrete steps.

10. The party must agitate against militarization in all its aspects, and against all U.S. armament expenditures. In this connection, the slogan "All War Funds to the Unemployed" and related slogans, together with the defense of democratic rights as these are cumulatively invaded by the war machine, must be pressed.

11. The party must conduct a constant agitation against the secret diplomacy of the government, demanding that the full truth be made known to the people.

12. The party must continue its demand that the power over war and peace be taken away from the President and Congress and placed in the hands of the people. For the present, at least, the demand for a people's referendum on war retains its validity, though the slogan "Let the People Vote on War!" should be subordinated to such slogans as "Take the war-making power away from Congress and the President!"

13. In the next immediate period, a special campaign should be developed in connection with the forthcoming special session of Congress. This campaign should feature opposition to Roosevelt's war step in demanding a lifting of the embargo; the demand for all war funds to the unemployed as a demand on the special session; and agitation against the preliminary mobilization steps (restrictions of democratic rights, possibly registration) which will undoubtedly come before the session.

October 11, 1939

Dear Comrade Crux,

I have written what I consider to be an objective analysis of the moves of the Stalin regime for publication in either the APPRAL or the internal bulletin. I do not look at these events from an "hysterical" viewpoint, but nevertheless, I insist that they confront us with new, complex problems which cannot be solved by any formulas. I have made a careful study of Trotsky's article on The USSR and War and have openly stated my support of it. Likewise, I still do not believe it contradicts that of M.S.

When I referred in a previous letter to the impending serious party crisis I did not mean primarily the Russian question. In my opinion, there can be no serious differences, or disagreements on this issue. Certainly there can be no split on this question because every comrade (with an infinitesimal exception) absolutely agrees that we must defend the nationalized economy from imperialist attack.

What I referred to was the impending struggle around the question of the internal regime and preparing the party for war. Yes, comrade Crux, I am deeply concerned about this and so is every other comrade. No one can foresee the outcome of this. That is what I meant by using the word "disaster." It is unfortunately true that this issue is mixed up with the Russian question, and thus great confusion results. But this is the case. In the discussion that impends on both these issues it will be necessary for each one to clarify his views and take his stand. I certainly shall not hesitate to do this.

I would like to conclude by saying that so far as the Russian question is concerned, the issue is not "Workers State or non-Workers State." Trotsky's article states this clearly. The issue is the relationship between our defense of the economic basis of the U.S.S.R. and our analysis of the activities of the Kremlin rulers.

In this respect, I see no relationship whatsoever between the bureaucratic military conquests conducted by the Kremlin against Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (and now Finland) and the revolutionary conquests engaged in by the victorious workers' revolution.

To cite an example of what I mean, last week I attended a meeting run by a small Indian workers' club in New York. To these Indian workers, the possibility of an invasion by Stalin of Afghanistan and Northern India was a real possibility and menace. Everyone of them would condemn such a move and swore that the Indian people would take up arms to resist it. In such actions by the Stalin regime these workers instinctively saw a blow (a deadly blow) struck at the colonial revolution. In my opinion, they are correct and this is what I have written for the APPRAL or the internal bulletin.

It is my belief that all issues will be clearly revealed in the actual discussion that is about to open in the party. Certainly I shall do my best to make ~~that~~ the case.

Comradely yours,  
Sherman Stanley

P.S. I might add that I have already received information that the Indian Stalinists are already at work as "defeatists"--that is, stirring up Hindu-Moslem trouble, etc. I would not be surprised if they were working already in close collaboration with the Nazi agents.

October 22, 1939

Dear Comrade Stanley:

It is with some delay that I answer your letter of October 11.

(1) You say that "there can be no serious differences or disagreements" on the Russian question. If this is so, why the terrible alarm in the party against the National Committee, i.e., its majority? You should not substitute your own conceptions for that of the minority members of the National Committee who considered the question serious and burning enough to provoke a discussion just at the threshold of the war.

(2) I cannot agree with you that Trotsky's statement does not contradict that of Comrade M.S. The contradiction concerns two fundamental points:

- (a) the class nature of the U.S.S.R.
- (b) the defense of the U.S.S.R.

On the first question, Comrade M.S. places a question mark, which signifies that he denies the old decision and postpones making a new decision. A revolutionary party cannot live between two decisions, one annihilated, the other not presented. In the question of the defense of the U.S.S.R. or the new occupied territories against Hitler's (or Great Britain's) attack, Comrade M.S. proposes a revolution against Stalin and Hitler. This abstract formula signifies negating the defense in a concrete situation.

(3) I agree with you completely that only a serious discussion can clarify the matter, but I don't believe that voting simultaneously for the statement of the majority and that of Comrade M.S. could contribute to the necessary clarification.

(4) You state in your letter that the main issue is not the Russian question but the "internal regime." I have heard this accusation often since almost the very beginning of the existence of our movement in the United States. The formulations varied a bit, the groupings too, but a number of comrades always remained in opposition to the "regime." They were, for example, against the entrance into the Socialist Party (not to go further into the past). However it immediately occurred that not the entrance was the "main issue" but the regime. Now the same formula is repeated in connection with the Russian question.

(5) I, for my part believe that the passage through the Socialist Party was a salutary action for the whole development of our party and that the "regime" (or the leadership) which assured this passage was correct against the opposition which at that time represented the tendency of stagnation.

(6) Now at the beginning of the war a new sharp opposition arises on the Russian question -- it concerns the correctness of our program elaborated through innumerable disputes, polemics, and discussions during at least ten years. Our decisions are of course not eternal. If somebody in a leading position has doubts and only doubts, it is his duty toward the party to clarify himself by fresh studies or by discussions inside the leading party bodies before throwing the question into the party -- not in the form of elaborated new decisions, but in the form of doubts. Of course from the point of view of the statutes of the party, everybody, even a member of the Political Committee, has the right to do so, but I don't believe that this right was used in a sound manner which could contribute to the amelioration of the party regime.

(7) Often in the past I have heard accusations from comrades against the National Committee as a whole -- its lack of initiative, and so on. I am not the attorney of the National Committee and I am sure that many things have been omitted which should have been done. But whenever I insisted upon concretization of the accusations, I learned often that the dissatisfaction with their own local activity, with their own lack of initiative, was transformed into an accusation against the National Committee which was supposed to be Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnibenevolent.

(8) In the present case of the National Committee vis-a-vis the decision of "conservatism," I believe that to defend the old programmatic decision until it is replaced by a new one is the elementary duty of the National Committee. I believe that such "conservatism" is dictated by the self-preservation of the party itself.

(9) Thus in two most important issues of the last period comrades dissatisfied with the "regime" have had in my opinion a false political attitude. The regime must be an instrument for correct policy and not for false. When the incorrectness of their policy becomes clear, then its protagonists are often tempted to say that not this special issue is decisive but the general regime. During the development of the Left Opposition and the Fourth International we opposed such substitutions hundreds of times. When Vorockon or Sneovliet or even Molinor were beaten on all their points of difference, they declared that the genuine trouble with the Fourth International is not this or that decision but the bad regime.

(10) I don't wish to make the slightest analogy between the leaders of the present opposition in our American party and the Vorockons, Sneovliets and so on; I know very well that the leaders of the opposition are highly qualified comrades and I hope sincerely that we will continue to work together in the most friendly manner. But I cannot help being disquieted by the fact that some of them repeat the same error at every new stage of the development of the party with the support of a group of personal adherents. I believe that in the present discussion this kind of procedure must be analyzed and severely condemned by the general opinion of the party which now has tremendous tasks to fulfill.

With best comradely greetings,  
Gruex

P.S. -- In view of the fact that I speak in this letter about the majority and the minority of the National Committee, especially of the comrades of the M.S. resolution, I am sending a copy of this letter to Comrades Cannon and Shachtman.



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THE REFERENDUM AND DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

We demand a referendum on the war question because we want to paralyze or weaken the centralism of the imperialist state. But can we recognize the referendum as a normal method for deciding issues in our own party? It is not possible to answer this question except in the negative.

Whoever is in favor of a referendum recognizes by this that a party decision is simply an arithmetical total of local decisions, everyone of the locals being inevitably restricted by its own forces and by its limited experience. Whoever is in favor of a referendum must be in favor of imperative mandates; that is, in favor of such procedure that every local has the right to compel its representative at a party convention to vote in a definite manner. Whoever recognizes imperative mandates automatically denies the significance of conventions as the highest organ of the party. Instead of a convention it is sufficient to introduce a counting of local votes. The party as a centralized whole disappears. By accepting a referendum the influence of the most advanced locals and most experienced and far-sighted comrades of the capital or industrial centers is substituted for the influence of the least experienced backward sections, etc.

Naturally we are in favor of an all sided examination and of voting upon every question by each party local; by each party cell. But at the same time every delegate chosen by a local must have the right to weigh all the arguments relating to the question in the convention and to vote as his political judgment demands of him. If he votes in the convention against the majority which delegated him, and if he is not able to convince his organization of his correctness after the convention, then the organization can subsequently deprive him of its political confidence. Such cases are inevitable. But they are incomparably a lesser evil than the system of referendums or imperative mandates which completely kill the party as a whole.

Leon Trotsky

October 21, 1939

October 28, 1939

Dear Comrade Crux:

I have received your letter of October 22, copies of which were also sent to comrades of the N.C. I wish to give my reply to certain of the points raised therein. Now that the Party discussion is underway and comrade S. and other leading comrades of the N.C. minority are preparing more extensive documents and articles than those that have appeared to date, I think that those points to which I do not reply in this letter will be more adequately answered by them.

(1) I did not substitute my personal conceptions for those of the N.C. minority members. The first task I attempted to perform was to obtain as accurate and objective a viewpoint as possible as to the differences in the N.C. I was convinced from reading the documents and speaking to various N.C. members (of both viewpoints, naturally) that the differences on the Russian question were neither "fundamental nor serious." I still am convinced of this. That they may become serious in the future, particularly if the majority N.C. continues to remain silent on the question of Russia's role in the war, is an undeniable possibility. But today, in my opinion, the differences are very thin, or at least thinning down. I believe this is due to the retreat of the majority comrades from their original position on the Polish invasion.

(2) Despite your statement to the contrary, I still can find no fundamental contradiction between Trotsky's statement & that of comrade S. I think this will be clearly and definitively shown in the more elaborate resolution and speech of S. which is now being prepared. The minority resolution of comrade S. makes no mention of the question concerning the class character of the U.S.S.R. I, personally, am fully prepared today to still call the U.S.S.R. a "degenerated workers' state." But this, as you yourself have stated, is not the issue. The issue is: how do we characterize and analyze Russia's participation in the present imperialist war? What do we tell workers in countries now threatened?

Likewise on the defense of the U.S.S.R. Every leading minority comrade - so far as I know - stands ready to defend the Soviet Union (including the occupied territories) against imperialist invasion. I must emphasize this point: if the nature of the present war changes into an imperialist assault on the U.S.S.R. the minority comrades stand 100% for the defense of the Soviet Union and its state property against Hitler and Chamberlain.

As I understand the minority resolution, it is an attempt to analyze, explain, clarify and offer a revolutionary perspective to those workers involved by Russia's intervention in the war. Events, unprecedented and unforeseen by us, have taken place. Is it enough to merely repeat, as if by rote, the old formulas? Should we have given the shameful reply of Comrade Albert Goldman, who endorsed the invasion? We of the minority say no, and attempt to supply our answer to the specific events.

Revolutionary policy - as I have learned above all from you - consists in responding to events, offering an analysis, formulating a

prognosis and a concrete plan of action. I believe the facts prove that our N.C. failed to respond to the war crisis, could offer no explanation of the events, and certainly had no plan of action - either for today or tomorrow. To this very day they have not condemned the invasion of Poland! In the present situation, that is an example of what is meant by the accusation of "bureaucratic conservatism."

(3) You speak at some length of past differences among our Party leadership. Having joined the Fourth International from within the Socialist Party when our movement first joined it almost 5 years ago, and having thus never been a member of the C.L.A. or W.P., I cannot speak about such matters. But I can see no relevance to the present issues. The present division does not at all correspond to the division on the question of the S.P. entry. Suppose a comrade did oppose the S.P. entry 5 years ago - that cannot automatically condemn his opinion of today. All that belongs to history; I am concerned with the profound problems of today and tomorrow.

(4) Comrade S. is the first to admit that his Plenum document is not a fully-rounded, elaborated position. This is undeniable. But, as I have stated at the beginning of this letter, he is now in process of elaborating and motivating more fully his original statement, as he did at the membership meeting opening the discussion in New York City.

The minority comrades - as is well known to you - do not consist of "ultra-left sectarians and crack-pots." Nor do they have anything in common with adventurers, opportunists or men with personal axes to grind, like Molinier, Voroecken etc. The whole personal record of those comrades - so far as I am concerned - cries out against their being lumped together with such alien elements.

Nor has the Russian question been raised by them as a sly way of getting at the internal regime question. Whether we like it or not, the two are interlinked and both are highly worthy of discussion and solution. The whole manner in which the N.C. "responded" to the events make it inevitable that the internal situation should be brought to the light of day. In fact, the majority comrades precipitated the "regime" question by organizational attacks on the minority.

The duty of the N.C. - as you state - is to defend the old position until it is replaced by a new one. That is an elementary duty. But this duty consists not merely in "defending" the old position, but in supplying answers and analyses also to those who are challenging the old position, or who are demanding answers to new events. Isn't our program more than just a "tradition"? But this is what the majority N.C. comrades - who keep repeating, "nothing is really new", "don't get nervous" - are trying to do.

To sum up in as simple a manner as I possibly can: the whole present crisis would not have arisen if the N.C. had adequately, flexibly and collectively responded to the war events and the war crisis. It failed to do so and thus arose the Russian question and the "regime" question.

Events will prove who is correct in their answers and plans for the solution of these problems. Perhaps it will be that the beginnings of the democratic revolution in India which can now be discerned will prove the testing ground. I would not be surprised if this were the case. I, for my part, while not hesitating to advance my viewpoint which coincides with that of the minority in this case, will do whatever I can to prevent a rupture in the Party and to find a common solution for our problems.

Comradely yours, Shorman Stanley

AGAINST THE SHACHTMAN RESOLUTION

By John G. Wright

Comrade Shachtman and his co-thinkers voted at the plenum against the reaffirmation of the party's fundamental position on the nature of the Soviet state and the role of Stalinism. But instead of raising "at this time the problem of the class nature of the Soviet Union", they justify their vote and their resolution on the ground that the party has "thus far failed to give a clear and unambiguous answer" to those "concrete questions raised by the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the ensuing conquest of Poland and matters related thereto."

If this argument means anything at all, it means that immediate and adequate answers to developments involving the USSR can be given as they arise without involving the problem of the class nature of the Soviet Union. That is not the way in which Marxists give answers either to political events in general, or to events in war-time in particular. Marxists have always proceeded in their analysis of any event from their fundamental position on its class line. So that the point of departure of the Shachtman resolution runs counter to our principled approach to questions.

But let us for the moment grant Shachtman his starting point. The central point of his resolution, which he asks the party to adopt, is a "condemnation" of Stalin's invasion of Poland as an "imperialist act." The official position of the party is to characterize Stalin's acts as those of a tool of Hitler. Shachtman, to be sure, does not explain just why he finds the latter characterization inadequate, but he insists on his own, namely:

"The Party condemns the Stalinist invasion and subjugation of Poland as acts of imperialist policy...German Fascism and Stalinist bureaucratism are now engaged in a joint campaign of imperialist expansion."

Is this a clear and unambiguous answer? If any "answer" ever raised, as Carlyle put it, "unpublished thoughts in one's mind" the foregoing answer surely does. But let us approach it, so to speak, on its merits.

Since when have Marxists considered "condemnation" of "imperialist acts" especially in conjunction with imperialist war as constituting an adequate, clear, or unambiguous expression of their position? They never have.

In the last war, the social patriots on the side of the Allies were loud in their condemnation of the German invasion of Belgium. It was an act of imperialist aggression ("expansion?"), they cried. And they called upon the workers to conduct a struggle against the Hohenzollern army. In reply to those who called upon the workers to "take sides" on the invasion of Belgium, Lenin wrote: "The German imperialists have shamelessly violated the neutrality of Belgium, as is the custom, always and everywhere, of all belligerent states who if need arises trample underfoot all treaties and obligations." Lenin did not cry: "Betrayal", instead he exposed those who were yelping in "condemnation" of the invasion, and taught the workers what their tasks were.

Unless I am greatly mistaken, Lenin and his co-thinkers generally wasted little breath in condemning war-time shifts of frontiers but rather centered the barb of their condemnation on the imperialist tools of the bourgeoisie, and social patriots. Nor is this so difficult to understand. A revolutionist is not only justified but obliged to point out the shameful and criminal treachery of a trade-union bureaucrat who sells out a union; but he would hardly apply the same terms ("shameful and criminal treachery") to the other partner in the deal -- the boss. And this, not for psychological but for political reasons. For in one case it is a question of a Judas to his class, a boss's tool; while in the other, it is the class enemy himself. Only the social patriots paint-up the ruling class even in "condemnation"; the revolutionists explain the real nature of acts in an imperialist war and pass on to the vital issues.

That is why we never insisted that the condemnation of Hitler's onslaught on Poland provided the indispensable and "clear and unambiguous" answer either to the Polish workers or workers everywhere in the struggle against the present war. On the contrary, we know that it is one of our important tasks to expose the hypocritical condemnation of the "democratic" camp of the imperialist and their social-patriotic tools.

What then can Shachtman possibly contribute to our clarity by demanding that we put to the forefront our condemnation of Stalin's invasion of Poland as an "imperialist act?" He has failed to think things out to the end.

Comrade Shachtman, unless he has changed his position, would subscribe emphatically to the characterization of Stalin's act as a "shameful and criminal betrayal." Such a characterization is comprehensible only if we proceed from the assumption that Stalin is acting here as a tool (a shameful and criminal role) in the hands of a class-enemy (Hitler) and is therefore guilty of betrayal (of the struggle against war and for the world revolution). But Shachtman does not accept this formulation which, whether one agrees with it or not, is nevertheless compatible with our fundamental position. The only implication of Shachtman's position therefore is that the commission of "an imperialist act" justifies such a condemnation.

This position is very dangerous for our party. For how on the basis of Shachtman's resolution can he object to the application of the very same terms to Stalin's partner in this "joint campaign of imperialist expansion?" Has then Hitler, too, perhaps perpetrated an act of "shameful and criminal betrayal?" Why, indeed, shouldn't he, too, be so condemned on the basis of Shachtman's resolution? Before Stalin, Hitler had a real imperialist for his partner, Chamberlain, in still another "imperialist act", the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. Yet I believe that Shachtman would most certainly object to a condemnation of this act in terms of: "The shameful and criminal betrayal of Czechoslovakia by Chamberlain."

The People's Front line is all too clear. But the very line of Shachtman's resolution makes it impossible to draw the class line which alone makes clear the differences between the two camps, and therefore between the two actions. As for Burnham, he assuredly can raise no valid objections. He can resort only to evasion. He cannot possibly draw any line of distinction between the "various" imperialists: Stalin, the "imperialist", Hitler, the imperialist, Chamberlain

the imperialist. He has already publicly characterized the Stalinist Bonapartist regime as a regime of "exploiters", that is, of a new class. Shachtman's resolution is acceptable to him precisely because implied in it is the characterization of Stalin as a "new" imperialist counterpart of Hitler. It is not for nothing that comrade Trotsky warns the innovators that they would be only embarrassed if the "terminological" concessions they demand were conceded to them. They leave the doors ajar for an opportunist line.

But Shachtman's resolution contains concessions to Burnham not only in "terminology" but also in political conclusions. We are and remain defensists in relation to the Soviet Union. Shachtman's resolution states blandly that a revision of our defensist position is necessary; and at the same time that the abandonment of the slogan of defense of the Soviet Union "does not necessarily follow" from it. What does follow from his resolution is that we advise the workers in Poland to proceed in the identical way in the territories held by Hitler as in those occupied by the Red Army. In fact, Shachtman calls upon workers everywhere, "in similar circumstances" to struggle "both against the Reichswehr and the Red Army." A false position.

If this means anything, it means that our comrades in Poland should among other slogans raise on the one hand the slogan of "Defeat the Reichswehr!" and on the other, "Defeat the Red Army!"

To raise a slogan of the defeat of a particular army is in itself, to put it mildly, misleading, especially at the very outset of the war, when as yet there have been no open manifestations of an upsurge on the part of the masses. For example, the Polish landlords and capitalists are now also for the "defeat of the Reichswehr" to say nothing of Messrs. Chamberlain and Daladier and their potential allies. In general, Marxists do not pose the task of the anti-war struggle in terms of the defeat of this or that army; we prefer the defeat of all warring imperialist governments, and that really is the way in which we pose our defeatism. So far as the armies themselves are concerned we place the stress rather on fraternizing between the opposing troops, especially so in the initial stages of the war.

Should we and our comrades in Poland call for the "Defeat of the Red Army?" That is not the way comrade Trotsky poses the question at all. He points out that the sovietization of the occupied territories is being carried out in a military-bureaucratic manner, and warns against illusions that the world revolution can be successfully extended by these methods. Nevertheless, despite itself, the Bonapartist regime is compelled to perform a progressive task, and our comrades should therefore be in the forefront helping the Red Army detachments in expropriating the landlords, nationalizing the economy, setting up Soviets, Workers' Committees, issuing leaflets... and thus in effect preparing for a revolutionary explosion against the Stalin regime, which must come into direct conflict with the initiative of the masses.\*

Furthermore were Hitler (or any other imperialist power) to attack these newly occupied areas, we would defend them, and help the Red Army defend them. This not only does not follow from the Shachtman resolution, but is excluded by it.

Here we have unmistakable indications of the divergent lines of Shachtman's resolution and the position of the party.

It is false to contend that this resolution merely "supplements" the party's position. If it supplements anything, it supplements Burnham's position. It is a step in the direction of the revision of our party position and must be rejected as such.

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\* It is by no means excluded that this conflict between the bureaucracy and the workers in the occupied territory might very soon flare up into an open struggle. The slogan of "Defeat the Red Army," if it had been previously advanced would then play directly into the hands of Stalin. The soldiers sympathetic to the workers or inclining towards them would find the use of this slogan by the bureaucracy almost an insurmountable obstacle when faced with the choice between the insurgent workers and the Bonapartist flunkies.

## COMRADE SHACHTMAN'S USE OF THE TERM "IMPERIALISM"

By Walter O'Rourke

The ambiguity of the Shachtman document is classically illustrated in its use of the term "imperialistic". For Marxist-Leninists, the use of this term to characterize the recent moves of the Stalinist Red Army in the Baltic area, is, to say the least, puzzling.

Comrade Shachtman employs the term in two different senses in his document; first, the moves of Stalin are those of an "agent of imperialism" and secondly, these moves are acts of "imperialist policy" or "imperialist expansion." It is to this latter use of the term that we direct the present criticism. Shachtman says in his resolution:

"The Party condemns the Stalinist invasion and subjugation of Poland as acts of imperialist policy.... Produced by the same cause, German Fascism and Stalinist bureaucratism are now engaged in a joint campaign of imperialist expansion.

Although many of the bourgeois columnists are writing of the new Russian "imperialism", it is imperative today in the middle of the second imperialist world war for us to understand exactly what imperialism has meant and still does mean to Marxists. An unscientific, phrasemongering use of so important a term may serve the ends of these columnists but such confusion cannot be allowed to enter our basic theory.

Prior to the appearance of imperialism on the historic scene, Marx was careful to stress, not the surface similarities between the Roman Empire and the colonial policy of merchant and industrial capitalism, but rather to point to the basic differences which arose out of the character of the class struggle in the two societies. Calling attention to the fact that in classical Rome both the poor proletariat and the rich aristocracy lived by the labor of a vast slave population, he stressed that in modern times the rich live on the labor of the proletariat.

"So extensive are the differences between the material, the economic, conditions of the class war in classical and in modern times, that the political incidents born out of the struggle in one epoch and the other can have no more resemblance to one another than the Archbishop of Canterbury has to the High Priest Samuel." (K. Marx, Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, preface to first German edition.)

Lenin considered clarity on the nature of imperialism of sufficient importance to devote a book to its analysis, in the midst of the first World War. Imperialism, highest stage of capitalism is the result. He also emphasizes the difference not only between classical Rome and modern society, but also between colonialism up to about 1890-1900 and imperialism thereafter.

"Colonial politics and imperialism existed even before the latest stage of capitalism and even before capitalism. Rome founded on slavery, carried out a colonial



policy and was imperialistic. But "general" arguments about imperialism, which ignore, or put into the background the fundamental difference of social-economic formations, inevitably degenerate into empty banalities, or phrases such as the comparison of "greater Rome and greater Britain." Even the colonial policy of capitalism in its previous stages is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital." (1)

Lenin established that imperialism was an inevitable stage in the development of capitalism and not merely a foreign policy "preferred" by some of the leaders of the government as maintained by Kautsky. His conclusion on the basis of a careful, strictly economic analysis of the evolution of competitive industrial capitalism into monopoly, finance capitalism was:

"Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has taken shape; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world by the international trusts has begun, and in which the partition of all the territory of the earth by the greatest capitalist countries has been completed." (2)

In his conclusion Lenin again says, "We have seen that by its economic essence imperialism is monopolist capitalism. This fact alone determines the place of imperialism in history..." (3) (my emphasis--W.O'R.)

Where does Shachtman's use of "imperialism" fit into this picture? He denies any desire to alter our basic analysis of the Soviet state as a worker's state; yet he describes the invasion of Poland as "acts of imperialist policy." Marxist-Leninists say that the place of imperialism in history is determined by the single fact that its economic essence is monopolist capitalism. Can Shachtman's use of "imperialist" as a term of imprecation be palmed off as no revision of basic theory? We think not.

But, a supporter of the minority may protest, we only mean that this is an imperialist policy of the government and not imperialism of the Soviet economy. To this we would merely call attention to Lenin's attack on Kautsky for precisely the same sort of mistake. Separating it from the evolution of the economy (i.e. monopoly capitalism), Kautsky considered imperialism to be the foreign policy preferred by the rulers.

"The important thing is that Kautsky detaches the policy of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as being a policy "preferred" by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy which he alleges to be possible on the same basis of finance capital." (4)

Since this error leads to the conclusion that the labor movement should try to change the course of the foreign policy of the state rather than

its economy, Lenin concludes that, "The result is bourgeois reformism instead of revolution." (5) In order to say that an imperialist policy can evolve on the basis of nationalized and planned economy, one must commit the same error as Kautsky and "detach the policy of imperialism from its economics..."

Thus one of two revisions is involved in the Shachtman use of the term "imperialist." First -- a revision of our analysis of the Soviet state; for only a monopolist, capitalist state can follow an imperialist policy. Therefore if the Soviet state is indeed conducting a campaign of imperialist expansion, then its economy must be in essence, monopolist capitalism; or if the Soviet state is indeed a degenerate workers' state then it cannot be conducting a campaign of imperialist expansion. Second -- the Kautsky revision of separating the policy of imperialism from its economics. Making use of this revision, Shachtman might say that although the nationalized and planned economy remains in the Soviet Union, nevertheless the government is following an imperialist "policy."

Whichever revision is intended should be presented as such and considered by the membership as such; by no means should it be allowed to slip in by the back door. The party should be most vigilant for attempts and tendencies to reduce terms which for Marxist-Leninists have a precise, scientific meaning to the status of "swear-words" -- to use Lenin's phrase. Referring to Plokhonov, Lenin wrote:

...instead of analysing the fundamental characteristics and tendencies of imperialism as a system of the economic relations of modern highly developed, mature, and over-ripe capitalism, he started angling after bits of facts to please the Purushkevichs and the Milyukovs. Under such conditions the scientific concept of imperialism is reduced to the level of a swear-word addressed to the immediate competitors, rivals and opponents of the two above-mentioned Russian imperialists...(6)

We are not going to build a party whose theoretical education is sound and able to stand up against the pressures in store for it, by dragging our theoretical vocabulary through the mire of confusion evident in the current popular bourgeois columnists. We will only succeed thereby in reducing scientific terms to the status of denunciatory epithets to be hurled without thought at this or another act of Stalinism. There is an abundance of "swear-words" without our misusing our scientific language for such a purpose. No, if we are to educate the party correctly, we must retain the scientific meaning of terms such as "imperialist" and remember that it is only through such clarity that a sound theory can be maintained.

October 26, 1939

1. V.I. Lenin, Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism, Int'l Pub., New York, (1933), p. 75.
2. Ibid, p. 81
3. Ibid, p. 111
4. Ibid, p. 84
5. Id.
6. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Int'l Pub., N.Y. (1930) v. XVIII, p. 399

SHACHTMAN DISCOVERS SOMETHING "NEW"

By John G. Wright

In his speech at the New York membership meeting on Sunday October 15th, comrade Shachtman dwelt at length on a single sentence in comrade Trotsky's document. On the basis of this sentence he erected an entire case. In particular, he saw in it a basis of agreement with Trotsky not only for himself but also for comrade Burnham. He stated in effect that on the basis of this statement alone comrade Burnham agreed to withdraw his own document etc. etc.

The sentence reads as follows: "WE WERE AND REMAIN AGAINST SEIZURES OF NEW TERRITORIES BY THE KREMLIN."

What does this sentence torn out of context really mean? Shachtman is content to rest his case on Trotsky's assertion that he is "against." Shachtman is also "against". Hence both he and Burnham can agree. Moreover, this constitutes "something new."

But Trotsky emphatically states that this "against" constitutes nothing new. For the sentence reads "we were and remain against."

If the reference here is, as Shachtman claims, solely to the Polish "seizure" then Trotsky's statement that we "were against" is well nigh inexplicable. Stalin's famous slogan has been, "We do not seek a foot of foreign soil, we shan't yield an inch of our own." In point of "seizure", the invasion of Poland constitutes the first violation of Stalin's well-publicized policy. To my knowledge, it was never forecast by Trotsky. But we miss the entire point of Trotsky's statement if we limit it as Shachtman does solely to the Polish episode.

Trotsky is merely restating here the classic Marxist position on self-determination. We were and remain in favor of self-determination for Soviet Ukraine, and all territories annexed by Stalin. One cannot be in favor of annexation and not be opposed to self-determination.

In his polemic against the opponents of the slogan of self-determination Lenin wrote in the fall of 1916 the following:

"What is annexation? We have posed this question in our thesis with complete clarity. The Polish comrades did not answer it; they evaded it, by emphatically declaring (1) that they are against annexations and (2) explaining why they are against. These are very important questions, it goes without saying. But these are different questions....."

"Why have we posed this question?" continues Lenin, "We explained it when we posed it. Because a protest against annexation is nothing else but the recognition of the right of self-determination. The concept of annexation is commonly understood to involve: (1) the concept of force (merger by force); (2) the concept of alien national oppression (the annexation of 'foreign' territory etc.) and--sometimes (3) the concept of the violation of status quo. This is just what we pointed out in our theses and our statements were not met with criticism.

"The question now arises can the social democrats be opposed in general to force? Obviously, not. Ergo we are not opposed.

to annexations because they are sheer force but because of something else. For the very same reason the social democrats cannot be for status quo. No matter how you squirm you cannot evade the conclusion that annexation is a violation of self-determination of a nation, it is the establishment of state boundaries against the will of the population. To be against annexations signifies to be for the right of self-determination." (The Balance Sheet of the Discussion on Self Determination, Lenin)

Is that what comrade Trotsky meant? There is no question at all about it. For his very next sentence provides the other side of the Leninist formulation:

"We were and remain against seizures (annexations! -JGW) of new territories by the Kremlin. We are for the independence of Soviet Ukraine, and if the Byelo Russians themselves wish - of Soviet Byelo Russia."

Because we are for self-determination of Soviet Ukraine we were and remain against annexations. That is all that comrade Trotsky's formulation means, and that is all that can be read into it.

But comrade Trotsky does not stop there. In connection with this question of self-determination (which incidentally comrade Cannon also raised in his editorial in the Appeal on Poland, in connection with our position on the Polish invasion), Trotsky also raises the question of our attitude to the sovietization of the occupied or annexed areas. Comrade Shachtman carefully avoided giving an answer to his own position on that aspect of the situation, which is indissolubly linked up with the entire problem of our position on the Soviet Union.

He wants to condemn the invasion of Poland by Stalin as an "imperialist act." This is his "new" contribution to terminology. As Trotsky warned, if our innovators were granted their new terminology, their victory would not only be an empty one but also prove embarrassing to them. If the annexation itself is imperialist, then the maintenance of it, to say nothing of its consequences are likewise "imperialist." So for that matter is the "annexation" of the old regions of Soviet Ukraine itself. If we accept Shachtman's "contribution" we cannot avoid branding the maintenance of Soviet Ukraine and other regions within the framework of the Soviet Union as an "act of imperialist expansion." How then can we possibly be defon-sists not only in the newly occupied areas but in the old areas of the present Soviet Union? By his position Shachtman involves himself in hopeless contradictions, and at the same time opens wide the doors for a revision of our fundamental position.

FOR UNCONDITIONAL DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

by David Cowles

The borders of the Soviet Union include approximately one-sixth of the world's area which has been conquered for collectivized economy by means of the overthrow of the capitalist class and their system of exploitation. This conquest is the objectification of the socialist revolution in its fundamental, i.e. economic, aspect. It has raised the struggles of the workers from capitalist to socialist levels. So long as this collectivized economy remains preponderantly intact, the Socialist Workers Party characterizes it for what it, in fundamentals, is: a workers' state and all revolutionists render it unconditional defense against all its enemies.

Those who oppose the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack because of their justified revulsion against the Stalinist dictatorship show themselves, in fact, the ideological victims of this very dictatorship. For the Stalin dictatorship continuously spreads the lie that it represents, symbolizes, and sums up the fundamental character of the Soviet Union. Those who deny the working-class character of the Soviet Union at the present time do so because they accept this lie as truth. In repudiating the dictatorship, they also repudiate the characterization of the Soviet Union as a workers' state in the fundamental, i.e. economic sense. They also repudiate unconditional defense of this workers' state.

Although springing from high moral motives in their political conclusions they fall victim to Stalinist falsification.

To oppose the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union is to show oneself part of the demoralized and confused flight from Marxism to nationalism which is taking place under the impact of the powerful capitalist war propaganda. This flight from Marxism is summed up in the question, "If the Soviet Union invades Poland, etc., how can we favor unconditional defense of the Soviet Union?"

What does this question mean? That the territory named "Soviet Union" has invaded another territory named "Poland"? If so, the question is absurd and meaningless. Lands do not battle among themselves nor invade each other.

Does it mean then that the masses in the Soviet Union have united in agreement to invade the territory of Poland and subjugate the people? If so, the implied answer of "Yes" is false to the core. To say "Yes" is to show oneself completely the dupe of the ideology of nationalism by means of which the Stalin dictatorship tries to hide its oppressive rule.

The only reference such a question can have is to the Stalin dictatorship and its Red Army. The Red Army, on orders from Stalin, invaded Poland and subjugated the Polish people to the Stalin dictatorship.

This, and similar counter-revolutionary acts, justify unconditional opposition to the Stalin dictatorship. But why should this

action warrant our throwing overboard the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union?

To repudiate the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union because Stalin's Red Army subjugated the Polish masses is to condemn and penalize the collectivized economy for the criminal acts of the dictatorship. To do so is to identify the fundamental nature of the Stalin dictatorship for low motives in such an identification, the fact remains that this political conclusion is but the "left" medal of Stalinist falsification and Stalinist counter-revolution. (\* with the fundamental nature of the Soviet Union. Whatever the high)

Revolutionists have never determined their attitude towards the Soviet Union by the actions of the Stalin dictatorship. We have always distinguished between the fundamental character of the Soviet Union as a workers' state and the character of the Stalin regime. We have always considered the Stalin dictatorship fundamentally opposed to the best interests of the Soviet Union as a workers' state. Our opposition to the Stalinist dictatorship is incidental to our desire to maintain and extend the gains of the collectivized economy. From thence rises our slogan "UNCONDITIONAL DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION."

The tactics of unconditional defense is the only question really worth discussing. The membership of the party which lends any ear at all to the opponents of the present position does so because the application of our present position to the Polish invasion was slow and inept. What is appropriate, then, is to give a more precise definition and content to the slogan of unconditional defense and not to destroy the slogan.

It is incorrect to say that the stand on unconditional defense of the Soviet Union incapacitates us from taking a true internationalist position. Comrade Trotsky, who strongly supports the slogan of unconditional defense, was also able to come out against Stalin's invasion of Poland.

#### THE CONTENT AND TACTICS OF UNCONDITIONAL DEFENSE

The orientation and general formulation from which this specific position proceeded are as follows:

The fundamental strategy of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union is the spread of revolution to other countries. Any tactic that would put a brake upon the spread of the revolution is a blow at the defense of the Soviet Union as a workers' state.

Our opposition to the Stalin dictatorship is based upon the fact that it is the hangman of the world revolution and the sapper of the foundations of the workers' state. At all times we carry on the struggle against it. The specific tactics of struggle differ with circumstances.

1. During peace time, our attack upon the Stalin dictatorship is a direct one which embraces every method of struggle conducive to its overthrow.

2. During war time, our attack upon the Stalin dictatorship is either direct or oblique, depending upon the character of the war.

In case of invasion of foreign territories by the Red Army we determine our tactics in each specific case by our independent judgment as to whether such invasion is, in reality, in the interests of the Soviet Union as a workers' state, since we believe that the defense of the Soviet Union as a workers' state coincides with the extension of the social conquests within the Soviet Union and the extension of the social revolution throughout the world. Where we determine that invasion serves primarily the aggrandizement of the Stalin dictatorship our policy is defeatism in the invading Red Army as the best defense of the Soviet Union as a workers' state. Our attack upon the Stalin dictatorship is a direct one.

Where capitalist property relations in any invaded territory have been destroyed and socialist property relations substituted in their place, we defend it against any imperialist attack. We are defensists. But we do not, thereby, lessen our attack upon the Stalin dictatorship. We only change the form of attack, from a direct one to an oblique one, by raising the slogan of national self-determination.

In case of invasion of the Soviet Union by imperialist forces, we are defensists, carrying into action our slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union regardless of the treacheries of the Stalin dictatorship. But we do not at any time support the dictatorship. Our direct attack is now changed into an oblique attack by our raising slogans which alone can ensure victory against the external foe and the native oppressors: Democratization of the army, workers' control of industry, mass participation in the processes of government, etc.

The argument against unconditional defense is sometimes made by comrades in the name of the world socialist revolution. This is not the first time that grand phrases are used to cover base retreats. In 1919, Karl Kautsky and Otto Bauer, to name only two outstanding revisionists, attacked the conquests of the October Revolution in the name of "world revolution."

The answer that Lenin gave to the Kautskys of that day is equally applicable to the Kautskys of today: Anyone who takes the world revolution as something more concrete than a journalistic phrase must advocate unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. The world revolution does not spring full born like Athena from the brow of Zeus. It is the result of a giant guerilla warfare over the world canvass. Concretely, the world revolution means the extension from one region where the revolution has succeeded to other regions where it has not yet taken place. The extension of the revolution to other regions can not take place unless there is a base from which to operate and extend the social revolution. The struggle to create this base and its actual creation is the great contribution of the Bolshevik party of Lenin. The failure to extend this base marks the everlasting shame of the traitors of the Second and Third International and has left the Soviet Union a great, but isolated, outpost of the world revolution whose backwardness and isolation are the greatest pillars of Stalin's dictatorship. The failure unconditionally to defend and extend this base would mark the death of the Fourth International.

THREE SLOGANS -- ONE DEFENSE, ONE HALF-AND-HALF, ONE DEFEAT

There are three, not two slogans being proposed on the Russian question.

First is the slogan of unconditional defense of this outpost of the world revolution against imperialist attack and internal dictatorship.

Second, is the Shachtman slogan of conditional defense. This has as its other face conditional defeat of the Soviet Union. As such it is a blow at the slogan of unconditional defense and it is a great leap forward to a third position that is still lurking in the shadows -- the position of "revolutionary" defeatism. The Shachtman position is the tactical bridge.

The position of "revolutionary" defeatism in the Soviet Union would indeed be a revolutionary one if those who advocate it could prove that the Soviet Union's collectivized economy has been destroyed and the Soviet Union has ceased being a workers' state. But this they cannot do. Or if they can prove that the Soviet Union is fundamentally the reflection of the Stalin dictatorship. This, too, they can only state but they cannot prove. Failing such proof, we can only say that their "revolutionary defeatism" in words is simply a fancy phrase for counter-revolutionary defeatism in action.

Shachtman's bridge to this position is based on real or assumed ignorance. On the question of the character of the Soviet Union, the spokesmen of this position assume a pose of ignorance. Yet the whole question of defense or defeat hinges on our characterization of the Soviet Union. If their ignorance is real, then it disqualifies them from any responsible judgment. If their ignorance is assumed, then we have every right to question the honesty and sincerity of persons who must hide the truth to justify their position.

The whole strength of the Shachtman resolution is based on the strength of the ignorance of the membership: ignorance that one group which supports it is using it as a tactical bridge to a position which they call "revolutionary", but which we call counter-revolutionary, defeatism in the Soviet Union; ignorance that another group is simply using this grave political question as an ideological smokescreen for an organizational attack that will ensure them the organizational victory which they failed to get in the national convention. When this ignorance is dissipated, the membership will realize fully the Menshevism of the first group, the unprincipled character of the second group, and will re-affirm the revolutionary internationalism of our party by supporting the present position:  
UNCONDITIONAL DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION.