

The Meaning of the Non-Aggression Pact.

An Unsigned Editorial from *Soviet Russia Today*.

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WE stopped the presses at the last minute to give our readers the official text of the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany signed in Moscow on August 23, 1939.

There has been much confusion and some deliberate distortion of the meaning of this pact. The British Tories are enraged because the Soviet Union and Germany promised not to attack one another.

These hypocritical protests, and similar outcries from like circles in this country, may be taken as a

measure of the a desire of such elements to provoke Germany into war against the Soviet Union.

Speaking in Leningrad on November 28, 1937, Litvinov said:

Concerned with the maintenance of peace not only on a our own frontiers, but with guaranteeing likewise the security of all peoples, on the basis of the indivisibility of peace, we agreed to enter into regional pacts of mutual assistance and concluded such pacts with France and Czechoslovakia....

I regret to say that not all powers — not even the dominant powers — have shown the same sincerity, the

same consistency and the same preparedness as the Soviet Government to carry out measures for organized a peace....

They do not go beyond words and declarations, and 7: with words and declarations, you will not crush the a aggressors.

Events proved these misgivings to have been understated. Spain and Czechoslovakia revealed that the “dominant powers” — the democracies of Chamberlain and Bonnet — not only failed to offer any resistance to aggression but even a encouraged and connived with the aggressors.

In March, 1939, Stalin made his brilliant analysis of this situation:

The non-aggressor democratic states combined are



undoubtedly stronger than the fascist states, both economically and militarily. Such being the case, how can the systematic concessions made by these states to the aggressors be explained? This might be explained by fear of revolution which may break out should the non aggressor states become involved in war and should the war become worldwide. Bourgeois politicians know that the first imperialist world war brought about the victory of the revolution in one of the biggest countries. They are afraid that a second imperialist world war may also lead to the victory of revolution in one or several countries.

But at present this is not the sole, not even the main reason. The main reason is that the majority of non-aggressor countries, and primarily England and France, have abandoned the policy of collective resistance to aggressors. They have taken up the position of non-intervention, the position of "neutrality."

In actual fact, however, this policy of non-intervention is tantamount to connivance at aggression, to unleashing war — consequently, to its transformation into world war. Through the policy of non-intervention, there runs the eagerness, the desire not to prevent the aggressors from perpetrating their black deeds, not to prevent, say, Japan, from becoming involved in war with China, or still better, with the Soviet Union; not to prevent, say Germany from becoming enmeshed in European affairs, from becoming involved in war with the Soviet Union; to allow all belligerents to sink deep into the mire of war, stealthily to encourage them to follow this line; to allow them to exhaust one another and when they are sufficiently weakened, to appear on the scene with fresh forces...to dictate terms to the weakened belligerent nations. It is cheap and it serves the purpose....

Take Germany, for instance. They let her have Austria despite the obligation to defend Austria's independence; they ceded the Sudeten region; they left Czechoslovakia to her own fate, thereby violating every obligation and then began to lie vociferously in the press about the "weakness of the Russian Army," about "riots" in the Soviet Union, urging the Germans on to march further east, promising them easy pickings and egging them on — just you start a war against the Bolsheviks and then everything will go nicely. It must be admitted that this looks very much like encouraging the aggressor....

Some European and American politicians and newspapermen who lost patience waiting for the "march on Soviet Ukraine" are themselves beginning to reveal the real background of the policy of non-intervention. They openly state and write in black and white that the Germans have "disappointed" them cruelly, that instead of marching on further east against the Soviet Union, they have turned to the west, if you please, and demand colonies. One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were ceded to Germany as the price for an undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union, and now the Germans refuse to pay the note, telling their creditors to go chase themselves.

Stalin concluded this dissection of the treacheries of the dominant European powers with a warning:

Far be it from me to sermonize apropos of the policy of non-intervention, to speak of betrayal, or treachery, etc. It

would be naive to preach morals to people who recognize no human morality. Politics are politics, as old and hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked however, that the big and dangerous political game which adherents of the policy of non-intervention have started may end in serious failure for themselves.

It was in this speech that Stalin stated the foreign policy of the Soviet Union so clearly:

We stand for peace and for the strengthening of businesslike relations with all countries....

We stand for close and neighborly relations with all neighboring countries....

We stand for the rendering of support to nations which have fallen prey to aggression and are fighting for the independence of their countries.

And finally, but not least important,

We are not afraid of threats from aggressors and we are ready to deal two blows for one against war-makers who attempt to infringe on the integrity of the Soviet border.

To carry out this policy, said Stalin, it was necessary "to be careful not to allow our country to be involved in conflicts by instigators of war who are used to getting other people to pull chestnuts out of the fire for them, to strengthen the fighting power of our Red Army and Navy to the utmost; to strengthen our international bonds of friendship with the working people of all countries who are interested in peace and friendship between nations."

We recommend Stalin's great program of peace to those who seek a clear guide to recent events. Read the words of Stalin, then read the text of the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany. "Businesslike relations with all countries ... close and neighborly relations with all neighboring countries," and not forgetting these words:

"Support to nations fighting for the independence of their countries...bonds of friendship with the working people of all countries who are interested in peace and friendship between nations." Read also, and very carefully, from the same speech, Stalin's list of the elements upon which the Soviet foreign policy relies:

Firstly, its growing economic, political and cultural strength.

Secondly, the moral and political unit of Soviet society.

Thirdly, friendship among the peoples of our country.

Fourthly, its Red Army and Red Navy.

Fifthly, its policy of peace.

Sixthly, the moral support of the working people of all countries to whom the preservation of peace is of vital concern.

Seventhly, the common sense of countries which for one reason or another are not interested in the violation of peace.

With this preparation, read carefully the words of the non-aggression pact. It is just what it says — a pact of non-aggression. A pact against war. Germany promises not to attack the Soviet Union. Germany promises not to participate in any alliance aimed against the Soviet Union.

Our readers may have their own opinions as to the value of a Nazi signature. But there are the words, there is the promise not to attack; there is the declaration before all the world. It may be violated. Well, then, it is violated and, therefore, void. You may be sure that the Soviet Union does not depend on this pact or any other for the protection of its territory. Recall the words of Stalin: “Strengthen the fighting power of our Red Army and Red Navy.”

The Soviet Union gives reciprocal pledges. These are less important because the non-aggressive nature of the Soviet Union has long been displayed before the whole world. The Soviet Union never threatened to attack Germany. No responsible Soviet leader ever threatened an inch of German territory. The Soviet Union would never enter an aggressive alliance directed against Germany — as the anti-Comintern pact was directed against the Soviet Union. Molotov’s signature merely confirmed the traditional peace policy of businesslike and neighborly relations with all countries willing to observe the same relations toward the Soviet Union.

For this Hitler sent Ribbentrop to Moscow, Molotov did not go to Berlin. Clearly audible in the angry cries from the British Tories and Roy Howard is the fear of such a reversal of Munich, a terrible fear of such a victory of - Soviet diplomacy, such a tribute to Soviet power. The *Herald Tribune* says:

Stalin has suddenly and dramatically seized the whip hand over the whole negotiation to which the reality of Russian power perhaps entitles him, but it is not clear that he has decisively altered the basic orientation of his policy.

Elsewhere in the same *Herald Tribune*, Leland

Stowe exposed the hypocrisy of those who pretend to see the nonaggression pact as an “alliance between Nazism and Communism.” Before August 23rd the Soviet Union had nonaggression pacts with eight countries, of all political varieties ranging from Afghanistan to Italy. But, as Mr. Stowe points out, no one ever suggested that the Soviet Union and Italy “thereby became bosom partners for a universal ideological offense.” Yet this is precisely what the *New York Times* says in its alarm over the pact. Mr. Stowe remarks further “The U.S.S.R. and Poland have been linked by a non-aggression agreement for seven years and the Poles were joined to Nazi Germany by a similar compact during five of these years; but it was never assumed that Poland had sold itself either to Communism or Hitlerism.”

It would be possible to interpret the pact between the Soviet Union and Germany in terms of who likes it and doesn’t. The *New York Times* does not like it, the boy reporters on the *New York Post* and Mr. Howard’s editorial writers do not like it. The Japanese militarists hate it. It was not well received by General Franco. But despatches tell us that it had a fine reception in China. We can believe that millions of honest people in Germany will see in it the first break in the dark cloud of lies so long surrounding them. Ribbentrop flies to Moscow. The Nazis promise not to attack the Soviet Union. *Mein Kampf* is on the dust heap. The pact will appeal mightily to the great masses throughout the world. It is a pact for peace. It is not an alliance of Communism and Fascism. It is not an alliance of any kind. It is a stroke for peace — a brilliant stroke, a courageous stroke, a mightily successful stroke. The Associated Press admits it: “On the whole observers are giving Russia credit for having achieved a major diplomatic triumph. Moscow has maneuvered the Soviet Union into one of the strongest, if not the strongest, positions of any European power.” (And that goes for Asia too.) And what is this power to be used for? Our readers know the answer. It will be used for peace and for the benefit of all mankind.

Izvestiia, the official Soviet Government organ, commenting on the pact, says:

Ideological differences and differences in the political systems of the two countries cannot and should not stand in the way of the establishment and preservation of good neighborly relations between the two countries.

The pact does not remove these differences. On the contrary, both *Izvestiia* and *Pravda* took occasion to point out their existence the day after the signing of the pact. The pact does not bring a social revolution to Germany. Ribbentrop brought nothing to Moscow except an unnecessary number of “experts” and a fountain pen. The pact is signed. The Chamberlains and Bonnets are cheated. So what? Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden. But Ribbentrop flew to Moscow. Why? Because the Soviet people are united and the Red Army and Red Fleet are strong.

Munich was the way to capitulation, the way to war, to victory for aggressors and oppressors. Moscow is the way to peace, to liberation, to victory for humanity.

Non-Aggression Pact.

The Government of the USSR and the Government of Germany, led by a desire to consolidate the cause of peace between the USSR and Germany, and proceeding from the basic provisions of the treaty on neutrality concluded between the USSR and Germany in April 1926, arrived at the following agreement:

Article I — The Two contracting parties undertake to refrain from any violence, from any aggressive action and any attack against each other, either individually or jointly with other powers.

Article II — In the event that either of the contracting parties should be subjected to military action on the part of a third power, the other contracting party will not lend that power support in any form.

Article III — The governments of the two contracting parties will in the future maintain contact for consultation in order to inform each other on matters affecting their common interests.

Article IV — Neither of the contracting parties will participate in any grouping of powers which either directly or indirectly is aimed against the other contracting party.

Article V — In the event of disputes or conflicts arising between the contracting parties on matters of one or another kind, the two parties will solve these disputes or conflicts exclusively in a peaceful way through an amicable exchange of views or, in case of need, by setting up commissions for the settlement of the conflict.

Article VI — The present pact is concluded for a term of ten years with the provision that, unless one of the contracting parties denounces it one year before the expiration of this term, the term of the validity of the pact will be considered automatically prolonged for the next five years.

Article VII — The present pact is subject to ratification within the shortest possible space of time. The exchange of the instruments of ratification shall take place in Berlin. The pact comes into effect as soon as it is signed.

Done in Moscow in two originals in the German and Russian languages on August 23, 1939, signed on the authorization of the Government of the USSR by Molotov;

For the Government of Germany, by Ribbentrop.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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