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## Who Are The Social - Chauvinists ?

"...If by 'national defense' is meant, what it has always meant among revolutionary Socialists: defense of the **capitalist** country in time of war, and if there are Communists standing for the defense of their **capitalist countries**, then such Communists (assuming that there are such) are not Communists at all but social-patriots;

social-chauvinists; they are people of the Kautsky stripe..."

(Alex Bittelman, in the Communist Party pamphlet "Going Left", published March 1936, analyzing the draft program of Left Socialists.)

## TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS WITH CAPITALIST NATIONS

The existence since 1917 of an isolated Soviet Republic in a backward country surrounded by an imperialist ring, before the second world war brought a direct Fascist invasion, reveals a varied and contradictory pattern of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. In the first period, under Lenin and Trotsky, the foreign policy flowed from the fundamental proposition of the EXTENSION OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION.

But from 1924 onward the foreign policy more and more took a line of capitulation to one or another group of imperialists. The axis which determined the foreign policy under Stalinism was based upon the THEORY OF

SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY, just the opposite of the former period. Whereas under Lenin, the Soviets admitted their weakness, from internal civil war and imperialist intervention, they were, nevertheless, firm and independent in relation to their class policy. While the Stalinists claimed they were internally strong and had arrived at the gates of socialism, they were making concessions to the imperialist pressure and were carrying out a nationalistic policy internally and internationally as the tail to the imperialists.

Signing of treaties and agreements must be considered in this framework. For example, the weak Soviets were forced to sign the Brest Treaty with German imperialism because they were on the verge of complete defeat. The

forced concessions to Germany (or defeat) gave them a breathing spell until the German Revolution ended all the acts of the Kaiser's forces. To sign such treaties when you are defeated, and at the point of a gun, not at the border, but with troops marching forward to take the entire country is one thing; but to sign such treaties and agreements as Stalinism has done (when Socialism was established (?) ) is betrayal.

The utilization of the friction in the imperialist camp has been revised by the Stalinists to equal the subordination of the proletariat to the imperialists. One must always take advantage of the imperialist antagonisms, but only upon the basis of the independence of the working class.

History has already proven that an isolated Soviet State must make concessions to capitalism, especially a Soviet established in a backward nation. This all the more emphasizes Lenin's position that unless we extend the October Revolution to western Europe we are doomed. He realized that the breathing spell of isolation was short lived. Stalinism took the opposite path.

### CAPITULATION, NOT CONCESSIONS.

A whole series of agreements with capitalist nations were made by Stalinism that represented only capitulation. Agreements, as such, by Stalinism cannot be condemned. The question is what KIND of agreements did Stalinism sign. The following are outstanding betrayals and capitulations of Stalinism in this sphere. (A detailed analysis on this can be found in previous material.) Franco-Soviet Pact. The Non-Intervention Agreement. The Execution of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee of 1926. The agreements with the Kuomintang in the Chinese Revolution of 1926-27. And above all, the Hitler-Stalin Pact that let loose the fury of the second world war. These agreements we condemn, not in tactics, but in principle. Not because they are agreements with capitalists by an isolated Soviet State, but because the agreements are anti-working class in content. They are capitulations.

One must make a distinction between agreements signed when you are defeated at war such as the Brest Treaty and the treaties signed in the period of temporary peace with imperialism. Likewise, one must make a distinction between agreements in times of tem-

porary peace and in times of imperialist war. A certain agreement in the period of peace may favor the Soviet Union and enable her to keep intact her independence; but a similar treaty in an imperialist war can negate all such relations. Treaties and concessions with the imperialists as a whole are concessions; and a sign of weakness, and must be considered **in their concrete relation.** A further distinction must be made between agreements signed with imperialists and those signed with semi- and colonial nations, countries where a phase of the bourgeois-democratic revolution has not been fulfilled. Small capitalist nations under one or the other imperialist domination can be used by the Soviets to disrupt imperialist hegemony and on this basis certain agreements may be signed.

### TREATIES BEFORE STALINISM

But these concessions and these agreements must be based **upon a clear class line.** Based upon the extension of the October Revolution, not upon the theory of socialism in one country; upon internationalism, not upon "Russian" nationalism. A resolution adopted by a 6 to 5 vote by the Central Committee in the period of the Brest agreement, entered by Trotsky states: "As a party of the socialist proletariat, which is in power and is conducting war with Germany, we apply through the medium of state organs, all means of equipping our revolutionary army in the best possible way, with everything that is necessary, and in order to acquire them wherever it is possible also from the capitalist governments. In doing so, the Social Democratic Workers Party of Russia (Bolsheviks, Editor) retains its complete independence with regard to its foreign policy, obligates itself in no wise to capitalist governments and in every case considers their proposals from the standpoint of expediency."

To retain its complete independence, obligates itself in no wise to the capitalist governments, etc. This position at the time of war with Germany in 1918 is the opposite of the position of Stalinism at war with Germany today. The independence is forsaken with an agreement with Anglo-American imperialism. Their capitulation to Roosevelt-Churchill is revealed in the position of the Communist Parties which overnight turned from negative (pro-Hitler) opposition to full support of these imperialists, to social-patriotism that would make the Second International in the last world war pale into insignificance.

## THE INVASION OF IRAN

Half-baked "Marxists" talk of Red Imperialism when the Soviet Union marches into neighboring territories for defense of the Soviet Union. This we openly admit is at the same time an offensive action against these small capitalist nations and a part of the military struggle once open war breaks out. To argue the case within the framework of military tactics is to confuse mountains with mole-hills. Wars can be determined on the basis of CLASS INTERESTS and not on moral, (bourgeois moral) concepts. In the 1921 agreement with Persia, Article six signed under Lenin and Trotsky gives the Soviets the right to march into the Persian territory when attack against the Soviet Union threatens from this area and when the Iran state is unable to prevent attack through their territory; that is, maintain their "independence".

The Cannon Trotskyites, although for the defense of the Soviet Union call for full support of Stalinism and not for its overthrow until after Fascism has been defeated. This is capitulation to Stalinism. There will be no defeat of Hitler unless Stalinism is eliminated and a revolutionary Marxian line followed. On the other hand, in United States and Great Britain the Cannonites call for the "turning of the imperialist war into a war against Fascism". This means that the main enemy is NOT at home—but in the "enemy" nation. Both positions supplement each other as a centrist tail-end position, and anti-Marxian position on the imperialist war as the defense of the Soviet Union.

Another attempt to obtain peace with the interventionists is revealed in the note of February 4th, 1919, sent to the Entente, at the time of the Lloyd George-Wilson Prinkipo proposal. This shows the concessions the Soviets were willing to offer to obtain peace. The People's Commissariat proposed: "1—Acknowledgement of the financial obligations toward the creditors in the Entente countries. 2—Payment of interest on State Loans in raw material. 3—The granting of concessions to the Entente capitalists on the conditions that such concessions would not affect the internal Soviet Regime. 4—Territorial Concessions involving the occupation of areas forming part of the Russian Empire, by armies drawing support from the Entente".

The Commissariat says, "We were also prepared, in case of an agreement with the

Entente Powers, to include in it a pledge not to intervene in the internal affairs of those Powers." Although the conference did not materialize it revealed to what length the Soviets were willing to go to obtain peace.

A strong Soviet State backed up by parties of the International in other nations and a sympathetic working class would not have to offer such concessions. Stalinism offered and actually GAVE ten times, nay a hundred times more, in concessions to the imperialists in the treaties they signed. In spite of the Stalinist claim of Socialism, of "powerful" Communist Parties in all countries, facts prove the degeneration and capitulation on a false non-Marxist basis. Stalinism gave these concessions to imperialism, not when they were pressed on 21 fronts by intervention and civil war, but a period of internal peace and border peace with imperialism.

## STALINISM SELL-OUT TO ROOSEVELT-CHURCHILL

In relation to those above factors the question must now be posed and answered — what about the Stalinist agreement with the Anglo-American imperialists since the Hitler invasion? We have condemned the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Since then History has fulfilled our position.

We condemn the Roosevelt-Churchill-Stalin agreements as a capitulation to the Anglo-American imperialists. We call for repudiation of this agreement as detrimental to the workers' interests and the interests of the defense of the Soviet Union. Instead it is necessary to form a link with the only ally the Soviet Union has, the workers and oppressed colonial peoples. In fighting the Fascist armies the revolutionary Marxists would appeal, by press, radio and airplane leaflet distribution to the workers of the world, AND ABOVE ALL TO THE WORKERS OF EUROPE, to prepare to revolt against Fascist domination — to rise in arms against the Fascists. This appeal to Italy and Germany would take on special character where demoralization could be sowed. Not an offer for a return to bourgeois-democracy, such as the I. L. P. and Churchill offer, but an appeal to the peoples for the United States of Socialist Europe, for the overthrow of capitalism.

Likewise the Stalinist support of the Roosevelt-Churchill 8 point program means that any revolts in occupied Europe will reveal the line of a "return to bourgeois-democracy" by the Stalinists instead of a struggle for the social revolution.

At the same time, it (the Marxists' appeal) means that the parties existing in the Anglo-American nations would appeal to the workers of these imperialist powers, and these "allies", for the continuation of the class struggle. That the main enemy is at home. That the imperialist war must be turned into a war against imperialists. That the line of revolutionary defeatism applies to all warring capitalist nations.

Does this mean that we would not attempt to obtain economic and military concessions from the Anglo-American imperialists? No. Based on the line of the Central Committee resolution of the period of the German invasion of the last war, within **that** framework, we would endeavor to obtain aid. The independent action of the parties and the working class to turn the imperialist war into a civil war, not Stalinist social-patriotism is embodied in that resolution already quoted.

#### RWL CORRECTION

The RWL erred in the article of October 1939 on the Hitler-Stalinist pact when we stated: "The workers' state cannot make trade agreements with capitalist nations during war or revolutionary periods." This was referring to the agreement with Hitler and aid to Hitler which events have proven that Stalinism was wrong. But we elevated our opposition to the false Hitler-Stalin Pact to all such agreements in war periods, etc. What we must state now, in correction, is that the Hitler Stalin pact was wrong in PRINCIPLE. But that it is conceivable that certain agreements, retaining the independence of the class, and freedom of the Soviet State, (which Stalinism did not do) can

be signed and aid obtained by the Soviet Union. As a general rule economic and military agreements in periods of wars and revolutions will be used by the imperialists against the workers. Exceptions have been made by Lenin and can be carried out again, **providing the political and organizational independence of the class and its state is maintained.** This cannot be obtained under social-reformist Stalinism. It can be assured only under a revolutionary Marxian leadership.

We reject a military agreement or alliance with an imperialist power (an agreement for war ends, covering all operations) but we do not reject such an agreement with a colonial or semi-colonial power "fighting" imperialism. At the same time we point out that in rejecting a military alliance we are of the opinion that temporary military agreement for specific ends, within the framework of the class independence is permissible as an exception. Each such action must be considered in its concrete relation to the given moment.

#### STATUS OF AGREEMENTS

The whole question of agreements and treaties with capitalist nations must be considered within the framework of a transitory, auxiliary action in relation to the independent line of the working class, and the existence of an isolated workers' state. Stalinism has made this auxiliary question the LINE, while it has discarded entirely the LINE of the political and organizational independence of the working class. This difficult contradictory situation has caused the confusion. Let us be clear on the question so we can be of aid to our comrades in Europe, who will seize power before the present imperialist war is over, and who will have to use these auxiliary tactics in maneuvering with the capitalist nations until the sweep of the social revolution assures the United States of Socialist Europe.

Sept. 21—41.

FOR A NEW COMMUNIST PARTY  
IN THE SOVIET UNION

## Centrism And The Soviet Union

The outcome of the present imperialist war will determine the path that mankind will travel for the next stage of history. The outcome primarily revolves around the struggle of Fascism, and the Proletarian Revolution even though many of the surface aspects revolve around the imperialist conflict. This position must not be confused with the outcome of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. The war against the Red Army is part of this broader and more fundamental conflict and although very important, is not the key to the struggle of Communism and Fascism. This is due to the fact that the Soviet Union and the Red Army are under the domination of Stalinism. And Stalinism represents a social-reformist bureaucracy, an imperialist agent within the workers ranks.

### CENTRISM STUMBLES ON THE SOVIET UNION

Confusion has been created by the difficult and complicated antagonism that the imperialist war and Soviet invasion reflects. It is not only an imperialist war. With the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union the elements of revolutionary war, in defense of the Soviet Union, enter into the problem. This does not mean, as the social-patriotic Stalinists claim, that the imperialist war no longer exists and in its place is the Soviet Union and those that help her against the Axis.

### FIGHT ON TWO FRONTS

On the contrary, all indications are that imperialist conflict will flare up to new heights. Support to any imperialist power on any pretext is capitulation to imperialism and plays into the hands of the enemies of the Soviet Union. While we have the Stalinists and other such reformists who reside in capitalist nations under Anglo-American domination now supporting the imperialist bloc against the axis; we have others, such as the Cannon Trotskyites who make the same error in principle and in action capitulate to Stalinism in their hope of defending the Soviet Union. They argue that we cannot fight on two fronts — against imperialism and Stalinism at the same time. They argue that now we will fight imperialism and later we will settle with Stalinism. But the Marxists must point out to the working class that **SUCCESSFULLY TO FIGHT IMPERIALISM WE MUST AT THE SAME TIME FIGHT A-**

**GAINST THE IMPERIALIST AGENTS IN OUR RANKS, THE STALINISTS AND OTHERS.**

### DEFENSE OR DEFEATISM

The Shachtman Trotskyites, on the other hand, add even more confusion to the problem. Before Burnham walked out on them he was able to sow more confusion and non-Marxian ideas among them than Browder could do in a life time, if given a chance. Speaking of defeatism, Shachtman reveals his complete ignorance of Lenin's position and still clings to the revisionist Trotsky position expressed in "War and the Fourth International", and further degenerated elsewhere. "By defeatism in Russia, if I may still use the word, I aim at the defeat of the Stalinist counter-revolution by the Soviet working class". Shachtman stops the quotation where the problem really begins. If he is for defeatism in the Soviet Union, the same as he is for defeatism in imperialist nations the question must be answered — are you for the defeat of the Red Army? If you are for the defeat of the Stalinist government, (by the Soviet Workers) are you also for the military defeat of the Soviet Union by Fascism and the other imperialists? Or are you against that? This question Shachtman does not answer.

We can reply by stating that we are for the defense of the Soviet Union and the Red Army. We are for a **POLITICAL REVOLUTION** to oust Stalinism, now if possible. This is the opposite of defeatism. But in Germany, against the Nazi invaders, or the other imperialists, we are for a **SOCIAL-REVOLUTION**. In preparation for action **TOWARD** that end we are for defeat of the Nazi armies (and the other imperialists too) — for the military defeat of those forces.

### DANGER OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION

In that sentence Shachtman makes another error. He speaks of the Stalinist **COUNTER-REVOLUTION**. One must make a distinction between the forces that will organize a counter-revolution, the restoration of capitalism, and those that play into their hands, or those who are agents. In the Soviet Union, during the struggle between the imperialists (counter-revolution) and the real defenders of the Soviet Union, the working class and the Marxist forces (for a political revolution) the Stalinist bur-

ocracy will break up when this struggle reaches its decisive stage. No doubt very many of those in the Stalinist bureaucracy will join with the counter-revolution (if they are promised a place in the structure) while a section of the lower ranks will join with the working class and the Marxists. If capitalism exists in the Soviet Union the counter-revolution has already been completed. If there is still a counter-revolution ahead capitalism has not been restored. This is Shachtman's contradiction.

Shachtman is for "defeatism" in the Soviet Union. But in the same article he speaks of Spain and says, "... we supported bourgeois democracy as against fascism — critically, to be sure." **CRITICALLY, TO BE SURE.** Such a stinking petty-bourgeois position could not be presented in any kind of an organization except one that was in the last stages of decay. In Spain when the Civil War was raging — they were **AGAINST DEFEATISM, and FOR THE SUPPORT OF BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRACY.** But today they are for Defeatism and against any support to the Soviet Union and the Red Army. Both positions, in Spain and in the Soviet Union are wrong. Like Stalinism they swing 180 degrees from one error to the next.

### SHACHTMAN SUPPORTS BOURGEOIS

If one can support a capitalist Peoples Front against Fascism, on the same stinking premise, one could support Stalinism against Fascism if one were "objective". But if objectivity were injected into the two positions both the support of bourgeois-democracy and Stalinism would fall. Instead, in Spain they would carry on **INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION** against Fascism, with no support to the Peoples Front; and in the Soviet Union independent working class action against Fascism, with no support to Stalinism. In both cases, march separately and strike together.

Shachtman is a **DEFENSIST** in Spain for bourgeois-democracy, and he is a **DEFEATIST** in the Soviet Union. Lenin, speaking of the Kornilov-Kerensky period said, "We shall become defensists **only after** the passage of power to the proletariat..." But Shachtman defends bourgeois-democracy, not even considering the question of proletarian power. Lenin also said, "We ought not **even now** support the Kerensky Government. This is unprincipled." This is how Lenin answered the question of

"marching separately and striking together with Kerensky and Kornilov". Trotsky and Cannon and Shachtman forgot this in Spain, and now the majority of the Trotskyites on an international scale revise the Marxian position on the Russian question.

### INDEPENDENCE OF PROLETARIAT

Shachtman says, "To the extent that anything can be done in Russia I would seek to direct the efforts of the internationalists at reconstructing the independence and integrity of the proletariat." Words, words, words — and confusion. One thing that must be kept in mind is the fact that Shachtman throughout the article uses the term, Russia, instead of the Soviet Union. This clearly reveals the false position as to the type of economy in the Soviet Union. Shachtman always was long on words and short on economics and dialectics. That is why he became a fellow-traveler with Burnham on these positions. But like most fellow-travelers, and not being as firm as Burnham he could not keep the pace.

He wants the internationalists to do the work. Yes, internationalists, but what is the matter with the term, Marxists? Why not the Marxists point the way ahead? But more important, is Shachtman's point about the reconstruction of the independence of the proletariat. And just how will our Trotsky friend accomplish the job of the independence of the proletariat? Not a word on this question! Again he stops where the real problem begins. Again he has nice sounding words that conceal hollow ideas.

The key question of the problem of the independence of the proletariat **FROM THE CAPITALISTS** is the question of the political and organizational independence of the revolutionary Marxian organization. But to keep **POLITICAL** independence of the Marxian organization one **cannot** state that, "we support bourgeois democracy against Fascism."

And to keep the **ORGANIZATIONAL** independence of the Marxian organization one cannot liquidate such an organization into the Second International, into the Socialist or "Labor" Parties.

September 19—41.

(Shachtman quotations are from "Labor Action" of September 1, 1941.)

## Karl Marx On The Tax Question

"Taxation reform, the hobby of all Radicals, has for its objects (1) either the abolition of traditional, obsolete taxes that impede trade; (2) or cheaper government; (3) or a more equitable distribution. The more zeal the middle-class reformer develops in the pursuit of his chimerical ideal of just incidence of taxation the more it eludes his grasp in practice.

"Taxation can only modify some secondary effects of the conditions of distribution which spring directly from the capitalist production, that is, the ratio between profit and wages, profit and interest, profit and rent, but it can never attack them at their basis. All disquisitions and debates concerning taxation presuppose the permanent existence of the capitalist order. Moreover, the abolition of all taxes, far from establishing socialism, could but result in accelerating the development of bourgeois property and its inherent contradictions. Taxation may favour certain classes and oppress others, as we see this, for instance, under the regime of the financial oligarchy. It can ruin the intermediary strata that are placed between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, since their position does not allow them to shift the burden to the other classes. The proletariat is driven down a degree lower

through every new tax; the abolition of an old tax does not result in raising the rate of wages, but that of profit. During a revolution, taxes may be swelled to colossal proportions in order to use them as a lever for attacking private property, but even then they will progressively drive on to new revolutionary measures, or ultimately lead us back to the old conditions of bourgeois property.

"Reduction of taxation, a more equitable incidence of taxation, that is the demand of the commonplace middle-class reformer. The abolition of taxation, that is the socialism of the Radical reformer. This Radical socialism appeals particularly to the industrial and commercial class and to the peasantry... Behind the demand for the abolition of the taxation lurks the demand for the abolition of the State. But the abolition of the State is only logical with the Communists as the inevitable result of the abolition of the classes, for only then will there be no need for an organized power of one class to keep down the other."

Marx, in his *New Rheinische Revue*, which he edited from London in 1850.

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