Max Shachtman

Bio-Bibliographical Sketch

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Basic biographical data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Max Shachtman</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other names (by-names, pseud. etc.): Cousin John * Marty Dworkin * M.S. * Max Marsh * Max * Michaels * Pedro * S. * Max Schachtman * Sh * Maks Shakhtman * S-n * Tr * Trent * M.N. Trent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date and place of birth: September 10, 1904, Warsaw (Russia [Poland])</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date and place of death: November 4, 1972, Floral Park, NY (USA)</td>
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<td>Nationality: Russian, American</td>
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<td>Occupations, careers, etc.: Editor, writer, party leader</td>
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<td>Time of activity in Trotskyist movement: 1928 - ca. 1948</td>
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Biographical sketch

Max Shachtman was a renowned writer, editor, polemicist and agitator who, together with James P. Cannon and Martin Abern, in 1928/29 founded the Trotskyist movement in the United States and for some 12 years functioned as one of its main leaders and chief theoreticians. He was a close collaborator of Leon Trotsky and translated some of his major works. Nicknamed 'Trotsky's commissar for foreign affairs', he held key positions in the leading bodies of Trotsky's international movement before, in 1940, he split from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), founded the Workers Party (WP) and in 1948 definitively dissociated from the Fourth International. Shachtman's name was closely webbed with the theory of bureaucratic collectivism and with what was described as Third Campism ("Neither Washington nor Moscow"). His thought had some lasting influence on a considerable number of contemporaneous intellectuals, writers, and socialist youth, both American and abroad. Once a key figure in the history and struggles of the American and international Trotskyist movement, Shachtman, from the late 1940s to his death in 1972, made a remarkable journey from the left margin of American society to the right, thus having been an inspirer of both Anti-Stalinist Marxists and of neo-conservative hard-liners.

Max Shachtman was born in Warsaw (Poland) – then part of the Czarist Russian Empire – on September 10, 1904 as a child of Benjamin (died in 1948) and Sarah Shachtman (died in 1941), socialists of Jewish origin who in 1905 emigrated to the United States settling in New York, where the boy grew up and lived until 1923. Shachtman had a younger sister, Tilly. The family became naturalized in 1921.
Max Shachtman

Although he dropped out from college at the age of 19, he should become a colourful man of remarkable literary style and talents, a bibliophile whose rich collections first were literary and then focused on the classics of socialist literature and history; furthermore, he came to be a brilliant orator, polemicist and debater, renowned for his wit, humour and irony. He was more or less fluent in English, German, French and Yiddish, with passing knowledge of Spanish, Russian and Hebrew. He was married three times: first with Billie Ramloff, second with Edith Harvey (formerly associated with Shachtman's friend Albert Glotzer; the couple got a son, Michael, in 1939), and eventually with Yetta Barsh (1925-1996), like himself successively a member of the Communist League of America (CLA), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Workers Party (WP), the Independent Socialist League (ISL) and eventually the Social Democrats, USA.

Being a sympathizer of the left wing of the Socialist Party (SP) and under the strong influence of the Russian revolution, Shachtman in 1922 became a member of the Workers Party, the legal arm of the then underground Communist Party (CP) of the United States where he got in close contact with Martin Abern, the leader of the Young Workers League (YWL), the CP's youth arm, who persuaded him to take functions in the leadership of the youth organization and to become editor of the Young Worker (Chicago). Shachtman spent the next few years in Chicago as a communist full-time organizer, soon became a renowned and talented party journalist and made a career in the CP where he became the youngest alternate member of the Central Committee and later a delegate to the Moscow congresses of the Young Communist International and of the International Red Aid, respectively. At the same time he became – pushed by his mentor James P. Cannon – a leading member of the International Labor Defense (ILD) and in 1926 editor of its organ, Labor Defender. Within the CP, Shachtman associated himself with the faction grouped around William Z. Foster and James P. Cannon, until Cannon, Abern and Shachtman eventually broke with Foster in 1925.

In 1928, Shachtman, Cannon and Abern were expelled from the ranks of the CP after they had begun to challenge the Stalinist party majority faction by openly defending Trotsky's fundamental criticism of Stalin's rule in the USSR and of the adventurist and dangerous political line of the Stalinized Comintern. The three expelled, backed by some dozen other militants excluded from the party and endorsed by some other nuclei of a Trotskyist anti-Stalinist opposition soon founded an oppositional paper, The Militant (appearing in New York), and in Spring 1929 launched an external left oppositional faction, the Communist League of America (CLA) which soon should become the American affiliate of Trotsky's International Left Opposition (ILO) and in 1934 joined forces with another leftist group led by Abraham J. Muste to form the Workers Party. Shachtman functioned as contributing editor of the Trotskyists' weekly mouthpiece The Militant and of their theoretical journal The New International which was launched in 1934. In 1931, he founded Pioneer Publishers which for many decades – under changing names – should function as the most eminent Trotskyist publishing house.

From its very beginning in 1928 to 1940, Shachtman was, second only to James P. Cannon, the political and theoretical head of the American Trotskyist movement which eventually in 1938 was reconstituted as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) under national secretary James P. Cannon. Shachtman during those years made innumerable oral contributions to party conventions and meetings as well as brilliantly written contributions to the American and international Trotskyist press and to a great variety of internal and discussion bulletins. Being in close contact with Leon Trotsky and his son, Lev Sedov, Shachtman travelled several European countries during the early 1930s (e.g. Germany, France, Britain, Spain) and functioned as international secretary of the International Left Opposition, which in 1933 was renamed International Communist League (ICL) and in 1936 Movement for the Fourth International. During the 1930s, Shachtman was undoubtedly the most renowned American within the international Trotskyist community, a very pillar of Trotsky and perhaps one of the most gifted thinkers and writers in the ranks of the movement.
In 1930, he had been the first American visiting Trotsky after the exiled leader of the Russian revolution had settled on Prinkipo Island (Turkey); Shachtman later met Trotsky again in his French and Norwegian exile, and he belonged to the American delegation which welcomed the Trotskys when they arrived in Mexico, the last station of their exile, in 1937. There was a very considerable letter exchange between Shachtman, Trotsky and his secretaries. In 1938, Shachtman participated as one of the American delegates in the founding congress of the Fourth International; the English-language version of the minutes of that meeting was from his pen. In 1939, Shachtman became one of four people constituting the New York Resident International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. Last not least, Shachtman came to be known as an outstanding translator of Trotsky's works – thus deserving greatest thanks with regard to the dissemination of his writings in the English-speaking world – and author of a valuable account of the early history of the Trotskyist movement and of an analysis of the monstrous Moscow show trials.

At the time of the outbreak of World War II, great tensions unfolded within the SWP which eventually should culminate in a devastating split: Max Shachtman and James Burnham became the main spokesmen of a (strong) minority faction which argued against Cannon's and Trotsky's assessment that the Soviet Union despite all Stalinist degeneration and even in view of the August 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact and the USSR's war against Poland and Finland (1939 and 1940) remained a "workers' state" which socialists and revolutionaries have to defend against any aggression. The Shachtman-Burnham faction got in fundamental disagreement with this genuine Trotskyist view. They began to challenge the validity of the Trotskyist position of unconditional defense of the USSR by developing a theory – originally sketched by an Italian ex-Trotskyist, Bruno Rizzi, and later developed by Milovan Djilas and others – which emphasized that the USSR had become a bureaucratic-collectivist state in which those who control the state-owned means of production are constituting a ruling class (not a caste or a stratum); thus Marxists consequently should side neither with the 'Moscow' nor with the 'Washington', neither with the Stalinist nor fascist nor capitalist camp, but rather fight against all ruling and exploiting classes and against all oppressive regimes. Shachtman and those Trotskyist dissidents championing such positions often have fittingly been designated as 'Third Campists' (or 'Third Camp Trotskyists', respectively).

Deeply involved into the SWP's internal struggles, Trotsky from the very beginning endorsed Cannon's views, sharply opposing Shachtman's and Burnham's revisions and deviations from traditional Trotskyist viewpoints. After several months of a quite unparalleled theoretical and factional struggle about the 'Russian question' (and about questions of internal party regime as well as about some philosophical questions, too), the adherents of Burnham and the 'Shachtmanites' left the Socialist Workers Party in the early summer of 1940, taking with them some 40 percent of the total party membership including a majority of its youth arm. The 'Shachtmanites' immediately founded a new party, the Workers Party (WP) while Burnham soon came to drop from Trotskyism and from radical politics. The 'Shachtmanites' took with them the theoretical journal The New International and at the same time began publishing a weekly paper called Labor Action.

In the 1940s, the Workers Party under Shachtman's leadership was the American branch of an interna-

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1) For a list of major works by Leon Trotsky translated and/or edited and annotated by Shachtman see the respective paragraphs of our Selective bibliography below

2) He even translated and edited some of Trotsky's writings after his split from Trotsky's American followers (see below)

3) The best and most instructive discussions of 'Third Campism' probably are the long essay by Alan Johnson and chapter 5 of Peter Drucker's Max Shachtman and his Left, both listed in the paragraph Books and articles about Shachtman of our Selective Bibliography below. As a matter of fact, Shachtman's theories of the 1940s in one way or another maintained alive in many dissident ('non-orthodox') Trotskyist groups and tendencies, particularly in America and Britain

4) As Shachtman and his followers were called by the 'Cannonites', i.e. by the SWP majority led by James P. Cannon
tional current of dissident Trotskyists (or, semi-Trotskyists) rejecting both Western private capitalism and Eastern bureaucratic collectivism – views which were held by some European (ex-)Trotskyists, too, as for example by Yvan Craipeau. At the end of the 1940s and beyond, Shachtman's thought – chiefly developed in the columns of The New International and propagated on speaking tours and in public debates – in one way or another influenced all those theorists who came to coin different varieties of "bureaucratic collectivism" and "state capitalism" theories; thus some of Shachtman’s essential ideas are to be found in various brands of the strictly anti-Stalinist (or, Stalinophobe) left, such for example in the theories of the American Joseph Carter (Friedman) or of the British Tony Cliff (Gluckstein), the latter being the creator of the International Socialism current ("Neither Washington nor Moscow"), or in the theories developed by the 'left Shachtmanite' Hal Draper ("Socialism from Below") who broke with Shachtman in 1961.

In the mid-1940s, Shachtman took part in discussions about the possibilities of a re-unification of the SWP and the WP – which of course failed– and could win over, at least for a short span of time, some further dissidents from the SWP. Although his Workers Party never became a considerable political factor, Shachtman's influence on some contemporary writers, labour activists and intellectuals of the younger generation – whether or not formally affiliated with his organizations – remained quite considerable, e.g. on Irving Howe, Sydney Hook, Irving Kristol, Hal Draper, Michael Harrington, James T. Farrell, Saul Bellow, Harvey Swados, Bayard Rustin, Stanley Plastrik, Emanuel Geltman, to mention only a few.

For many years, Shachtman maintained regular contact with Natalia Sedova, Trotsky's widow, who under the influence of Grandizo Munis et al. had broken with Trotsky's Fourth International aligning instead with Shachtman who in 1948 definitively broke with the Trotskyist movement, too. At the time of the SWP-WP split, he still had regarded himself as a Trotskyist, or at least as a revolutionary Marxist, and still in Spring 1948 he attended – as a spokesman of the opposition – the second world congress of the Fourth International. However, by the end of the same year he came – strongly influenced by Carter (Friedman) – to the conclusion that the Stalinist Soviet Union was the greater evil and socio-economically more reactionary in comparison with Western/American capitalism; he and his supporters categorically objected to give whatever support to the Stalinists and to the Soviet Union – a position absolutely incompatible with traditional or official Trotskyism – and thus eventually came, as it soon should become evident, to side with 'the West'. His break with Trotskyism turned out to be irreversible. In the 1950s, in view of the post-war boom and the Cold War division of the world into rival hostile blocs, Shachtman successively approached to positions commonly described as 'democratic socialist' and eventually moved more and more decisively to the right.

In 1948, Shachtman's group, the Workers Party, was renamed Independent Socialist League (ISL), which under his unchallenged leadership successively shifted from revolutionary Marxist Anti-Stalinism to reformist socialism and eventually merged in 1958 with the (social-democratic) Socialist Party (SP) of the old Norman Thomas. But that was not at all the end of Shachtman's political trajectory; his journey (or, odyssey) from socialism to liberalism and beyond continued and rather accelerated during the 1960s: he became the moving spirit of a so-called realignment tendency within the SP favouring engagement for and in the Democratic Party, regarding it as the appropriate means to move the nation towards social democracy. This realignment included for example the endorsing of the Democrats.

5) From 1952 to 1961, Shachtman together with his wife often visited Natalia Sedova in Mexico. Despite his 1940 break with Trotsky, Shachtman remained his literary representative in the U.S. acting in that capacity for Natalia Sedova and thus often corresponding with her on legal and financial matters.

6) A socialist's odyssey through the "American century" is the sub-title of Peter Drucker's magnum opus about Max Shachtman: Max Shachtman and his Left (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1994, based on author's doctoral thesis), an unsurpassed, comprehensive and meticulously researched first rate political biography thoroughly dealing with almost all aspects and facets of Shachtman's life and analysing in detail all steps in his moving from the left to the right

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liberal "progressive" social policy and the backing of Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert H. Humphrey, respectively, in the 1964 and 1968 presidential election campaigns. In the mid-1960s, SP's name was changed to Social Democrats, USA. Shachtman at the end of his life – as many of his followers – eventually became a veritable cold warrior (or, a cold war social democrat)7, abandoning most of the remnants of his earlier held political positions, endorsing Kennedy's Anti-Cuban Bay of Pigs endeavour and Johnson's backing of the South Vietnamese dictators against Ho Chi Minh's "expansionism"; short before his death, Shachtman came to give his support to a declared foreign policy hard-liner, Henry M. Jackson, in the 1972 presidential primaries. When instead of Jackson George McGovern won the Democrat's primaries, Shachtman refused to back the latter against Republican candidate Richard M. Nixon.

During the 1960s, Shachtman devoted much of his time to research work related to a great project which unfortunately he never should be able to finish by the time of his death: a history of the Communist International (Comintern). In connection with this research work, he made oral history interviews with many surviving veterans and eye witnesses, searched the rich archival resources preserved at Hoover Institute (Stanford, Cal.) where he also gave lectures as he did at other universities and research centres, too. His booklet on Comintern's splinter movements reflects parts of his research work.

Max Shachtman died on November 4, 1972.

During Shachtman's long odyssey from the far left to the right, many of those people who in the 1940s to the 1960s had been 'Shachtmanites' or at least temporary fellow-travellers of Shachtman, dissociated from him and launched rival groups and sects in which, of course, certain elements of the old 'Shachtmanism' of the 1940s remained alive. A considerable number of former 'Shachtmanites', however, made remarkable careers in government, built lasting and influential networks in the Democratic Party machinery or in the AFL-CIO union bureaucracy closely associated with the Democrats. A typical pattern of those political actors was that they championed a fairly progressive interior policy, e.g. by advocating the civil rights movement and a pro-labour social policy, while at the same time endorsing an uncompromisingly anti-Soviet (or, anti-communist) world policy of the United States. Unpleasant with allegedly "too liberal" views of the Jimmy Carter administration, some ex-members of Shachtman's organizations or sympathizers even became prominent members of conservative think-tanks, contributors to trend-setting liberal-conservative papers and last not least renowned advocates and pillars of Ronald Reagan's and George H.W. Bush's international policy, such as for example Paul Wolfowitz and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Additionally, it has been stated that Irving Kristol, Irving Howe, Sidney Hook and other renowned intellectual forerunners of what should become known as American neo-conservatism ('Neocons') had a certain 'Shachtmanite' ideological background and were strongly shaped by Shachtman's specific brand of anti-Soviet Stalinophobia. Neo-conservatism as unfolding in the last quarter of the 20th century and gaining mainstream influence in American policy since Ronald Reagan, has been made subject of a veritable flood of analyses and comments in books, journals and particularly in the Internet; some of them are dealing inter alia with "Trotsky's ghost" in the State Department or in the White House, focusing on the 'Shachtmanite' (or, allegedly 'Trotskyist') past of many of the now hard-liners at relevant government posts or in the media industry8. However, we would like to emphasize that any interpretation of American policy as being influenced by whatever brand of 'Trotskyist' thought is lacking historical or political correctness.

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7) The question whether or not this was a logical consequence of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, has been critically and carefully discussed by various authors, thus by Alex Callinicos, Peter Drucker, Ernest Haberkern et al. [see our listing within the paragraph Books and articles about Shachtman within our Selective bibliography below]


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Selective bibliography

- Selective bibliography: Books/pamphlets (co-)authored by Shachtman

1871 - the Paris Commune. - Chicago: Daily Worker Publ. Co., [192?]. - 64 pp. - (The little red library ; 8)


Comintern's splinter movements: (Trotskyism, Bukharinism). - Stanford, Cal., 1964. - 54 pp. [Prelim. working paper, submitted to the Conference on One Hundred Years of Revolutionary Internationals, Stanford, Cal., Oct. 5-7, 1964]


Is Russia a socialist community?: the verbatim text of a debate [between Max Shachtman and Earl Browder, moderated by C. Wright Mills] [Electronic resource]. [The debate took place in March 1950 and was originally publ. in The New International, 16.1950 (3)]


The price of recognition: an exposure of the Soviet agreement with the United States / Max Shachtman [i.e. Shachtman]. - [Sydney?]: Workers Party of Australia (Left Opposition), [ca. 1934]. - 10 pp.


Ten years: history and principles of the Left Opposition. - New York, NY: Pioneer Publ., 1933. - 79 pp. (Later ed., publ. also with titles: 10 years; Genesis of Trotskyism; History and principles of the Left Opposition]


9) TSB item numbers (e.g. <TSB 0716>) refer to Lubitz' Trotskyist Serials Bibliography, München [etc.]: Saur, 1993, which is out of print but available as PDF file within the framework of the Lubitz' TrotskyanaNet website. In TSB you can find detailed descriptions of the respective Trotskyist journals, newsletters, bulletins and the like.

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**Selective bibliography: Books/pamphlets and journals (co-)edited by Shachtman**

Labor Defender (New York, NY)
The Militant (New York, NY) [ISSN 0026-3885] <TSB 1026>
The New International (New York, NY) <TSB 1089>
The Organizer (Minneapolis, Minn.)
Truth about the Moscow Trials (New York, NY) <TSB 1748>
Young Worker (Chicago, Ill., etc.)

**Selective bibliography: Books/pamphlets translated by Shachtman**

Serge, Victor: Russia twenty years after / transl. by Max Shachtman. - New ed. / prep. by Susan Weissman. - Atlantic Highlands, NJ : Humanities Pr., 1996. - LI, 345 pp. - (Revolutionary studies) [Containing also Serge's Thirty years after the Russian revolution]
Trotsky, Leon: The only road / transl. from the German by Max Shachtman and B.J. Field. - New York, NY : Pioneer Publ., 1933. - 93 pp. [& later ed., publ. also with title The only road for Germany, publ. by various publishing houses]
• Selective bibliography: Books, collections, journals, bulletins to which Shachtman contributed


As we saw the Thirties : essays on social and political movements of a decade / Max Shachtman [et al.] Ed. by Rita James Simon. - Urbana, Ill. [etc.] : Univ. of Illinois Pr., 1967. - 253 pp. [& later ed.]


Bulletin de la Ligue Communiste Internationaliste (Bolcheviks-Léninistes) (Bruxelles) <TSB 0176>
Bulletin intérieur / Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (Bolcheviks-Léninistes) (Paris) <TSB 1172>

Bulletin of the Workers Party (New York, NY) <TSB 0255>


Communist (Chicago, Ill.)

Dissent (New York, NY) [ISSN 0012-3846]


Fourth International (New York, NY) <TSB 0532>


Intercontinental Press (New York, NY) [ISSN 0020-5303 ; ISSN 0162-5594] <TSB 0657>

Internal Bulletin / Communist League of America (Opposition) (New York, NY) <TSB 0358>

Internal Bulletin / Socialist Workers Party (New York, NY) <TSB 1548>

International Bulletin / American Committee for the Fourth International (New York, NY) <TSB 0023>

International News / Left Wing Group, Workers Party USA (New York, NY) <TSB 0704>

Internationales Bulletin der Kommunistischen Links-Opposition (Paris; later: Berlin) <TSB 0758>

Labor Action (New York, NY) [ISSN 0094-6850] <TSB 0869>

Labor Defender (New York, NY)


Liberation (New York, NY) [ISSN 0024-189X]

La Lutte de classes : revue théorique mensuelle (Paris) <TSB 0948>
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The Militant (New York, NY) [ISSN 0026-3885] <TSB 1026>

Mitteilungsblatt der Reichsleitung der Linken Opposition der KPD (Bolschewiki-Leninisten, Sektion der Internationalen Linken Opposition) (Berlin) <TSB 1065>

The Modern Monthly (New York, NY)

The Nation (New York, NY) [ISSN 0027-8378]

The New International (New York, NY) <TSB 1089>

The Organizer (Minneapolis, Minn.)


Quatrième Internationale (Paris etc.) [ISSN 0771-0569 - ISSN 0765-1740] <TSB 1282>


Socialist Appeal (Chicago, Ill.) <TSB 1496>

Socialist Organiser (London) <TSB 1513>

Survey : a journal of East & West studies (London etc.) [ISSN 0039-6192]


Unser Wort (Prag, later: Paris; later: Antwerpen; later: New York, NY) <TSB 1761>

What Next? : Marxist discussion journal (London)

Workers' International News (London) <TSB 1840>

Workers' Liberty (London) [ISSN 0960-8753] <TSB 1844>

Workers Monthly (Washington, DC)

Workers News / Workers International League (London) <TSB 1848>
The Lubitz's Trotskynets

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The Young Comrade (Chicago, Ill.)
Young Pioneer (Chicago, Ill.)
Young Worker (Chicago, Ill.)

- Selective bibliography: Books and articles about Shachtman

[Anon.]: Max Shachtman. [Biographical sketch, Wikipedia article]
Auciello, Joe: Max Shachtman and some political offspring, in: In Defense of Marxism <TSB 0616>, 15.1997 (3=137), pp. 40-41
Braverman, Harry: A defamer of Marxism / Harry Frankel [i.e. Harry Braverman], in: Fourth International <TSB 0532>, 5.1944 (5=44), pp. 149-152
Callinicos, Alex: State in debate, in: International Socialism <TSB 0709>, [ser. 2.] 1996 (73)
Drucker, Peter: Max Shachtman and his left : a socialist's odyssey through the "American century". - Atlantic Highlands, NJ : Humanities Pr., 1994. - XXI, 346 pp. - (Revolutionary studies) [Table of contents: p.VII Preface -- p.XVI Chronology -- p.1 "The working class of this country ... will yet be the living vindication of Marxism" (p.1 Introduction -- p.6 A communist from Harlem -- p.34 Trotsky's commissar -- p.68 The New International -- p.106 War -- p.144 The third camp) -- p.185 "The American working class as it really is" (p.185 Introduction -- p.189 Between reformism and barbarism -- p.218 Beyond Lenin and Trotsky -- p.259 To the right -- p.286 The "American century") -- p.315 Conclusion -- p.321 Bibliography -- p.328 Index]
Finkel, David: Shachtman and his legacy, in: Against the Current <TSB 0014>, n.s. 10.1995 (3=57), pp. 37-39
Haberkern, Ernest: Max Shachtman / Ernie Haberkern [Electronic resource]. [Biographical sketch]
The Lubitz' TrotskyanaNet

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Wald, Alan: Portrait Max Shachtman, in: Wald, Alan: The New York intellectuals : the rise and decline of the anti-Stalinist left from the 1930s to the 1980s, Chapel Hill, NC [etc.], 1987, pp. 172-175. [Biographical sketch]

Note: More informations about Shachtman are likely to be found in some of the books, pamphlets, university works, and articles listed in the relevant chapters of the Lubitz' Leon Trotsky Bibliography [ISSN 2190-0183], particularly in chapters 7.5.18 and 9.

* Books dedicated to Shachtman


* Notes on archives

— A considerable collection of archivalia related to Max Shachtman, the Max Shachtman Papers 1917-1969, is housed at The Taminent Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York. The collection consists of 52 boxes (25 linear ft.) and has partially been microfilmed (some 70 reels). The call phrase of the original Shachtman Papers is Taminent 103, the call phrase of the microfilms is R3344 to R3414. The entire collection was processed by Claudia Hommel in 1983 and since 2003 an excellent machine-readable finding aid, created by Brian Stevens, is online available while a printed guide, published in 1983, is available, too. The Shachtman Papers, like the man himself, encompasses a multi-faceted and fascinating view of the 20th century socialist and communist movements. This extensive collection includes correspondence, manuscripts and notes, internal documents and bulletins, clippings and ephemera. Dozens of countries and regions are covered and virtually the entire political spectrum on the Left is documented from 1917 to the late 1960's. The perspective is at once personal, organizational, and intellectual,

reflecting the many roles which Shachtman was to play throughout his life: activist, advisor, historian, journalist, friend, comrade, and polemicist ... 11

The Shachtman Papers are arranged in 6 series:

Series I (boxes 1-18), divided into 10 sub-series, chiefly documents Shachtman's odyssey through the various groups of the left to which he was affiliated, ranging from the CP to the Social Democrats. The series also contains documents related to the youth groups led or inspired by Shachtman and last not least to the leading bodies and to various national sections of the International Left Opposition and of the Fourth International, respectively. Furthermore it contains Russian typescripts of a considerable number of Leon Trotsky's writings in exile (many of which were translated by Shachtman into English) and copies of Max Shachtman's correspondence with Trotsky and his secretaries.

Series II (boxes 19-27) consists of Shachtman's research notes for The history of the Communist International, his scheduled magnum opus which, however, never was finished. Material in this section is organized in several sub-series, e.g. by country or region, by name of author. While most of his notes were derived from published sources, others are from personal accounts or data recollected by former participants in the communist movement. The series also contains clippings, translated abstracts and correspondence.

Series III (boxes 28-33) consists of Shachtman's personal correspondence, generally non-official, although often related to subjects treated in series I and II. The series is subdivided into 4 sections, of which the most exhaustive is the Individuals section, comprising his correspondence with Norman Thomas, Michael Harrington, Natalia Sedova, Farrell Dobbs, Erich Fromm, A.J. Muste, Max Eastman, Hal Draper, Raya Dunayevskaya, James T. Farrell, Albert Glotzer, Irving Howe, Julius Jacobson, Isaac Don Levine, Max Nomad, Boris Souvarine, Esteban Volkov, Karl Wittfogel, Bertram D. Wolfe, Alfred Rosmer, Pierre Naville, Lev Sedov and many others. Minor sub-series contain Shachtman's business correspondence with publishers, libraries and archives as well as his personal correspondence with family and friends.

Series IV (boxes 34-40) consists of Shachtman's writings and topical files, covering a great variety of interests. It contains manuscripts and typescripts by himself as well as some manuscripts by others. Sub-series E contains some clippings and articles about himself.

Series V (boxes 41-51) is particularly relevant with regard to research on Trotskyism, since it contains a considerable number of internal bulletins, international bulletins, periodicals, leaflets and other rare, hard-to-find and often fragile primary source material, chiefly published prior to 1948. Of special interest should be sub-series A (Left Opposition bulletins other than United States, 1930-62), sub-series B (Internal bulletins of U.S.A. groups, 1933-67), sub-series C (Periodicals of the Left Opposition, 1928-62), and sub-series D (Hitler's rise to power, 1931-33, statements and periodicals).

Series VI (box 52) is called Addendum, containing for example minutes of the Communist League of America (1929-33), and internal documents and correspondence of the Young Socialist League (1953-57).

As stated above, Shachtman was a devoted bibliophile and book collector, too. Some 3,000 books and more than 1,000 pamphlets once in his possession were removed from the collection and integrated into Taminent Library's book shelves and vertical files.

With regard to personal aspects of his life, the Shachtman Papers are rather disappointing since there are only cursory biographical notes and virtually no memorabilia. Little or nothing is to be found about his childhood and youth and the same applies to his activities within the communist movement and its youth arm up to 1927.

The Shachtman Papers were purchased from his widow in 1978. An addendum was received from her estate in 2002.

The collection is open for research without restrictions at 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012, USA.

11 Cited from the 'scope and content note' in the above-mentioned machine-readable guide.
— Another, quite smaller, Shachtman collection is housed at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven, Conn.: *Max Shachtman correspondence with Leon Trotsky*, consisting of 17 letters by Shachtman to Trotsky, 47 letters by Trotsky to Shachtman, 17 letters by Trotsky to third parties and a few letters by Joseph Hansen to Cannon and Shachtman.

— Some text archives, containing material by and about Shachtman, are to be found in the Internet, such as for example *Max Shachtman 1904-1971* [sic] within the framework of the *Marxists' Internet Archive*.

— In view of Shachtman's outstanding role in the history of the American left in the 20th century and the remarkable number of people with whom he corresponded, it goes without saying that letters and other unpublished sources relating to him can be traced in almost all of those public archives preserving the written heritage of the leading figures of the American left, their organizations, etc. 12, as for example in the collections of the *SWP*, of James P. Cannon, John Dwyer, as well as in the famous *Trotsky exile papers*, preserved at *Houghton Library*, Cambridge, Mass.

*Note: The photograph on p. 1 was taken from the Marxists' Internet Archive at http://www.marxists.org/archive/shachtma/*

*Wolfgang and Petra Lubitz, 2006*

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