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## AGAIN THE RUSSIAN QUESTION

An Answer to Schachtman

"History is not made out of the whole cloth" said Karl Marx in his critique of the Gotha program. Unfortunately too many people have either not understood this simple maxim or simply choose to disregard it.

The social scene is composed of innumerable hybrids, and seeming exceptions from the rule. It is quite true for instance that "the state is the instrument of the ruling class" but one will find it difficult at all times and under all circumstances to give 100 per cent pure proof of this general law. Under the feudal absolute monarchies for instance the bourgeoisie were given enormous encouragement to develop as a class. On the other hand, under the bourgeois regimes of Robespierre and Louis Bonaparte, dozens of thousands of the leading bourgeois were mercilessly slaughtered. The control of the state by the bourgeoisie in the period of mercantile capitalism, before large scale industry and finance capitalism, was considerably different than the control of the state by a few large financial kings today. Nevertheless the general historic law that the state is the instrument of the ruling class is absolutely correct.

In the three volumes of Capital Marx gave an exposition of the capitalist system which is unparalleled in the history of science. Nevertheless one would search in vain to find anywhere on earth the system which Marx described. For Marx was dealing with pure capitalism without hybrids, carry-overs, etc.

## THE "THIRD" SOCIAL ORDER

All of this is a propos of the new school of revisionists who have discovered that in between capitalism and socialism there is a possibility of a new "third" social order. In publishing some old documents by Leon Trotsky, entitled the New Course, Max Schachtman has added to it an addendum of some 150 pages to prove that the Soviet Union today is a new third form of society and it has a new type of ruling class.

"But what about the socialist successes in economic life?" asks Schachtman, "The whole secret lies in the fact that while there have been successes, even extraordinary successes...there is nothing socialist about them. The Marxists, the socialists, have a very simple but altogether decisive measuring rod in the

field of economic progress: where such progress is accompanied by an improvement of the economic position of the workers, by a strengthening of their social position, by an extension of their political power...by a reduction of economic and social inequality, by a decline in the necessity and therefore the power of state coercion--then progress marks a socialist success." This is mechanical thinking of the worst sort. Generally and historically what Schachtman says is correct, but ONLY generally and historically.

Capitalism in its early stages liberated the forces of production and made possible a much higher standard of life. But in the early days of capitalism, particularly in the great revolutionary period this was not immediately apparent. In England the conditions of the working masses deteriorated after the revolution and particularly after the first growth of large scale factories. The condition of the American Negro after the American civil war deteriorated. The Southern plantation owner freed from the necessity of looking after an expensive piece of "machinery" naturally permitted the "free" Negro to live on the same starvation wages as the free white. It is just not true to say that socialist progress of the character of a system is judged by the various aspects of the superstructure. Speaking broadly and generally again that is correct, but speaking dialectically that is not necessarily so.

#### DYNAMICS OF THE DEGENERATION OF THE S.U.

What was the character of the Russian Revolution of 1917? It was a proletarian revolution in the most backward country of Europe, and it started with the heritage of despoilation, famine, and a complete lack of credits. The possibility of maintaining that revolution and driving it forward towards socialism, depended entirely upon the extension of revolution to more advanced countries and the elimination of the bourgeoisie on a world scale. But the extension of October failed. Unfortunately for the bourgeoisie they were unable through direct methods to destroy the Soviet Union. But faced with such an isolation, and "armed" with the completely false theory of building "socialism in one country" it was inevitable--unless the tempo of revolution could again be resumed--that whatever leadership existed in the Soviet Union would have to fall back upon Nationalist and reactionary elements in order to gain a mass base.

That is precisely what happened. In the early days of the revolution the worker was the favored character of the Soviet Union. His citizenship rights entitled to him all manner of privileges denied to former bourgeois elements. There was a tendency to equalize wage scales and to improve the general conditions of the working class and the oppressed peasantry.

Had the revolution been extended abroad this process would undoubtedly have been accelerated. But with the defeat of the revolution abroad, with the defeatist theory of socialism in one country (i.e. that successful revolution was IMPOSSIBLE abroad) and with the imminent threat of invasion, again it was inevitable that Stalinism would fall back upon and pay homage to bourgeois elements within the Soviet Union. That is what happened. The rich peasant was pampered with the slogan "enrich yourselves" from 1924 to '29. After the revolt of the peasantry in 1929 the pendulum swung in the other direction. Stalinism forcefully collectivized the farm population at a cost of millions of lives during the man-made famine of 1929-33.

But from that time on till the present, in order to maintain some semblance of a mass base, Stalinism has been forced to create cleavages and differentiations amongst the masses. This would not have been necessary of course had a correct scientific marxist approach to world revolution and to industrialization been maintained. But given the defeatism of the Stalinist bureaucracy there was no other course. Stalinism had to create Stakhanovites and favored engineers amongst the working class. It had to create groupings and "classes" on the collective farms, and it had to build up a vast net work of bureaucratic usurpers, factory managers, writers, etc., and to grant concessions to various nationalist elements within the country. All of which attests to the fact that history is not made of the whole cloth, that if you analyze the dialectical background of a situation, a single content may have innumerable forms. Capitalism has Fascist forms, democratic forms, colonial forms, and monarchial forms and innumerable subforms today. The proletarian dictatorship is capable likewise of different forms in different countries, and particularly depending upon the direction in which the dictatorship is moving.

#### BUREAUCRACY NOT A SOCIAL CLASS

But Schachtman denies all this. "The past 15 years of economic progress and political transformation in Russia are the years of the rise and consolidation of a new type of slave state with a new type of ruling class." Originally the bureaucracy of 1923 to 1933 was a "workers" bureaucracy. Today however it is a new class. According to Schachtman the criterium is "the fact that the party bureaucracy (of 1923) took steps to restrain if not to halt...those industrial directors who proceeded to develop production at the direct expense of the working class."

Now that there are no longer any restraints on those people-- ipso facto the bureaucracy becomes a new class. What childish jibberish! A class is determined by its relations to the productive process and a social order by its mode of production.

For instance, the three outstanding characteristics of capitalism are: Commodity production (production for the market based on a division of labor) (2) wage labor and surplus value and (3) private appropriation. All capitalists participate in the private appropriation of the surplus value of others. They control in one form or another shares in the industrial, distributive and banking process. The manager of a factory, the grafting mayor of a big city, or the politicians in Congress are not capitalists; they are parasites who live off the bounty of capitalism. This distinction is of no minor importance.

What class is the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union? The whole idea that it is a class is obviously ridiculous. Can you lump the Stakhanovites, engineers, trade union officials, GPU, Communist Party officials, collective farmers, writers, etc. all into one class? What economic bond binds them together? It is quite true that each of these individuals receives a disproportionate share of the total produce of society in the Soviet Union. The American Congressmen are also enormously overpaid. So is Mayor LaGuardia and so are the thousand and one flunkies of the democratic party, stool pigeons of the various detective agencies, etc., overpaid. But these are not capitalists. They do not exploit the working class. Theirs is a different relationship to the economic system. The same can be said of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. It is not a class. It has no special relationship to the mode of production, or rather it has an enormous amount of different relationships to the mode of production. It is a parasitic body upon the Soviet economy just like our Congress is a parasitic body upon the backs of the American working class. But between that and a class there is day and night.

#### THE COMPOSITION OF A CLASS

Sooner or later, of course, elements in the present parasitic clique will grow over into a new capitalist class. Private appropriation in the Soviet Union is growing, but it still has no outlet in the means of production. The individual cannot as yet hire or exploit the labor of others, by and large. If Schachtman claims this is a new class he must tell why, what are its special economic interests. According to Schachtman the fact that it is a political bureaucracy determines its character as a class. But that is posing the question upside down. A class gains its political privileges from its economic role in society, not vice versa. Only a parasitic body or individuals in the body politic gain economic privileges from their political status. Hitler and Goering, for instance, were not capitalists to begin with. They evolved to that status by their parasitic usurpation of privileges granted by the bourgeois state. The same may be true of elements of the Stalin bureaucracy. But as yet they are not capitalists.

According to Lenin "classes are great groups of persons defined ... by their relations to the means of production, by their roles in social organization of work and consequently by the manner and extent of their participation in social wealth." Where is the common bond between the Communist party official who does nothing but sit in the office or the GPU official and the Stakhanovite or the factory engineer or the privileged member of a collective farm. There just is no economic bond, there is merely a political bond, out of which come certain economic benefits.

Schachtman, of course, denies that it is a capitalist state. Such an idea is completely ridiculous he says. But it is a third form of state. The Soviet Union was a workers state he says only "because the state (was) the proletariat, organized politically as the ruling class."

Again we are confronted with the theory that history is made of the whole cloth.

#### ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF A STATE

The dictatorship of the proletariat, the first stage of socialism, is characterized not by political criteria but essentially by economic criteria. What are these criteria? (1) Once the capitalists are expropriated, in place of private appropriation there is substituted state appropriation. (2) The price of labor power is increasingly divorced from the value of labor power and is increasingly tied to other factors such as the general productivity, etc. (3) Commodity production is increasingly replaced with production for use, the workers' state becomes less and less dependent upon the vicissitudes of the market and its production is more and more correlated with the needs of the economy as a whole.

The workers' state under Lenin made a start in all of these things. Under Stalin the facade of this structure still remains, particularly the elimination of private appropriation and of commodity production. In the field of the price of "labor power" there has been--due to the Stalinist bureaucracy--no marked improvement towards social labor. But again we repeat, history is not made of the whole cloth. The Soviet Union cannot mark time: it must either go backwards to capitalism or forwards by political revolution to socialism.

Schachtman unconsciously throughout his whole thesis makes one of the most glaring theoretical errors. If we are to assume the Soviet Union is a newsocial order today, if a new ruling class rules there, if the change took place as the result of the 1936-38 purges then we are confronted since 1938 with two types of social orders in the world: Capitalism and bureau-

ocratic collectivism or whatever Schachtman chooses to call it. But, here is the significant thing about it. No Marxist can stay neutral in a struggle between two social orders. Every Marxist must state which order is progressive relative to the other. Schachtman states at the end of his work that both capitalism and the Soviet order are reactionary.

The Marxian criteria is not humanitarian but historical. Any mode of production and social order that is capable of advancing or of liberating the forces of production is a progressive social order. Capitalism, Schachtman will readily admit, is incapable of doing so today. It can only organize scarcity and starvation. It can only plow under and destroy the forces of production. But according to Schachtman, the Soviet Union--this new social order--has achieved enormous economic successes. How can a Marxist remain neutral between the system which achieves economic successes and a social order which achieves economic defeats? One must either say that we support capitalism against this new social order because capitalism is more progressive or vice versa. Anything else is not Marxian but mysticism.

The three social orders of so-called civilization--chattel slavery, feudalism, capitalism--imposed upon the oppressed very great privations. Nevertheless Marx and Marxists generally showed preference between one social order and another. We supported the Northern side of the Civil War against the South even though the graft and inhumanity of the North was considerably greater than that of the South. We supported it because one social order was superior to another. Schachtman argues, of course that he cannot support the Soviet Union with all its progressive economic features because there is already present a class capable of establishing a superior order to both that of the Soviet Union and to that of capitalism. What of that however? Marxists can't live in the future with their heads in the clouds. They have to take a position on things as they are. While we can say relative to a war between two imperialist states, a plague on both their houses; we must make a choice between two social orders.

#### THE CHASM BETWEEN DISTORTION AND DESTRUCTION

But Schachtman, like other revisionists, confuses form and content. He expects history to be made "of the whole cloth," he is surprised to see shadings and gradations. He has learned a lesson in a book by rote and he can't see the living dynamic dialectical reality. The Soviet Union is a workers' state not because of but despite Stalinism. It is a workers' state because the general economic structure instituted by the Revolution has not yet been torn down although it has been distorted. The fact that it has a political structure which fights the

proletariat does not alter this fundamental statement. There can exist, said Engels, periods in society relatively long or short where the state rests upon the equilibrium of classes and appears to be above classes, although its roots lie in the existing social order. Such regimes, popularly referred to as Bonapartist regimes, e.g., the absolute monarchies under feudalism, Robespierre, Louis Napoleon and now Stalin, are by their very nature unstable. The Stalinist regime is today unstable and has been for a long time, otherwise it would not have had to resort to so much force. But the basic characteristics of the Soviet Union are still there. The basic content is still proletarian. The present historical crisis will knock the props out from under the present political bureaucracy just as the Franco-Prussian war did to Louis Napoleon, etc. The importance of the Soviet Union lies in the fact that here is a potential ally of the workers' revolution elsewhere; that unlike the armies and social orders of the capitalist nations, here we do not have to tear the whole structure down from top to bottom and rebuild it anew. The basic framework is already there, sound and firm; it needs only to wash away through a political revolution the parasitic excrecences.

April 8, 1944

## The Canadian Economy and Working Class

The recent strikes in Canada, the present labor unrest, the increasing power of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, (Labor Party) reveal the contradictions and antagonisms wrought by capitalism and its imperialist war. An understanding of the position of the Canadian workers requires an analysis of Canada's relationship to the world capitalist economy and the present imperialist war.

Few other geographic units of the capitalist chain reveal more openly the contradictions of the inter-imperialist struggle. Although politically a Dominion of Great Britain and part of the British Empire, economically Canada is controlled by U.S. Imperialism. One needs only to examine the facts to establish the truth of this statement.

The total U.S. investment in Canada today is approximately four billion dollars or three times more than that invested by England. This is the culmination of a process which manifests itself openly from the beginning of the previous imperialist war. In 1914 British investments in Canada amounted to \$2,711,841,000 compared to the United States investment of \$904,455,000. In 1919 the British had \$2,606,848,000 compared to the American investment of \$1,800,435,000. However, by 1929, due to the results of the war and the emergence of U.S. imperialism as a creditor nation, together with the favorable capital movements of the twenties, the total investments of both countries began to show an open reversal. British investments totaled \$2,128,489,000, compared to U.S. investments of \$3,608,521,000. In 1931, the British had \$2,204,858,000 invested compared to nearly double that sum of American investments, \$4,107,803,000. In 1932 there were 1200 U.S. controlled or affiliated firms in Canada with a total capitalization of \$2,167,249,000. In that same time there were only 98 manufacturing concerns owned and controlled by the British, but the total capital employed was only 20% of the U.S. total.

At the beginning of the present war in 1939, the relationship of Canadian economy was so binding to America that 66.17% of Canadian imports were absorbed by America. The total trade of U.S. imperialism with Canada was 4/5 as large as its total trade with the combined Latin American countries. The war however, has only intensified the Wall Street grip on Canada.

Already Britain is a debtor to Canada to a sum of over one billion, seven hundred million, and unable to pay. But as Britain's debt to Canada mounts, Canada's debt to the U.S. increases. In 1942 it amounted to \$269,000,000.

Thus British imperialism, forced into a defensive position economically by the war has had to act as a parasitic drain on the resources of her Empire. Meanwhile, the U.S. through its favorable geographic and economic position, through its Joint Economic Committee, "Materials Resources Committee," etc., with Canada, "to explore the possibility of a greater degree of economic cooperation" between the two countries, is dealing the death blow to any remaining British control. There is virtually present today an unofficial political control by the U.S. It is in this manner that U.S. imperialism controls the Canadian economy and its government. As the noted Canadian liberal economist F.R. Scott has commented, "Every Canadian corporation is free to sell abroad where it is able. In considering the objectives of Canadian economic policy, this distinction between what the Canadian government decides and what independent Canadian exporters decide must be borne in mind, for frequently Canadian policy in fact will be determined by the exporters rather than by the government.... Once economic policy (public and private) has turned in a certain direction, foreign policy cannot easily take a different course." (Canada Today, F.R. Scott P. 151-52)

The dynamics of the Anglo-American antagonism today thus reveals itself as a forced retreat by the British with Wall Street pushing the Empire to the wall. What has happened in Canada is now happening in Australia, New Zealand and India. After the war, if the Allied imperialists are able to defeat both the Axis imperialists and the proletarian revolution, this same struggle will take place over the Pacific Islands and Asia, as well as Europe. The struggle for the world's airways will be an important part of this fight between the imperialists. Today it takes place in conferences and statements, tomorrow it may mean war between England and the U.S. or the absorption of the British Empire by the Yankees. American imperialism holds the ace card in any imperialist struggle, its main problem is the defeat of the proletarian revolution.

### THE CANADIAN ECONOMY INTERNALLY

A knowledge of the relationship of Canada to American and British imperialism clears the way for an understanding of the dynamics of the Canadian economy internally

The economy of all capitalist nations in the imperialist stage reveals a tremendous concentration of industry and wealth in the

hands of a few giant individuals, corporations and cartels. Canada is no exception to the rule. The great proportion of its financial dealings are cleared through three banks. The Bank of Montreal, Canadian Bank of Commerce, and the Royal Bank. Two-thirds of all oil & gasoline sold and consumed is controlled by the Imperial Oil Company, which is Standard Oil controlled. Canadian Industries Limited, a Du Pont subsidiary, controls all chemical production. The International Nickel Company controls 90% of the world's nickel resources, the majority of whose stock is American controlled. Only two railway systems exist - The Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National (government owned). As far back as 1929, only 3.2% of Canadian plants had an output over a million dollars, yet they produced 62% of the total production.

Although a glance at the map reveals Canada as a huge virtually uninhabited country with tremendous unexploited natural resources, the forces of capitalist economy have produced an uneven and combined development placing the city and industry as the decisive part of the economy, which ordinarily in colonial countries farm and agriculture would nominally hold.

The previous imperialist war culminated the process of this combined development in which industry became dominant over agriculture. Canada's political ties to the British Empire inspired an investment in and expansion of industry. Agricultural production however, although encouraged by the increased markets of that war suffered by the contraction of post-war markets. This together with its inability to compete with the American and Argentine markets and the eventual depression struck a death blow to a healthy agriculture. In the period between 1926-1938 the field crops (principally wheat) declined 50%, primary forest production 70%, pulp and paper 22%, dairy products 33%, live-stock and poultry 21%. But the output of those resources directly connected with the expansion of industry increased. For example gold 270%, copper 440%, lead 145%, zinc 250%, nickel 320%, crude petroleum 120%, asbestos 35%, central electric stations 35%, horsepower 80%. The development of all "backward" countries such as (Russia), India, China, and Japan shows the same dynamics of uneven and combined development.

#### THE CANADIAN WORKER AND FARMER

It is in this background that the Canadian working class faces its problems. Exploited on the one hand by U.S. imperialism and on the other by British imperialism and a native bourgeoisie, in a comparatively young and expanding economy, which has tremendous potentialities, it holds a unique position.

From the point of view of economic struggles the Canadian workers are behind the American. They still are in the primary stages of union organization and recognition. The Trades and Labor Federation, the Canadian Congress of Labor, are virtually affiliates of the A.F. of L. and C.I.O. in the United States. The National Catholic Syndicate reflects the attempt of the French-Canadian Catholic Church and workers to maintain their racial, religious, and cultural ties in the field of union organization. Sixteen per cent or 400,000 of the 2½ million Canadian workers are organized.

One of the main struggles of the workers has been the attempt to force the capitalists to bargain collectively with their unions. The American workers through their independent mass action have been able to have this legalized through the Wagner Act. The Canadian workers have not yet reached this stage however, faced with the No-Strike pledge of their leadership and a concomitant government wage stabilization program. In December of 1943, the municipal workers of Montreal staged a series of strikes which resulted in obtaining higher wages, the recognition of the Canadian Congress of Labor as their bargaining agent and the repudiation by both major unions (the C.C.L. and the T.L.F. - A.F. of L.) of the No-Strike pledge. The strikes were an indication of the growing unrest and dissatisfaction of the workers. (It is very significant that the workers who went out on strike were clerks, firemen, policemen, and nurses, usually backward sections of workers.)

The emergence of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation in the depression period reflects a combined agrarian and proletarian unrest which is seeking crystallization through political channels. It presents a Fabian-Socialist solution to the problems of the Canadian workers and farmers. Its six point war program for: 1. Government ownership of essential industries; 2. Replacement of dollar a year men by paid state officials; 3. One hundred per cent taxation of all profits above the figure of 4%; 4. Nationalization of Financial Institutions; 5. Establishment of a maximum individual income; 6. Compulsory interest and free loans for financing the war. The whole program resolves itself to support of the imperialist war and the attempt to reform the surface problems but not the principal causes of the problems of the workers and Canadian population. The recent support accorded the C.C.F. by both Trotskyite groups only shows the extent of their betrayal and misleadership of the workers.

The law of combined and uneven development again comes into play. Although behind their American brothers in the economic struggle for better conditions, union recognition, etc., the organization of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, the C.C.F.

reflects the advanced outlook of the workers in that ultimately it is only through the political struggle that a fundamental solution to their problems can be attained.

The remarks of the Canadian professor economist R.A. McKay at the conference on Canadian-American Affairs in 1935 are very noteworthy. "It remains to be seen, however, whether this marriage of Fabian Socialism and Agrarianism can be a lasting one. The difficulty is that Socialism is essentially the gospel of the propertyless, while agrarianism, however radical it may appear, is the gospel of the small landed proprietor. Can these two groups be amalgamated into a single national party, which is essential if they are really to change the economic and social order of the Dominion? The older parties have bridged perhaps as serious gaps in the body politic, notably those of race and religion, but they have done it because they have had no positive programmes, and no consistent philosophy. Just because the C.C.F. has a creed its problem of uniting diverse groups for the purposes of political action promises to be more difficult. Whether it can become a national left wing party would seem to depend in part upon its shedding its somewhat doctrinaire views of politics, and becoming like other Canadian parties, an association of politicians held together by a common desire for office. But would it then be any longer a left wing party?" The bourgeois professor has correctly estimated the future role and position of the C.C.F.

One other "Left" movement exists within the ranks of the Canadian workers. The C.P. although formally dissolved, nevertheless exerts a large influence within the unions, the C.C.F. and its own groupings. The International News and Fighting Worker have dealt extensively with its national and international role. It need only be stated here that the criterion by which workers must guide their estimation of a political organization must be by what position it takes in relation to the Imperialist war. Support means betrayal.

#### FRENCH-CANADIANS

One of the main problems of the Canadian scene is the question of the position and relationship of the French-Canadians, fully one-third of the total population. Their social and economic position is very similar to that of the Negroes in the U.S. hemmed in by the ideology of the Catholic Church the majority live a peasant life.

The French-Canadian struggle to maintain its social and cultural independence has been usurped by the Catholic Church to win for it a dominant position over the French-Canadian. The Church holds almost absolute power and remains one of the principal

exploiters. It is the wealthiest landowner in Quebec, has its own school system (with the support of the state), its own press etc. Many still pay tithes for the support of Church land. When a new Church is to be built an extra tax is placed on the farmers' mortgage. It has beheaded all militant actions of the people to the left, and has had state laws such as the Paddock and the Cannon laws passed, which oppose all actions contrary to the state and to the needs and desires of the church.

A large part of the reaction and opposition of the French-Canadians has been due to the fact that a large group have come to work in industry. Here as on the farm they find themselves exploited by the foreign capital of the U.S. and England. This together with their special "minority problems" accounts for their overwhelming anti-war position. (70% voted against Canada's entrance into the war.) Significantly a writer in Foreign Affairs magazine of April 1938 says, "Thus the economic and social conditions combined with a militant Catholicism tend to push certain individuals in the direction of Fascism. For that reason the Fascist movement may be expected to increase for a considerable time." The recent organization of the French-Canadian nationalist party Bloc Populaire Canadien bears watching in this relationship.

It is only when the French-Canadian is rid of the triple exploitation of the U.S., British capital and the reactionary power of the Catholic Church that a beginning of solution to the problem of the French-Canadians will be found.

FOR THE RIGHT OF THE FRENCH-CANADIANS TO MAINTAIN THEIR CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS INDEPENDENCE FREE FROM ALL EXPLOITERS. FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FRENCH-CANADIANS FROM THE REACTIONARY POWER AND AUTHORITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. FOR THE UNIFIED STRUGGLE OF ALL WORKERS (FRENCH-CANADIAN AND ENGLISH).

Such is the economic and political situation in Canada today.

The special problems of Canada are part of the general problems wrought by the imperialist stage of capitalism. The solution of these special problems lies in the solving of these general world problems. But the Canadian proletariat in its own special struggle aids and accelerates the world struggle against Capitalism. Together with his brothers in Europe, Asia and the Americas, he must work for the establishment of a World Soviet System. The establishment of an independent Marxian organization in Canada to aid in the co-ordination of these special problems to the general will be a major step in the right direction. Workers in the U.S. must bend every effort to that task.

## WHAT NOW?

The Red army has reached the borders of Rumania and Old Poland. It is but a few miles from the borders of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This territorial advance brings with it tremendous important political questions for the working class of the four countries mentioned as well as the Soviet Union. In other parts of the International News we have given our analysis of the inter-imperialist conflicts. Here, we propose to take up the question of what the working class of these five countries should do. The advance of the Red Army into the territories of the four capitalist countries brings two different systems of economy into conflict. The horrors of the last few years impell the workers and peasants of the four capitalist countries to take definite steps towards fundamental economic changes. Stalinism, continually retreating before allied imperialism, will endeavor to stifle revolutionary manifestations. What must be done?

It is only by applying theoretical principles of the permanent revolution to this situation that any immediate practical steps can be taken. The solution consists in the proletarian revolutionists in all five countries, as well as in Germany, fighting for real Soviet power. Therefore the marxists in all these countries including the marxists in the Red Army, have as their task immediate fight against the native bourgeoisie, (who will be supported by both imperialist capitalist camps), and also the immediate struggle within the Red Army against the Stalinist bureaucracy. The economic and political collapse demands seizure of the land, particularly necessary in these agrarian countries, seizure of the factory and expropriation of the bourgeoisie and proclamation of the slogan "A United Soviet Europe". The only way in which this can be accomplished is by the formation of soviets led by a marxist party. If the Red Army under Stalinism attempts to suppress these soviets, then the Red Army should be fought, and the marxists within the Red Army must put out as immediate slogans the desertion of the Russian Army to the Soviet Army, and a political revolution against Stalinism. The fate of Europe, and the immediate fate of the world revolution, depends upon boldness. Only such a course as outlined above can lead to the disintegration of the German army. Give the German masses, in uniform and out, an opportunity to fight for a Soviet Europe, a real workers' world and they will take it. Present them, as Stalinism does, with a combination of junkers, generals, and bourgeoisie in the form of a "Free German Committee", and they will have no external incentive to social revolution. Upon the marxists of Europe a tremendous

opportunity and a tremendous responsibility rests. Upon the revolutionary vanguard of the U.S.A. there is also tremendous responsibility and opportunity. We are confident that in the coming gigantic conflicts the working class of the U.S.A. will not play the role of supporters of imperialism but will play a working class role in aid of their European brothers and against the main bulwark of international imperialism, the American capitalist class.

## SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

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INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORRESPONDENCE  
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## On the Fight against Social Chauvinism

By N. Lenin.

**Note:**— The following article, which was written by Lenin on the 1st of June 1915, criticises the political line of the Women's Conference held at Berne, the first international socialist gathering after the outbreak of the war. Today, it is necessary for every Communist to study the lessons of the fight of the Bolsheviki, under Lenin's leadership, against social chauvinism in its open and concealed forms, and also at the same time to study Lenin's criticism of the mistakes which even many revolutionary internationalists made at that time. The conciliation of the Trotskyists with the Labor Party Social-Patriotic elements both in the U.S. and Britain is a case in point!

The most interesting and latest material regarding this topical question has been supplied by the Women's International Socialist Conference recently held in Berne. We will deal here with one aspect of the question.

Representatives of the women's organisations of the Russian Organization Committee, Dutch women from Troelstra's Party, Swiss women from the organisations which the "Berner Tagwacht" sharply attacks on account of their too Left attitude, a French representative, who did not wish to enter into any dispute on any important question with the official party (which, as is known, adopts a social-chauvinist standpoint), English women who are hostile to the idea of a clear separation of pacifism from revolutionary proletarian tactics — they all united with the "Left" German social democrats on a resolution. The representatives of the women's organisations of the Central Committee of our Party dissociated themselves from them and preferred to remain isolated for the time being than to participate in such a bloc.

Wherein consists the essence of the difference of opinion? What fundamental and general political importance has this difference of opinion?

At the first glance the "middle-course" resolution which unites the opportunists and a portion of the Left appears to be very suitable and correct. The war is recognised to be an imperialist war; the idea of defence of native country is rejected; the workers are summoned to mass demonstrations etc. etc. One could believe that the only difference between it and our

resolution was that ours contained some sharper expressions such as "traitor", "opportunism", "withdrawal from the bourgeois ministries" etc.

There is not the least doubt that this will be the standpoint adopted by those who will criticise the delegates of the women's organisations of the Central Committee of our party for having dissociated themselves from the rest of the delegates.

One only needs to consider the matter attentively and not to confine oneself to the "formal" recognition of this or that truth, in order to perceive the complete untenability of such a criticism.

At the conference there collided together two judgements of the war and of the tasks of the International, two tactics of the proletarian parties. The one view is: There has been no collapse of the International; there exist no great and serious hindrances to a return from chauvinism to Socialism; there is no strong "inner" enemy in the shape of opportunism, nor has it committed any direct, indubitable and open betrayal of socialism. Hence the conclusion: we do not wish to damn anybody; we wish to grant an amnesty to the deniers of the Stuttgart and Basle resolutions; we wish to limit ourselves to the advice, steer to the Left and summon the masses to demonstrations.

The other view of all these questions is the exact contrary. There is nothing more injurious and damaging to the cause of the proletariat than the continuation of party diplomacy towards the opportunists and social chauvinists. The resolution of the majority was acceptable to the opportunists and followers of the present official parties because it is permeated through and through with the spirit of diplomacy. The working masses who are at present led by the official social patriots will be duped by this diplomacy. The working masses will be given the thoroughly erroneous idea that the present social democratic parties, together with the present governments, are capable of changing their course and of adopting a correct course in place of the wrong one.

That is not the case. That is a profound and extremely dangerous error. The present social democratic parties and their governments are incapable of seriously altering their course, as a matter of fact, everything will remain as before, and the "left" wishes expressed in the majority resolution will remain pious wishes (the followers of the party of Troelstra or of the present French party leadership, with their correct political instinct, realised this and therefore voted for this resolution). The summons to the masses to demonstrations can acquire a practical, real, serious importance only with the active support of the present social democratic leadership.

Can one expect such support? Obviously not. As is known, such an appeal will encounter a bitter (and for the greater part concealed) counter-action on the part of the governments and will by no means receive their support.

If one were to say that straight out to the workers, then the workers would know the truth. They would know that for the realisation of the "left" wishes a fundamental change in the course of the social democratic parties is required, that an obstinate fight against the opportunists and their centrist friends is necessary. But the workers are now being lulled with left wishes because people disdain to name plainly and clearly the evil, without combating which these wishes cannot be fulfilled.

The diplomatic leaders, the originators of the chauvinistic policy in the present social democratic party, will know how to make excellent use of the weaknesses, the lack of firmness and definiteness of the resolution of the majority. As skilled parliamentarians they will divide the roles among themselves; the one — Kautsky and Co. — will say: "serious" arguments have not been taken into consideration, have not been investigated — we wish now to place the discussion on a broader basis. The others will say: See, were we not right when we said that there exist no profound differences of opinion, when the followers of Troelstra party and of the Guesde-Semiat party come to an agreement with the German Left?

A women's conference ought not to have helped Scheidemann, Haase, Kautsky, Vandervelde, Hyndman, Guesde, Semiat, Flechanov etc. to lull the working masses, but should have declared determined war on opportunism. Only then would there have been the practical result — not the hope of an "improvement" of the above-mentioned "leaders", but the rallying of forces for the hard and severe struggle.

Let us take the question of the violation of the Stuttgart and Basle resolutions by the opportunists and "centrists"; there lies the crux of the whole matter! let us face the matter plainly and clearly, without diplomacy.

Foreseeing the approaching war, the International met together and unanimously decided, in the event of the outbreak of war, to "accelerate the collapse of capitalism", to work in the sense of the Commune and of the October and December revolution of 1905 (that is the exact expression of the Basle resolution!!!), to work in the spirit that, for the workers of one country to fire on the workers of another country shall be branded as a "crime".

Here the line of action in an international, proletarian, revolutionary spirit is quite plainly prescribed; so plainly in fact that it could not be expressed more plainly without overstepping the bounds of legality.

Then there came the war, the very war which had been so plainly foreseen at Basle. The official parties acted in the exact contrary sense: not as internationalists, but as nationalists; bourgeois and not proletarian; not as revolutionaries but as arch-opportunists. If we say to the workers: a direct betrayal of the cause of socialism has been committed, then with these words we reject at one stroke all subterfuges and excuses all sophism a la Kautsky and Axelrod. We point out quite clearly the whole depth and strength of the evil; we summon the workers to fight and not to reconcile themselves to the evil.

And the resolution of the majority? Not a word of condemnation of the traitors, not a syllable on opportunism; a simple repetition of the idea of the Basle resolution!!! As if nothing serious had happened, — it was in fact only a trifling accidental error; it suffices to repeat the old decision; a trifling difference of opinion, not involving any principle has arisen, it suffices to patch it up!!!

This is a direct scorning of the decisions of the International, a scorning of the workers. The social chauvinists would in fact like nothing better than a simple repetition of the old decisions in order that nothing would be really altered. That is, at bottom, a tacit and hypocritically masked amnesty for the social chauvinist adherents of the majority of the present parties. We know that there are a great many "amateurs" who would like to follow this course and to confine themselves to a few radical phrases. These people have no business with us. We are following another path and we shall follow another path; we wish to promote the labour movement and the building up of the workers' party by action, in the spirit of irreconcilability towards opportunism and social chauvinism.

A part of the German women delegates were obviously afraid of a clearly outspoken resolution, out of considerations relating exclusively to the rate of development of the fight against chauvinism within a single, that is to say, their own party. But such arguments were obviously out of place and erroneous. For the international resolution does not mention either the rate or the concrete conditions of the fight against social chauvinism in the individual countries. In this sphere the autonomy of the individual parties is unchallenged. It was a question of proclaiming from the international tribune the irrevocable breach with social chauvinism along the whole line, in the entire character of social democratic work. But instead of this, the majority resolution again repeated the old error, the error of the II International, which diplomatically cloaks opportunism and the divergence between words and deeds. As we have said, we shall not follow this path.