

The Stalin-Hitler Pact

AND

THE IMPERIALIST WAR

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The Hitler- Stalin Pact

The signing of the non-aggression pact between Germany and Soviet Russia is a new high stage of Stalinist treachery to the working class. A workers state may sometimes be forced to sign treaties with imperialist nations, democratic or fascist. This can be a question of tactics. But there is a world of difference between the treaties signed by Stalinism and the treaties signed in Lenin's time — a principled difference. The entry into the League of Nations, the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Non-Intervention Pact, the US-Soviet trade treaty, and now the Nazi-Soviet Pact are ALL steps of capitulation by Stalinism, betrayals of the international working class.

What are the concrete conditions and reasons that make the Nazi-Soviet Pact a further capitulation to imperialism and betrayal of the working class?

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PACT

On the eve of the signing of the pact, Europe was again approaching one of its recurrent crises, the outward signs of the death agonies of European capitalism. The surface struggle was between the imperialist robbers; but cutting across this struggle was the imperialist fear of wide-spread proletarian upheavals as a natural outcome of the predatory war.

Instead of being used by the imperialists as a pawn in their maneuvers, a healthy workers state, functioning in the interests of the oppressed of the earth, would seize this opportunity to issue a ringing call that at this moment in

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particular would resound throughout the world — a call to an unrelenting proletarian struggle against imperialist war, a call for the class war against the bosses war, a call that would strike terror into the hearts of the robber class and palsy the hands of these would-be butchers of the people. The call would come forth from the international revolutionary party; while the workers state itself would proclaim to the world its independent working class status, its scornful repudiation of any part in the imperialist war moves. A healthy workers state would seek to intensify and take advantage for the interests of the people of the antagonisms of the imperialists.

Did the Soviet Union under Stalinism point out this three cornered struggle of robber group versus robber group, and both against the proletariat? Did Stalinism point out the way for the workers? Did the Stalinist international issue a call to the struggle against war? No. Instead it attempted to continue its false policy of tagging along with the "democratic" dictators against the Fascist dictators, calling for a struggle against the fascist "aggressors" and lulling the proletariat to sleep.

But Germany had grown too strong. The disastrous defeat of the working class in Spain, made possible in no small degree by the Stalinist People's Front line, provided a new springboard for renascent German imperialism. Terrified at the perspective of confronting both Japan and Germany at once, at the thought of being "isolated" (to Stalinism the working class is only a tool; for "real allies" it looks only to this or that imperialist group), Stalinism redoubled its efforts to get a bloc with Britain against Germany. But at the same time, in anticipation of the possible failure of this strategy, Stalinism also began to lay the

basis for the other variant — a bloc with Germany against England. The "180 degree turn" of Stalinism was long in the making. It could have taken place months before, except that not Moscow but Berlin was determining the conditions for any bloc. What Germany was not yet ready to use a few months ago, became a master stroke of Hitler against the Anglo-French bloc under the circumstances of the present "Danzig" crisis.

HITLER WON, STALIN CAPITULATED

The pact enabled Hitler to further blackmail Anglo-French imperialism and to bring pressure on Poland to force her to terms. Stalin was not even permitted to retain the usual "escape" clause in his non-aggression pacts, generally to the effect that if either of the contracting parties commits an act of aggression, the second party is no longer obligated by the pact. It is true that neither side will keep its agreements, but the objective conditions favor Hitler. Hitler agreed on PAPER to PROMISES in the future; while Stalinism gave SUBSTANCE in the PRESENT.

What Hitler feared in the present was a war against the Anglo-French bloc on two fronts. With the Soviet army "neutral", with a concentration in the West, Hitler now has an enormously stronger hand against Poland. Today Stalinism makes it possible for Germany to take Poland and Hungary. Tomorrow Hitler will be at the gates of the Ukraine.

IN WHAT CONSISTS THE NEW BETRAYAL?

To the "democratic" imperialists and their propagandists, the betrayal of Stalinism consists in the doublecross of signing up with Hitler instead of with them. But from a working class viewpoint, there is no principled difference between the two. The Nazi-Soviet Pact is as much a betrayal as the Franco-

Soviet Pact or the Non-Intervention Agreement before. The difference is one of DEGREE. All were concessions of principle to imperialism.

To the working class the betrayal of Stalinism consists in its participation in the war moves on a WHOLLY IMPERIALIST BASIS, in that its policies are indistinguishable from the power politics of post-war Europe, in that it teaches the working class to depend for salvation — not on independent working class action — but on capitalist nations, "democratic" or fascist.

The workers state can not make trade agreements with capitalist nations during war or revolutionary periods. Such material and economic exchange in war periods amounts to political aid to these capitalist exploiters in their hour of need. Military agreements of the Workers State (not with colonial or semi-colonial countries fighting imperialism) but with imperialist nations are betrayals of the working class. Military agreements with imperialists will primarily be used against the working class of the imperialist country and secondarily for a struggle against the opposing imperialists.

By signing with Hitler, Stalinism has played into the hands of the "democratic" bourgeoisie who identify Communism and fascism, who point to the kinship of the Soviet Union under Stalinism with Nazi Germany. The prestige of the proletarian dictatorship has received a staggering blow; to the masses the word of the workers state under Stalinism is equally as perfidious as the word of Hitler or Chamberlain.

The signing of the pact with fascism, deadly enemy of the labor movement, is the beginning of an entire new line, which will be extended internationally. The old slogans of democracy

against fascism will go. We can expect to see adaptations in the structure of the Stalinist international as well.

The pact signifies a long step in the process of destroying the Soviet Union. It will be used to dull the vigilance of the workers in the Soviet Union. It will undermine powerful bases within the masses internationally for the defense of the Soviet Union. Jewish workers will turn away in bitter disgust. Polish and other workers whose nationalist spirit could have been brought into revolutionary channels will be driven to the right. The international labor movement will take another long step to the right.

We can expect that one of the unpublished clauses in the trade pact provides for technicians and experts to accompany the machinery which Germany is to send into the Soviet Union. As in Spain and China, these technicians will have a secret political mission as well from the Nazis — to aid and coordinate and attempt to take the leadership of the counter-revolutionary forces in the Soviet Union, to attempt to bring the counter-revolution under Nazi hegemony. The danger is all the greater because these agents will have a seemingly "legal" and "peaceful" mission, and will be COVERED UP POLITICALLY by Stalinism.

THE LINE'S BEEN CHANGED AGAIN

Many people who were not politically blind realized that the removal of Litvinov was a sign of steps toward Nazi Germany. The sudden announcement of the pact was stage-play. In reality it is the product of months of negotiations. The Imperialist powers through their secret agents knew of these discussions. Their "surprise" is for public consumption.

The Pact stunned the Stalinist followers

throughout the world. The turn from Peoples Frontism and the Democratic Front to the Fascist-Stalinist Front came overnight insofar as the members are concerned. The blow has already caused mass desertions. Unfortunately, not only Stalinism but the working class of the world is hard hit.

The opportunists, the political degenerates and the yellow Stalinist journalists are already proving that all is well, that it was a "master stroke" of the brilliant "leader". Each betrayal brings forth a new volley of lies.

Stalin's speech of March 10, 1939 has now been dug up to show the theoretical base for the pact. It was made at the 18th Party Congress of the Russian party, on which the FIGHTING WORKER at the time stated in part: "In a desperate effort to break out of this isolation there is no doubt Stalin is willing to make far greater concessions than ever before. His speech hinted at a possible rapprochement with Hitler." For exposing this pending sell out our members were bodily attacked by Stalinist hoodlums.

Yesterday Stalin framed and shot leading members of his party as German spies. It was "the great leader of the working class" who was maneuvering with Hitler. He was getting rid of those who might oppose this sell-out.

The R. W. L. predicted this development of a German-Russian bloc **three years ago**, in a detailed analysis published in the November, 1936 issue of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. Today, the ultra-lefts, hit by the "new" betrayal, point to it as additional proof that Russia is a capitalist state, etc. But our ability to correctly foresee this development three years ago rested on our analysis of Stalinism and on our analysis of the Soviet Union as a

warped workers state. We concluded from this analysis that Stalinism must be removed by a political revolution; that a new Marxian Party must be built in the Soviet Union before it is too late.

EFFECTS OF THE PACT

1. -- The pact was a heavy blow to the Anglo-French bloc. Even though it will end up as all pacts — as a scrap of paper — it has already done its service-for Hitler.

2. — Just to what extent the United States had a hand in the developments it is not yet possible to say. But it is clear that by weakening the position of Great Britain, the pact objectively aided her main rival, American Imperialism.

A year ago, at Munich, Great Britain made heavy concessions to Germany, mainly at the expense of France. She still hoped to bring Germany into line, still saw visions of a Four Power Bloc of Britain, France, Germany, Italy against the colossus of the west, the United States, on the one hand, and against the Soviet Union on the other. She still hoped to direct German expansion to the east, against the Soviet Union — under British hegemony of course.

But it was already too late for the declining British empire to achieve such a hegemony over Europe. It would involve an advance in position **over and above** the reconsolidation of the positions she has lost in the last decades.

Germany took the concessions, but drove ahead to establish her own position, with the aim of challenging Anglo-French supremacy, first in Europe and with a broader perspective for the future. However, despite the decline of her empire, Britain remains next to the United

States the great titan of post war imperialism. Within the imperialist arena, the great struggle is between these two. Germany cannot replace England without the major war that is in the offing, just as the United State needs that war to establish **her** world dominance. But that war will also give the working class the chance to replace them all. In the meantime, each blow by Germany against England objectively aids the relative position of the US.

3. — The pact was a blow at Japan who was counting on Russia being involved in the West so that she could mop up in the East against all, including Germany. Despite difficulties, however, Japan will make gains, always at the expense of and by taking advantage of the Anglo-American rivalry. England will now try harder than before to obtain an understanding with Japan. In this aspect, the pact was a horsetrade between Hitler and Stalin.

4. — Italy has been promised some of the gains in the deal, but again objective conditions have given Germany the greater share and the greater pressure in the Rome-Berlin axis.

Unless Hitler allows Italy to gather in a few crumbs, Engand's courting of Italy can be expected to get results. British pressure on Spain, increased suddenly although indirectly by the pact, has already succeeded in bringing Franco within reach of the British orbit.

5. — Now that Sudetenland is out of the way, Poland stands as the key obstacle to Hitler's march east. With Poland remaining in its present status as a second rate imperialist power, Germany cannot make an effective move east beyond its present position. Before Poland there was Sudetenland. Before the Ukraine and the Near East must come the fall

of Poland.

No doubt an "understanding" on the question of Eastern Europe was the KEY question of the talks that resulted in the signing of the pact. But Hitler will not keep his promise to Russia any more than he has honored previous agreements.

6. — The pact and the new relation of forces also signs a death warrant for the "independent" small countries of Eastern Europe not yet under fascist influence. Above all, Stalin's "go ahead" signal to Hitler condemns the millions of Jews of Central Europe to Fascism. The Stalinist-Hitler Pact aids Hitler against the workers and peasants of Central Europe.

7. — Should Poland fall without a major war, France will be reduced to a second rate power, with a perspective of sharpening internal class relations, continued and intensified decline, rapidly increasing moves toward fascism.

8. — Germany gained all the decisive points in this pact as she did at Munich. True, Munich gave Britain a breathing spell to catch up on military needs, and it is also true that the present pact gives Russia a breathing spell, although she would have had this interval even without the Pact since Hitler is not yet ready. Breathing spells through **capitulation** have weakened the working class base and support of the Soviet Union.

9. — Stalinism capitulated again, but the real losers are the Soviet workers and the world workers. Stalinism feared that Great Britain would turn Germany toward the Soviet Union, that is, from the Stalinist viewpoint, against the privileges of bureaucracy. To avoid this, she signed up with the Nazis. But the pact and the relations underlying it do not in any

way signify a warding off of imperialist attack. Playing the game of power politics, Stalinism can at best hope to be a tail to an imperialist lineup in a war, possibly such a lineup as American imperialism has envisaged long ago — the U. S., Germany, Russia. Such a bloc would be the most powerful imperialist bloc realizable. If concluded, it will be used against Britain, Japan, and others; but above all against the extension of the October revolution. Such a bloc will depend, however, not on Stalinism, but on American imperialism and its needs in the light of the developing relationships.

Hitler signed the pact with Russia not as a peace pact but as a WAR PACT. That will be its objective result. It is being used now as a WAR PACT against the Anglo-French imperialists by withdrawing a capable army from helping Poland. It is also being used as a WAR PACT WITH STALINISM AGAINST THE WORKING CLASS OF THE SOVIET UNION AND OF THE WORLD. The Non-Intervention agreement with Stalinism was also a CLASS WAR PACT OF ALL THE IMPERIALISTS WITH STALINISM and the leaders of the 2nd International against the Spanish revolution. It helped strangle the revolution. This Hitler-Stalin pact will further strangle the working class and further undermine the OCTOBER REVOLUTION'S PROPERTY RELATIONS IN THE SOVIET UNION.

By removing Poland, by undermining the internal conditions in the Soviet Union, with Stalin's help, Hitler will prepare the way for his counter-revolution in the Soviet Union.

THE STALINIST COUNTER-REVOLUTION-
ANY ROLE IN CHINA (1925-27) HELPED LAY
THE BASIS FOR HITLER'S RISE IN GERMANY.

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF STALINISM IN GERMANY HELPED LAY THE BASE FOR SPAIN. THE STALINIST COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ROLE IN SPAIN HELPED PAVE THE WAY FOR MUNICH AND FOR THE PRESENT PACT.

The Soviet Union now stands at the brink of violent and far-reaching upheavals, of internal CIVIL WAR. The working class must prepare to stand guard and rally to the defense of the Soviet Union against the imperialists and their Stalinist and other agents within. The Soviet masses need leadership above all, need a new Marxist party as part of an international revolutionary party.

10. — The Stalin-Hitler Pact, far from assuring peace, as the prostituted Stalinist press would have us believe, was a major factor in the Hitler war plans and the beginnings of the Imperialist War which we are witnessing.

Only a proletarian revolution can check this imperialist slaughter, even if a temporary "armistice" were possible.

The greatest unknown quantity is the Soviet Union, not because of Stalinism but in spite of Stalinism. The Soviet Union has the greatest internal contradiction, now coming to a head: the contradiction between the remains of the October property relations and the domination by the Stalinist imperialist agents.

The Spanish defeat is playing havoc with the world labor movement. The new Stalinist sell-out to Fascism will deliver more telling blows against the world's working class. All organizations will experience new internal struggles. The general decline will witness the increase of ultra-leftist tendencies. The Marxists through the INTERNATIONAL CONTACT

COMMISSION MUST RALLY ALL THEIR FORCES TO STEM THE TIDE, to push FORWARD against the stream.

The "democratic front" of Stalinism was as hollow as the fascist front of today. In fact, the democratic front paved the way for a Fascist Front. Only the INDEPENDENT ACTION OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST CAPITALISM, in both its democratic and fascist forms, can successfully smash capitalism and establish the rule of the working class.



RED ARMY INVADES POLAND

September 18 — By pre-arranged agreement with Nazi Germany, the Red Army of the Soviet Union has crossed into Poland to "liberate" the Russian and Ukrainians in Poland. According to reports Stalin and Hitler, as part of their "non-aggression" pact, have agreed to partition Poland between them, with a small buffer state in between the borders of the two large powers.

The invasion of Poland follows by less than 24 hours the issuance of a leaflet by the American Communist Party entitled "Long Live Poland" and calling for "unity of all in defense of freedom and independence of Hitler and the plots of Chamberlain."

While the two camps of imperialists are fighting for markets and colonies, Stalin is playing the game of one of the two camps. Instead of calling for peace, instead of calling for the workers on both sides of the trenches to overthrow their capitalist rulers, Stalin helps the war drive of Hitler by attacking the Poles.

STALIN GIVES OPEN WAR AID

Revolutionists are not in

principle against a Workers State sending its army into "foreign" territory. In 1919 the Red Army tried to march through Roumania in order to help the beseiged Hungarian Workers State. During the Civil War in Russia the Red Army marched into Poland. In each case, however, the steps were taken in order to free the workers and peasants in both areas from World Imperialism, from the misery and oppression of capitalism, to help them establish a Workers Society.

In the present case, however, Stalinism does not help the liberation of the Polish people. On the contrary, it has consigned them to the brutal terror of Hitlerism, by its present invasion, by its war pact with Hitler, by its anti-working class policy.

In Spain, Stalinism helped the "democratic" capitalists, France and Britain, smash the working class revolution. Now in Poland it helps Germany, the "fascist" power, in its war drive. Stalinism can play no role, other than a tail to either one or the other imperialist camp.

JAPAN TO GAIN TOO

The march into Poland fol-

lowed the announcement of a truce with Japan in the Outer Mongolian war. Two weeks ago Stalin's pact with Hitler was the "go ahead" sign to take Poland. Is the truce and a rumored non-aggression pact with Japan the "go ahead" signal for the Nipponese to take China?

The addition of a part of Poland into the Soviet Union on the Stalinist basis, rather than on the basis of proletarian revolution will increase the contradictions - and antagonisms within Russia itself. The capitalist elements inside the Stalin bureaucracy and the new Fascist ally of Stalin, Germany, will insist that private property relations remain in the newly conquered territory. The reorganization of the economy of this area, one way or the other, will bring the maturing crisis in Russia much closer.

This is Hitler's wooden horse, which he sends into the Red enemy city in order to undermine it. The Ukraine question will now become the key to Eastern Europe.

The invasion of Poland does not, however, make the Soviet Union a capitalist state, as some people will say. It merely means that in order to defend its constantly weakened posi-

tion inside the Soviet Union, Stalinism must make constant concessions to the imperialists, even to the point of giving them military aid in war time. Help to Hitler is no different in principle than help to France (which was pledged 4 years ago.)

Millions of Russian workers are now being given guns. Under the orders of the Stalinist generals they are being forced to use these guns to aid the Fascists. The rank and file Red soldiers must, however, and WILL demand the right to elect their own officers and generals, the right to prosecute a war in defense of the workers of Germany, England, France and Poland, rather than as a helpless tail to one or the other imperialist camp. Stalin's apparent strength — his military conquest — thus becomes his greatest weakness. From the right or the left, Stalinism is reaching its Waterloo.

The working class will continue to defend the Soviet Union from world capitalism and its Stalinist agents within Russia.

A detailed series of articles on Russia appears in the October issue of the INTERNATIONAL NEWS, organ of the International Contact Commission).

THE IMPERIALIST WAR

September 15 — The first week and a half of the war in Europe have not altered decisively the relation of forces in spite of the rapid gains of Germany in Poland. The attempt to finish off Poland in quick order and then sue for peace will not meet with success because once the war has been declared events move beyond the control of the capitalists themselves.

The gains of France on the western front from a military standpoint are of little value. They have not yet penetrated the Siegfried line. From the point of view of morale and preparations for a drive, however, these gains are important. Although the general opinion is that the allies are moving too slow, the fact remains that war mobilization and action in this war are far more rapid than in the last war.

Direct aid to Poland was out of the question after Stalin's capitulation to Hitler. And to take an open offensive against the siegfried line without proper preparations, and with the Italians holding to a "neutral" position, would be suicide from a military standpoint. Furthermore, remember England's

motto: "We are prepared to fight the Germans to the last drop of Polish and French blood.", the same motto which England has used with other people in other wars.

It must be understood that the Anti-Comintern Pact between Hitler, Italy, and Japan, although aimed at the Soviet Union and the working class, was primarily used against the western "democracies," especially Great Britain. It was an attempt to blackmail Britain into giving concessions. The capitulation of Stalin to Hitler does not change the double purpose of the pact. On the contrary the Pact has served its purpose well.

As to Japan and Spain repudiating the "pact" because of the Stalin-Hitler relationship, one can say that this is an excuse and not a cause. Japan's national interest, (despite the desires of the young generals who have just been removed from the saddle) lay not in a military alliance with Germany, but in "neutrality" such as that of the United States — in other words a free hand in Asia while the other powers fight in Europe. And if this were not possible

then in siding with the Anglo-French. The open declaration of war brought the internal struggle in Japan to a head, and the group that advocated this policy all along won. (See **FIGHTING WORKER**, Sept. 1, 1939).

As for Spain, her position was untenable at the very start. If she had joined Hitler her fate would have been sealed even sooner than Poland's. Devastated by the Civil War, with over a hundred thousand trained Loyalist Spanish troops in Southern France; cut off from supplies and aid from Germany and Italy; she would be easy prey for the Allies. Her "neutral" position is the life belt of national existence. This is so with or without the Stalin-Hitler pact, a pact which the capitalist understand is nothing but a scrap of paper insofar as Hitler is concerned.

The Italian neutral position is more complex. The Anti-Comintern Pact was not even brought out as an excuse. Italy's position is precarious. If she had joined at the start with Germany, she would have confronted the heavy blows of the French and British. She would have been the front line trench for Germany just as Poland is for the Anglo-French. Powerful French and British

pressure is being exerted. And in the end Italy, like other capitalist nations will sell out to the highest bidder. Her "neutral" position gives her a key position **IN THE WAR**.

Regardless of which group is gaining the upper hand, the German or British, the fact remains that so far Italian neutrality has **OBJECTIVELY** aided the Germans. Not only were the Anglo-French forced to change their whole military plan of attack, but Italian ships ply the seas and bring in all war supplies, which in turn are shipped to Germany.

Today, unlike the first world war, Germany has two life-belts of supplies. She has the Russia bread basket at her disposal and as long as Italy is neutral she has direct connections, without fear of the British blockade, to the entire world.

Turkeys' position is also very important. Russia, Germany and England are busy working for final action in Turkey. Her key position in near-east can alter important relations depending upon her final action. One thing can be said now. Whereas Italian neutrality or military support of Germany both aid Germany; Turkish neutrality aids

England at present, because of the unknown quantity in Italy. A declaration of war now by Turkey may be decisive to force Italy into the struggle with Germany. England has not given up hope of winning over Italy.

THE MOST IMPORTANT UNKNOWN QUANTITY

The Soviets, in spite of the pact with Hitler, in spite of Stalinism, still holds the key position in the European set-up. Stalin, in giving up the proletarian policy and resorting to the capitalist policy of power politics is trying to play the role that Mussolini has cut out for himself. Mussolini desires to hold the balance of power in the war of exhaustion by her Anglo-French as well as her German enemy. Stalin too hopes to do this. On this basis Italy has **NO CHANCE** of holding the top position in the European relation of forces because she is a secondary power, but she does have a chance of coming out of the war with one of the most important parts of the loot in the redivision of the earth. Stalin has not even a chance for the second aspect.

Nevertheless, whichever

way Stalinism tips the Soviet ship it will have far reaching effect on the whole outcome. An open military position in behalf of German Fascism is not theoretically excluded, no more than the present economic aid to Hitler was excluded yesterday. This economic aid, coupled with the agreement not to fight Hitler in the war is already a form of objective military aid.

THE UNITED STATES POSITION.

The development of the war in Europe will to the greatest extent now be determined by the action and position of the Soviets, Italy and Turkey, in the order of their importance. Any one or all of these three forces brought into the conflict in a different relation than their present "neutral" position will be an important new element in the conflict, above all the Soviets.

But more important that these three nations, insofar as the final outcome is concerned, not only in relation to the positions held in the European set-up after the war, but above all on a **WORLD SCALE**, for the redivision of the earth, is the position of the United States.

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There is no real dispute at the moment in United States over its war policy, in the camp of the exploiters. The dispute over Neutrality, with Roosevelt sure to win in spite of a Borah strong opposition, is important but not decisive. The only difference in the present law and the proposed ammendment is the difference between circumventing lots of red tape to supply war material for PROFITS. Under either law WAR MATERIAL IS SHIPPED TO EUROPE. And under either law the dynamics of the struggle in Europe, if a proletarian revolution does not make sport order of the war, will INEVITABLY draw American imperialism into the conflict. Senator Borah is correct when he says Roosevelt's road

will lead us to war. But he is wrong when he says to keep the present law is to keep us out of the war.

Either way America holds the key world position. And in spite of Japanese difficulties in Asia, her peace talks with Stalin are aiding her. Japan, on a world scale holds the second most important position for dictating HOW the world will be redivided.

United States is not only carrying on manuevers with Italy, but also with Stalin and Japan. This goes on while pro-British propaganda is flooding the country. Basically the Anglo-American antagonism will later be intensffied, rather than modified by the British-German war.