
The New Policy of Stalinism in America

by James P. Cannon

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Once again American Stalinism has apparently changed its colors. The bright yellow of recent years, which reflected the alliance, or attempted alliance, of Stalin and the imperialist democracies, has been suddenly transformed, like the color of a chameleon on an autumn leaf, into the reddish-brown of the Stalin-Hitler pact.

Overnight the raucous demand for American participation in a holy war against German fascism in the name of democracy has given way to fervent appeals to “Keep America out of war” — against Germany. For good measure — and for the benefit of dupes — the Kremlin agents have even begun to mutter something about socialism and to threaten to “vote against war credits” in “all the belligerent countries,” including, it is to be assumed, Hitler’s Germany if and when the Communist Party deputies are summoned from their concentration camps or resurrected from their graves to cast their votes in the Nazi Reichstag.

What is the real meaning of their new policy, which so sharply contradicts their pronouncements of yesterday, and whom do they expect to deceive by this obscene horseplay with revolutionary slogans?

The answer to that double question must be divided into two parts. The new policy is designed to serve a definite purpose in the service of the Stalin-Hitler alliance. At the same time, by giving the pro-Axis agitation a superficial radical coloration, they hope to make it acceptable to the workers whose interests and sentiments have been

so rudely violated. The new policy spells as sharp a turn of the American Stalinists in American politics as Stalin’s alliance with Hitler represents in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and reflects the latter like an image in a mirror.

Agents of the Kremlin.

The Communist Party of the United States is a direct and immediate agency of the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Soviet Union. All the otherwise incredible twists and turns and overnight reversals of policy are understandable only in the light of this relationship. The fraternal association of the various national Communist Parties in an international organization for the promotion of the common aim of world revolution — the original design of the Comintern — has long since been replaced by the arbitrary rule of Stalin over staffs of functionaries in the various countries, selected for their readiness to execute any order, no matter how infamous, without hesitation. This mercenary staff in the United States is now beating the drums for the joint policy of Stalin and his axis partner, Hitler.

The Stalin-Hitler pact, first explained as an innocent device to secure the neutrality of the Soviet Union, actually gave the signal for Hitler’s invasion of Poland. This has already been followed by the Red Army’s invasion, first of Polish Ukraine and White Russia [Belorussia] and now of large sections of Poland proper which Hitler’s

army had conquered. The partition of Poland has been carried out before our eyes by the amicable collaboration of Hitler and Stalin. What else is needed to confirm the opinion that the pact of Stalin and Hitler is in fact a military alliance, that Stalin has linked his fate in the world war now unfolding with that of Hitler?

Oppression, Not Liberation.

Is this a turn to the “Left,” as the Stalinist press, with monstrous cynicism, tries to represent it? Is Stalin, with the cooperation of Hitler, carrying “liberation” to oppressed peoples in other countries? What fantastic perversion of reality! The innumerable inhabitants in the concentration camps of Hitler and Stalin could tell a tale about this liberation if only their voices could be heard! A new and terrible oppression awaits the conquered people on both sides of the dividing line drawn by the swords of Hitler and Stalin, an oppression from which they will be finally liberated only when the new conquerors are overthrown by the workers’ revolution.

Stalin’s invasion of Poland, in agreement with Hitler, simply means that the Soviet Union has been drawn into the imperialistic adventures of Hitler and made responsible for them. The journalists of the *Daily Worker* are carried along in the military train to sanctify the “liberation” with “Marxist” formulas as conquerors of backward nations once carried priests to sprinkle holy water over the bloody conquests.

Changing the Line.

The task of the American Stalinists, as agents of the Soviet foreign office, is to switch around from pro-ally to pro-axis agitation. The whole apparatus has adjusted itself automatically to the new assignment. The “peace lovers” of yesterday — those who favored a war on the side of England — are now designated as warmongers. The

Stalinists now clamor for a new “peace front” of all those who, for one consideration of bourgeois interest or another, want to give no aid to the Allies, including the “isolationists” who until yesterday were described as “fascist agents.”

Roosevelt, who was lauded to the skies and supported uncritically in everything, as long as an alliance of the Soviet Union and the imperialist democracies appeared in prospect, is now looked upon with a jaundiced eye. Tomorrow, it is safe to predict, the *Daily Worker* will begin to criticize and oppose him, for Roosevelt has a firm allegiance to the democratic imperialist camp. He wants a war against Germany and there is no chance to change his policy by new explanations of the nature of the conflict. The Stalinists, who were the most vociferous advocates of a third term for Roosevelt, dropped the slogan like a hot potato on the day the Red Army marched to meet Hitler’s forces at the new line of partition in Poland.

The new line has already been transmitted to the CP fractions in the trade unions. The Transport Workers Union, the first organization under Stalinist control to hold a convention since the Stalin-Hitler pact, passed a resolution in favor of “New Deal” candidates in 1940, but forgot to mention the chief “New Dealer” himself. An oversight? Not on your life. Mike Quill, the Stalinist boss of the union, is a boy who catches on quickly. For him Roosevelt went out as soon as Hitler came in. This single incident throws a searchlight on the new course of Stalinist policy in the unions.

A Pseudo-Radical Twist.

What about the radical trimming of the new Stalinist policy?

A revolutionary policy in the struggle against was, as on every other question, proceeds from the class independence of the proletariat and its irreconcilable struggle against the capitalist exploiters of all camps and all countries, in the first

place against the capitalist exploiters at home. It is against imperialist war because it is against capitalism. It conducts this struggle independently of the transitory opposition of certain sections of the capitalist class to entry into a given war at a given moment. The latest pseudo-radical anti-war policy of the American Stalinists has nothing in common with this fundamental class position.

The revolutionary phrase-mongering of the Stalinist bureaucrats is only a new deception, a transitional mechanism designed to bridge the abrupt change from a pro-democratic to a pro-axis policy and carry the workers along. A revolutionary anti-war policy cannot be turned on and off like a faucet. It can be the expression only of a consistent, principled class-struggle activity carried on systematically under all conditions. It must be animated by a clear and comprehensive revolutionary theory; its execution requires moral qualities of disinterestedness, courage, and devotion to the cause of the proletariat. On all these grounds the unprincipled hirelings of the Stalinist apparatus are disqualified. In order to go forward to a revolutionary fight against war the militant workers must sweep this human rubbish from their path.

Charlatans Add to Confusion.

Stalin's invasion of Poland in union with Hitler has not only caused consternation and demoralization in wide circles, it has also created a certain demand for simple and ready answers to each and every new turn of events. Charlatans ready to supply these simplified explanations are not lacking. But the situation is one of unprecedented complexity. Light can be thrown on new incidents as they occur only if one keeps certain fundamental considerations in mind and thinks

every thought through to the end — that is, to its political consequences. Superficial and simplified explanations only add to the general confusion and serve reactionary ends. Usually they are so designed.

Such a malicious simplification is that which arbitrarily classifies the Soviet Union as a fascist state and explains the Stalin-Hitler pact as a natural union of “brown bolshevism” and “red fascism.” That formula leads to the conclusion that there is nothing left of the Soviet revolution worth defending, and then — as a rule — to a recruiting speech for the war of democracy (imperialist) against fascism. Revolutionary workers cannot accept this apparently simple formula which leads to such reactionary conclusions.

We do not identify the Stalinist bureaucracy with the Soviet Union any more than we identify a labor union with a gang of corrupt officials who have usurped leadership in it and betray its interests. We are for the Russian revolution and the economic system created by it. And precisely because of that the revolutionary workers, who are the only genuine and loyal defenders of the Soviet Union, conduct an irreconcilable struggle against the bureaucracy which, by its criminal policy, undermines the Soviet Union and leads it toward complete destruction.

Contemptible are those fakers who say that Stalin has established “socialism” in the Soviet Union and is now “liberating” the Poles and Ukrainians. But no less contemptible are the literary hirelings of the democratic imperialists who want to liberate the Russian workers from the Stalinist yoke at the point of British and French bayonets, as the Indian and Moroccan masses, for example, have been “liberated.”

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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