

**PARTNERS**  
*in*  
**TYRANNY**

**THE**  
**NAZI - SOVIET**

**NON ~~AG~~GRESSION**

**P A C T**  
**August 23, 1939**

*by*  
**John Kolasky**

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*Dedicated to the memory of the  
millions of innocent people  
who perished as a result of the  
Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact.*

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*Mackenzie Institute*  
*Toronto*

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**PARTNERS IN TYRANNY**

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

August 23, 1989 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. Developments both in the Soviet Russian Empire and in the free world have focussed considerable attention on this controversial agreement. Results of the imposition of the terms of the Pact by the Russians were challenged in the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which were among the countries adversely affected by the implementation of its terms.

The following monograph is an attempt to present in broad outline the basis of the Pact, the events leading up to its formulation, and its terms, consequences and legacy. There is an avoidance of excessive detail on the day to day diplomatic manoeuvres. The aim is to outline the main elements of the relations between Russia and Germany in language that is understandable to the average reader.

The agglomeration of territories known as the *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, the *Soviet Union* or the *USSR* is being recognized as an empire, the Soviet Russian Empire, dominated by Russians and controlled by a highly-centralized government in Moscow. Consequently, the terms *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* and *Soviet Union* are misnomers because what was formerly the Tsarist Russian Empire is not a union and there are no actual republics.

The term *Soviets* as applied to either the empire, the government or the inhabitants is also meaning-

less. In Russian the word means "councils". The lumping of all the inhabitants of the various republics as *Soviets* does them a great injustice by denying their national origin which they strongly resent. The use of these terms is, therefore, avoided except in direct quotations.

In the select bibliography are listed the basic collections of documents and more important general titles that were used. An extensive bibliography is avoided so as not to overburden the average reader.

The author has relied on published sources, the most notable of which was the collection from the archives of the German Foreign Office, published under the title: *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941*. Some volumes of the *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, were also very useful. *The Incompatible Allies*, the memoirs of a German diplomat, Gustav Hilger, who served in Moscow during this period, throws considerable light on some of the events. For an understanding of the military aspects of the relations between Germany and Russia during this period John Erickson's exhaustive study, *The Soviet High Command*, was indispensable. Among the secondary sources, most useful were Rossi's, *The Russo-German Alliance, August 1939 - June 1941*, and Tolstoy's, *Stalin's Secret War*. Three articles by Carsten, Gatzke and Hallgarten were essential for an understanding of the Russo-German military relations during the Weimar period.

*John Kolasky*

Vancouver January, 1990



## INTRODUCTION

When in 1986 an organization calling itself the International Black Ribbon Day Committee announced its intention to use the anniversary of the Nazi-Soviet Pact to focus attention on the plight of its victims, the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa responded with Stalinist vituperation. In a news release titled "Hate Propaganda Day Sullies Canada", the document accused the organizers of "flirting with nazism and fascism" and spreading a "Goebbels brand of propaganda". However, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney sent a strong message of support to the rally on August 23, in contrast to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which had refused to air a commercial about the event - one that was broadcast by other networks.

Russian stonewalling over the Pact and its consequences lasted nearly 50 years, reflected in the West by communists and fellow travellers who rejected the existence of the secret protocols and made excuses for the Pact itself. Not until July 1989 did a Kremlin official, Valentin Falin, admit for the first time that the USSR acquired the Baltic States under the terms of secret protocols, protocols that had always been denied. The corollary is clear: Russian rule in the Baltic states, and indeed in all the occupied territories, is and always has been illegitimate. This was the reason why, on August 23, 1989 - the fourth Black Ribbon Day - some two

million Balts joined hands across their countries in a wonderful expression of defiance. On the same day, in Moscow, several hundred Russians were dispersed by police while attempting to demonstrate against the shameful agreement.

In this book John Kolasky has provided an outline of the Pact, described its implementation, and discussed its consequences. He brings to life the principal players in the high stakes game of power politics that began with Lenin's secret military cooperation with Germany, culminated in the Nazi-Soviet Pact and ended, so far as the principals were concerned, with Hitler's surprise attack on his partner, Stalin. Because the game has not yet ended for its other victims, this book is more than a history. It is living testament to the continuing struggle for freedom and dignity.

January 1990

*Maurice Tugwell*  
Director,  
The Mackenzie Institute

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

(between pages 88-89)

1. General Hans Von Seeckt, Chief of the German Army Command 1920-1926, who was the initiator and the guiding spirit behind the establishment of military collaboration with Russia after World War I.
2. On his arrival in Moscow on August 23, 1939 Ribbentrop is met by V. Potemkin, Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs (on right) and other Russian officials.
3. Stalin and Molotov beam as Ribbentrop signs the Pact. On his right are Skvartsev (Russian Ambassador to Germany) and Hilger. Between them in the rear is General Shaposhnikov.
4. Stalin and Ribbentrop smile as Molotov signs the Pact. General Shaposhnikov, Chief of Staff of the Red Army, looks on. Behind him is Richard Shulze, a member of Ribbentrop's retinue who was drawn into the picture by Stalin.
5. Congratulations are in order as Molotov sits down to sign the Pact.
6. Beaming with satisfaction Ribbentrop and Stalin pose after the signing of the Nonaggression Pact.
7. Hitler welcomes Ribbentrop with an ecstatic reception on his return from Moscow after the signing of the Pact.
8. Molotov being greeted on his arrival in Berlin on November 12 by Ribbentrop. Hilger is interpreting.

# Chronology of Key Events in Russo-German Relations 1920-1941

## 1920

April 16. - Russian representative in Berlin inquired about possibility of Russo-German military collaboration.

April 25 - October 12. - War between Russia and Poland.

## 1921 - 1923

Commercial agreements and Russian Concessions to Germans to build factories for the manufacture of planes, tanks, munitions and poison gas.

## 1922

April 16. - Russia and Germany signed Treaty of Rapallo.

August 11. - Secret agreement between the two powers to collaborate in the military training of the two armed forces.

## 1924

Germans built military training grounds in Russia for aviation, tanks and poison gas warfare.

## 1926

April 26, - Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality signed.

## 1928

Autumn - General Werner von Blomberg attended exercises of the Red Army.

## 1933

On the orders of Hitler all Soviet-German military cooperation ceased in the summer and autumn.

**1935**

December 21. – Bessonov, counsellor at the Russian embassy in Berlin declared at the German foreign ministry in favour of a "mutual nonaggression pact".

**1936**

November 1. – Rome Berlin Axis formed.

November 25. – Germany and Japan signed Anti-Comintern Pact.

**1938**

March 12. – Germany annexed Austria.

September 29. – The Munich Agreement signed.

October 1. – Germany occupied the Sudetenland.

**1939**

March 10. – Stalin declared at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Prty that Russia stood for friendly relations with all countries.

March 15. – Germany occupied Czechoslovakia.

April 17. – Merekalov, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, suggested to the German foreign office that relations might be improved.

May 3. – Molotov replaced Litvinov as Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

May 17. – Astakhov, the Russian Charge d'Affaires in Berlin, stated to Schnurre that there were no conflicts in foreign policy between Germany and Russia.

May 20. – While negotiations were taking place with the British and French, Molotov suggested to Schulenburg that the "political bases" be reconstructed.

June 15. – Astakhov informed Draganov, the Bulgarian ambassador in Berlin, that Russia favoured a nonaggression pact with Germany.

July 27. – Britain and France agreed to send military missions to Russia. On the same day there was a meeting between Astakhov and Schnurre at which negotiations for a pact began.

August 11. – British and French military missions arrived in Mosow.

August 17. – Molotow proposed to Schulenburg that nonaggression pact should include a "special protocol".

August 23. – Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact signed in Moscow.

Spetember 1. – German armies invaded Poland.

September 3. – Britain and France declared war on Germany.

September 17. – Red Army invaded territories of the Polish state.

September 29. – Estonia signed Mutual Assistance Pact permitting Russia to set up naval, military and air bases on Estonian territory.

October 5. – Latvia signed a similar pact with Russia followed by Lithuania five days later.

November 30. – Russia invaded Finland.

## 1940

February 11. – Russo-German Commercial Agreement concluded by which Russia to supply raw materials to Germany.

March 12. – Peace treaty signed with Finland.

April 9. – Germans invaded Denmark and Norway.

April – Massacre of Polish officers by the Russians in Katyń Forest.

May 10. – Germany launched attack on France through Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands.

June 16–17. – Russian troops occupied Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

June 28. – Five days after France concluded an armistice with Germany, the Red Army occupied Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

August 3–6. – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania incorporated into the USSR.

September 27. – Germany, Italy and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact.

November 12–14. – Molotov in Berlin for talks with Hitler and Ribbentrop.

**1941**

**March 1. – German troops entered Bulgaria after she joined the Tripartite Pact.**

**April 5. – Russia signed Friendship and Nonaggression Pact with Yugoslavia.**

**April 6. – German army invaded Yugoslavia**

**April 13, – Russia and Japan signed Neutrality Pact.**

**April 17. – Yugoslav army surrendered unconditionally.**

**June 22. – German armies invaded the Russian Empire.**

## ABBREVIATIONS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| CC:        | Central Committee   |
| Comintern: | Communist International   |
| CPSU:      | Communist Party of the Soviet Union   |
| DGFP:      | Documents on German Foreign Policy  |
| KPD:       | Communist Party of Germany  |
| NKVD:      | Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs (The Russian secret police, now the KGB) |
| NSR:       | Nazi-Soviet Relations   |
| RSFSR:     | Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic                                       |
| USSR:      | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics   |



# I COMMERCIAL AND MILITARY RELATIONS UNDER THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

The Russo-German Pact of August 23, 1939 was the culmination of the intricately involved relationship between Germany and Russia during the entire inter-war period. It was the logical outcome of a close collaboration between the two powers that had continued with minor interludes since the end of World War I.

Germany was regarded by Lenin and the Bolsheviks as the keystone of their international strategy. Policy was based on the conviction that the revolution would sweep westward at least as far as Germany where a left socialist group, the Spartakusbund, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, planned to foment a revolution on the Russian pattern. On December 30, 1918 a Communist Party of Germany (KPD) was formed by members of the Spartakusbund and other socialist elements. Karl Radek participated as a representative of the Russian Government.

In early January, 1919 a left-wing revolt broke out in Berlin with the participation of the KPD. Communist hopes ran high leading Liebknecht and Radek, according to unconfirmed reports, to sign a

Treaty of Recognition, Mutual Assistance and Cooperation between the Russian Soviet Federated Republic (RSFSR) and the German Soviet Republic on January 5, 1919 by which Russia was to recognize and assist the German Soviet Republic financially and militarily.

Ten days later Liebknecht and Luxemburg were arrested and murdered. The Russian Government continued its support of the KPD but when the prospects of a revolution faded it sought a rapprochement with the German Government which was not averse to an understanding with Russia.

The two defeated powers were drawn together by various common interests: political, economic and military. Both were outcasts from the concert of European nations, Germany as a defeated power and Russia as a Bolshevik pariah. Russia was regarded with particular disfavour and hostility especially for its policy of confiscation of private property including that belonging to foreigners, and for its support of international proletarian revolution aimed at destroying capitalism and private ownership.

Russia had raw materials which Germany desperately needed while the latter had the means and the capacity to produce manufactured goods including machine tools and capital goods. These Russia required to rebuild her war-torn economy and promote industrialization. German industry, on the other hand, could see few prospects in the

West; only commercial relations with Russia could revive the German economy.

The rapprochement and eventual close collaboration was also enhanced by a number of other factors. Both countries were opposed to the Versailles settlement and had accounts to settle with Poland. This created one of the strongest bonds between the two powers.

Historically Poland had played an important role in Russo-German relations. In 1772 Russia and Prussia participated in what is termed the First Partition of Poland followed by a second in 1793 and a third in 1795-1796 in which Austria was also involved. For a century and a half there were intermittent threats of intervention on behalf of Poland by West European powers. As long as this continued Russia and Germany were drawn together in the interest of exclusion of such intervention. After 1796 when Poland ceased to exist as a state and especially after the Polish insurrection of 1863, the common interest that bound Russia and Prussia dissipated and the two powers drifted apart.

Poland was restored to prominence in Eastern Europe after the First World War, becoming an outpost of the Western Allies by virtue of the Treaty of Versailles. Poland's territorial acquisition of what had been part of Germany made the latter a bitter enemy. But Poland also incurred the enmity of Russia.

Both powers claimed Galicia (Halychyna), Western Ukrainian territory which had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the autumn of 1914 the tsarist forces advanced against the Austrians and annexed Galicia to the Russian Empire, only to relinquish it the following year through military reverses.

With the collapse of the Russian and Austrian monarchies the Ukrainians in both the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian empires declared their independence, the first on January 22, 1918 and the latter on November 1, 1918. However, the superior forces of the Russian Red Armies overcame the Ukrainian National Republic and the Polish forces subdued and annexed the Western Ukrainian Republic.

Fearing an attack by Russia, the Poles, supported by Symon Petliura, former President of the Ukrainian National Republic, initiated a preemptive strike against the Russians by marching into Ukraine as far as Kiev, the ancient capital, which the Russians had occupied. When the Red Army reversed the military situation and marched into Poland as far as the gates of Warsaw, the Germans became excited. The collapse of Germany's enemy and a bastion of the Versailles Treaty appeared imminent. To aid Poland the Allied Powers sent munitions and military advisors. Germany placed a ban on the transit of munitions to Poland and in Danzig German dock workers refused to handle munitions destined for Poland.

The Poles succeeded in repulsing the Red Army advance. By the Peace Treaty of Riga March 18, 1921, Poland received Volynia (Volyn) and other Western Ukrainian territories. Galicia was assigned to Poland by the Council of Ambassadors on March 19, 1923 with the proviso that she guaranteed autonomy to the region.

The loss of territory, that had been part of the Tsarist Russian Empire, and the humiliation and loss of military prestige as a result of her defeat by Poland, strengthened the tenuous bonds that had already been developing between Russia and Germany. Poland, a small country, found herself hemmed in between two hostile powerful neighbours.

In 1921-1922 various commercial agreements were signed between Russia and Germany, several companies and a number of German corporations were set up in Russia. The most important of these was a tractor works and mechanized experimental agricultural station established by Krupps.

On April 16, 1922 the two powers signed the **Rapallo Treaty** which provided for the resumption of full consular and diplomatic relations. Russia renounced all claims for reparations and joined Germany in a pledge of peace and friendship.

The treaty was significant for the fact that it drew together two outcasts from western society in the face of the perturbation and hostility of the Allied Powers. It was tantamount to a political

According to Seeckt the nation would be vulnerable and at the mercy of Allied whims until it was able to bargain as an equal from a position of strength. And the only source of strength available to Germany was Soviet Russia. He believed it was possible to co-exist with the Bolsheviks and was even prepared to collaborate with them but on his own terms. Consequently, Seeckt was the initiator and the guiding spirit behind a policy of collaboration with the Russians. He declared that his policy was "to prepare for war and to strengthen the Reich's military position so as to enable it to use the next international conflict for the purpose of fighting for its freedom".<sup>4</sup>

The Russians appeared no less anxious for understanding and collaboration with the Germans. The first contacts between the German military and Russian representatives appears to have taken place in the second half of 1919 on the initiative of Karl Radek, a representative of the Soviet Government, who had come to Germany to attend the founding congress of the Communist Party of Germany.

On April 16, 1920 Victor Kopp, the Russian representative in Berlin, inquired outright in a conversation with Baron Ago von Maltzan, head of the Russian desk of the German foreign ministry, about the possibility of collaboration between the Red army and the German military. In December he started secret negotiations with German industrialists and military authorities for the rebuilding

of the Russian armaments industry under German technical management in return for Soviet aid to the Reichswehr. Lenin stimulated the secret talks by formally applying to the German Army for assistance in reorganizing the Red Army.<sup>6</sup>

On August 20, 1920, after the Russian defeat by the Poles, an old friend of Seeckt, a former Young Turk leader, Enver Pasha, who had been sent to Russia by Seeckt to make contact, reported that:

A party here... is in favour of a rapprochement with Germany... this party would be willing to recognize the old German frontier of 1914. And they see only one way out of the world's chaos: cooperation with Germany and Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

Later in the autumn of 1920 Seeckt organized a highly secret but efficient administrative organization within the War Ministry, Sondergruppe R, for the establishment of military contact with the Russians. In January, 1921 he sent Colonel Nicolai, who had been chief of the German Secret Service during the war, to set the stage for further military talks. Seeckt also informed Kopp that German military and industrial circles were interested in Lenin's offer of concessions on Russian soil.

The first stage in Russo-German military collaboration was the setting up of armament works in Russia by German firms. On April 7, 1921 Kopp reported to Moscow that he was carrying on negotiations with German armament firms and sug-

gested that a German technical mission should proceed to Moscow. A mission headed by Major Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, a career officer and a close associate of General Seeckt, visited Russia in early summer of 1921 as a representative of the German War Ministry.

This was followed in September by secret negotiations in Berlin between the Russian representatives, Victor Kopp and L. B. Krasin, Chairman of the Council of Foreign Trade, and General Paul Hasse, Chief of Truppenamt, the German General Staff, and other officers. These military and economic negotiations were approved by Lenin who characterized German arms factories in Russia as "concessions".<sup>7</sup> The essential point for the Russians in these talks was their wish to launch an attack on Poland, an undertaking for which they required planes. To meet this need they urged the firm of Junkers to set up operations in Russia.

On January 17, 1922 Radek returned to Germany with Major Niedermayer. On February 10 he met with General Seeckt to whom he submitted proposals for the revival of the Russian armaments industry with German assistance, for consultations between the two general staffs about military plans, and for the use of German military literature and instructions for the training of Russian officers.

At the beginning of July, 1922 a Russian agent named Rosenblatt arrived in Berlin and was received by Seeckt, and on July 29 a secret prelimi-



nary commercial agreement was signed. A related but separate agreement between the general staffs of the two armies was worked out in a series of negotiations and contained the details of plans for German military training on Russian soil. It was signed in Moscow in deep secrecy on August 1, 1922.

Simultaneously a provisional agreement was signed on the nature of the collaboration between the two armed forces. The Reichswehr asked for facilities:

To gain continuous experience in tactics, training and technical matters, to develop the theory and practice of forbidden weapons, to train higher personnel in the use of such weapons, to carry on weapon testing in battle conditions as an extension of the experiments in Germany, and finally to develop theoretical conclusions from such tests which would assist the planning of training and recruitment policies. Specifically there were three requests to be made of the Red Army. The first was for the use of military bases to exercise aviation, motorized troops and chemical warfare techniques. The second concerned freedom of action to conduct weapon tests and carry on tactical training. Thirdly, the Reichswehr asked for a full exchange of the results of the work in the military field.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning in 1922 the first German officers were sent to Russia to attend courses and Russians came

to Germany for the same purpose. German officers acted as instructors in the Red Air Force. Military manoeuvres of each nation were attended by the other's high ranking officers.

In the meantime the German War Ministry organized the Company for the Development of Trade Enterprises (GEFU). Under its supervision several German armament projects were set up in Russia. The most important of the military concessions was for the manufacture of planes. By an agreement signed on March 15, 1922 Junkers received a contract to establish plants for the production of engines and planes at Fili, near Moscow. German officers immediately proceeded to Fili and began work. The plant's annual capacity was 600 planes.

Other enterprises sponsored by GEFU included a factory to manufacture poison gases at Trotsk near Samara and installations by the firms Krupp, Daimler and Rhinemetall for the manufacture of tanks at Kazan. Contracts were also concluded by which Germany was to render technical assistance in the manufacture of ammunition in Russian factories at Zlatoust (Urals), Tula, Petrograd (the former Putilov Works) and Schluselburg.

A military agreement was drawn up in Berlin in August, 1923 with a Soviet delegation led by Rosenholts, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council and Chief of the Central Board of the Soviet Air Force.<sup>9</sup> As a result of this agreement 300,000

shells were produced for the German army and secretly shipped to Germany in 1926 in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. On the occasion of the arrival of the shells in Germany the *Manchester Guardian* published two articles (December 3 and 6, 1926) revealing some of the German involvements in military production in the USSR and caused a public sensation and considerable embarrassment for the powers involved.

Other and more important enterprises of the Reichswehr in Russia were those established for the training of officers in the use of weapons which Germany was forbidden to possess under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. These activities began in late 1922 and were supervised by 'Zentrale Moskau', the secret Moscow headquarters of Sondergruppe R and the Reichswehr. It had a permanent staff of German officers who looked after all the German personnel in Russia and German military establishments maintained there.

The Russians seemed anxious to expand the co-operation in arms production. Early in 1926 I.S. Unshlikht, the Vice-Commissar of War, arrived in Berlin in the greatest secrecy and made some rather ambitious proposals to Stresseman, Seeckt and other members of the German cabinet. He outlined plans for the construction in Russia of joint enterprises for the manufacture of heavy artillery, materials for chemical warfare and others, all of which the Treaty of Versailles prohibited the Germans from possessing and using. He also propo-

sed that officer training schools be connected with these enterprises.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to 1925 Russo-German military collaboration was limited almost entirely to the sphere of production for military purposes with Germany supplying the financial and technical resources and in some cases establishing German firms in Russia. However, in 1924 Germany embarked, in full collaboration with the Russians, on activities connected with the testing of war materials and with the training of German military personnel in the use of weapons and equipment forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>11</sup> For this purpose three military training grounds were established in Russia, one for aviation at Lipetsk, one for tanks at Kazan and one for chemical warfare at Saratov.

Germany was forbidden to maintain an air force. Consequently, 180 flying officers were taken into the Reichswehr and an air force core of experienced officers continued to exist. However, it was difficult to provide flying practice for these officers and even more difficult to train new recruits. The basic training of the future Luftwaffe personnel was conducted in Germany at schools that were supposedly training sport and commercial pilots. But these schools were only useful until training assumed a military character.

The Russians had a huge underdeveloped air field at Lipetsk, south of Moscow. By joint Russo-German efforts it was transformed in 1924 into a

large modern air base with hangers, construction and repair shops where engines could be tested, administrative and living quarters, a hospital and other facilities. The area of the aerodrome was wired off and guarded.

In 1923 General Hasse purchased one hundred Fokker D-XIII fighter aircraft from Holland. These were flown to Russia by a joint Russo-German company called Dereluft. In addition the German aircraft industry built new experimental craft which were first tested at the factories and then at a secret airfield near Rechlin under the auspices of the Reichswehr. As soon as the military character of these planes could no longer be camouflaged they were flown to Lipetsk.

Beginning in 1924 about sixty German pilots and flight instructors were attached to Lipetsk as basic flight personnel. During the summer the active flight group numbered as high as 100. Trainees were replaced every six months by others who had graduated from the basic training schools in Germany. The entire German outfit masqueraded as the "Fourth Squadron of the Red Air Force".

At least 120 outstanding German fighter pilots and 450 flight personnel, including reconnaissance and dive bomber pilots, were thoroughly trained at Lipetsk. As officers in later years, these men formed the core of Hitler's air force. Furthermore, Germany's aircraft industry took advantage of the opportunity at Lipetsk to consummate some of the

technical plans which otherwise could not have developed until Hitler started rearming openly.

At Lipetsk the industry perfected fighter planes, invented and developed dive bombers and tested and standardized reconnaissance planes. As a result of this work, Germany, which was prohibited from manufacturing any military aeroplanes under the Treaty of Versailles, developed prototypes of efficient all-metal war planes ready for mass production ten years before other major powers had them on their drawing boards.<sup>12</sup>

The two principal German uses of Lipetsk were: to give pilots and other air personnel their final training and to test and develop new war planes. According to General Helm Speidel, who worked in the administrative sector of 'Zentrale Moskau', Lipetsk's most important contribution was the laying of "the spiritual foundation for the future Luftwaffe in actual flying practice".<sup>13</sup>

In the final stage of their training at Lipetsk German reconnaissance pilots were allowed to participate in manoeuvres with the Red Army troops using artillery. As further compensation to the Russians for the bases, Red Army and Air Force officers and members of the General Staff were permitted to take part in the secret training programs organized by the Truppenamt which replaced the forbidden General Staff courses. Colonel von Blomberg, later Hitler's Minister of Defense, was one of the instructors.

Among the Russian officers participating in these programs were the later Chief of Staff, Marshal Tukhachevsky and the later Marshal Gregori Zhukov. During these courses the Russians were able to see and study all directives, tactical and operational studies, methods of recruitment and training and even the organizational plans of the illegal rearmament.

Beginning in 1925 Red Army and Air Force officers were invited to attend German war exercises, troop manoeuvres and weapons demonstrations. German army officers received the same privileges from the Red Army. To hide their identity when they appeared at Red Army manoeuvres the German officers came in civilian dress and were introduced as a "German Communist Worker's Delegation".<sup>14</sup>

Revelations in the *Manchester Guardian* regarding the shipment of shells and hand grenades to Germany from Russia made the two powers more cautious. However, military collaboration was intensified after 1926. As one observer of the events later wrote:

Stressman gave his approval to the continued operation of the schools at Lipetsk and Kazan. German scientists were sent to Orenburg to assist in chemical warfare experiments... It was not long before more German officers were coming through *Zentrale Moskau*... although greater care was taken to camouflage them as civilians... German officers of the highest rank visited

the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup>

The Russians were most anxious to please the Germans. In 1927 six German officers attended the Russian autumn manoeuvres. According to the German consul in Kiev the reception was very warm and the officers were allowed to see what they wished. A senior Russian officer revealed to the consul that:

We have received an order from Moscow which has done more than amaze us. We are to show the German officers everything. In carrying out this order we are showing the German officers more than we let our allies get their eyes on during the war.<sup>16</sup>

Further proof that German officers obtained access to the inner circle of the Soviet command and "acquired a not inconsiderable insight into Soviet military methods as a result of the collaboration" was a report on the Red Army compiled in the spring of 1928 by Colonel Mittelberger.<sup>17</sup>

In the autumn of 1928, on the invitation of the Russian Government, General Werner von Blomberg, head of the Truppenamt, attended the exercises of the Red Army, inspected the tank school at Kazan, the aviation training centre at Lipetsk and the experimental gas centre at Trotsk. According to this report he found that the gas school was well organized but experiments were behind schedule. The Russians showed a great interest in this work and an agreement was reached on the



expansion of the facility. Voroshilov emphasized the gas experiments and tests with gas shells and gas grenades, expressing the wish that the tests should go on through the winter.<sup>18</sup>

He was also an enthusiastic partisan of close collaboration with the Reichswehr. The reason was the Polish question. According to Blomberg, Voroshilov stated that:

Not only in the name of the Red Army, but in the name of the Soviet Government, I should like to state that in the event of a Polish attack on Germany, Russia is ready with every assistance. Can the Soviet Union count on Germany in the case of a Polish attack?<sup>19</sup>

The Polish question was constantly being raised by the Russians. On February 10, 1930 at the signing of a preliminary agreement between Rhinemetall and the Russian Government, General I.P. Uborevich, under the influence of vodka, asked:

Will we not be ready now in two years to carry out the frontier adjustments and kill the Poles? After all we must again partition Poland.<sup>20</sup>

The Russo-German cooperation also extended to the navy. During 1929 there were discussions regarding the setting up of a naval aircraft plant by the Sea of Azov and a second naval air station on the Black Sea. In December, 1929 a German naval

mission made a five-day tour of the Soviet Naval Academy and other naval training establishments. In March, 1930 a Russian naval delegation visited German naval establishments.

In August and September, 1929 several leading members of the Reichswehr spent six weeks on a tour of Russian military facilities. They participated in the autumn exercises of the troops of the Ukrainian military region, spent two weeks observing the manoeuvres and attended a conference with Voroshilov. On September 5, accompanied by four officers, Blomberg arrived in Kiev to participate in the manoeuvres. After his first visit to Russia as head of the Truppenamt in 1928, the visit of the head of that body to Russia for contact with the Russian High Command became an annual event up to and including 1932.<sup>21</sup>

And so two powers, Germany and Soviet Russia, which had been at war with each other only a few short years previously, were drawn together in opposition to the European settlement imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. Their cooperation included the establishment of various military facilities on the territory of Russia to rearm Germany and train the core of her army and air force.

German companies set up factories in Russia to manufacture planes, tanks, guns, ammunition and poison gas. The Russian Government provided an air field to test planes and train pilots, and proving grounds to test tanks, other military weapons and

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poison gas – all in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles which forbade Germany to rearm.

## II RELATIONS WITH THE NAZI REGIME 1933 – 1938

The growing economic crisis in Germany in the early 1930s with its mass unemployment was accompanied by growing political instability and sharp polarization. On the extreme left stood the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and on the other extreme the National Socialist Party headed by Adolf Hitler, as the main protagonists.

The Social Democratic Party which had more support than the Communist Party, embraced a program of social reform to improve the conditions of the labouring masses within the framework of the constitution. The KPD, which advocated the revolutionary overthrow of the existing order, nurtured an implacable hatred for the social democrats which dated back to 1919 when the latter participated in the suppression of communist attempts to establish Soviet power in Germany.

The communist position regarding the social democrats was laid down at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1928. The communist parties were competing with the social democrats for labour support, regarded the latter as the greatest enemy and labelled them “so-

cial fascists". In Germany the rivalry was especially sharp and the social democrats were regarded as a greater evil than the Nazis.

This was clearly underlined in the report of S.I. Gusev to the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern on September 8, 1932:

It may seem that in Germany at the present time... the chief social bulwark of the bourgeoisie is fascism, and that therefore we should deal the main blow against fascism. This is not correct... first because fascism is not our chief enemy in the worker's movement, but social fascism is our chief enemy in the worker's movement... It means that to win over the majority of the proletariat, i.e. to prepare the basic condition for the proletarian revolution, it is necessary to direct the main blow against social fascism.<sup>1</sup>

All appeals by the social democrats to the communists in Germany to unite against the Nazi menace were rejected. In April, 1931 when a right wing sponsored referendum was held to break the social democratic control of the Prussian Government, the communists voted with the right to topple the social democrats.

In the general elections of November 6, 1932 the Nazi vote declined. The communists saw this as a sign that the Nazi threat had passed. Having increased their own vote they intensified their attacks on the social democrats. In desperation the

latter repeatedly appealed to the Russian embassy to exert pressure on the communists to cooperate against the Nazis. The answer was always negative. In January 1933, less than two weeks before Hitler became chancellor, the attache of the Russian embassy in Berlin, Vinogradov, replied to a request for a common front between communists and social democrats against Hitler that:

Moscow is convinced that the road to a Soviet Germany leads through Hitler.<sup>2</sup>

In Moscow the official view was that Hitler could not last long. According to one observer:

One day after Hitler assumed the office of Reich Chancellor, *Izvestia* wrote that the moment was near where the struggle for power among the capitalist factions could turn into open class war, and as late as March, 1933, Radek assured the readers... that the National Socialists had won only an illusory victory. On the basis of such considerations certain circles within the Soviet Government actually gave silent welcome to Hitler's accession to power because they believed he could not last long, and that his fall would speed the development of a proletarian revolution in Germany.<sup>3</sup>

When it became clear that Hitler was consolidating his power and becoming entrenched, apprehension was aroused in Russian and German communist circles fuelled by the rabid anti-communist propaganda and the reign of terror against the

KPD.

What troubled the Russians was not the attacks on the Communist Party and the murder of thousands of party members, but the danger of a German attack on Russia. After all, they had been helping to arm Germany and train her forces for a decade and were aware of its military potential.

The Russians were careful not to antagonize Hitler. There was a tendency on both sides to pretend that nothing had happened to alter relations between the two states. On March 4, 1933, as a gesture of goodwill, *Pravda* consoled its readers with the comment that the USSR was the only major country which was not hostile to Germany and added that "only fools on the throne" would want to poison Soviet-German relations and isolate Germany completely.

On March 23 Hitler expressed a desire to maintain friendly relations with Russia and added that the struggle against Bolshevism in Germany had no bearing on their relations. Immediate events seemed to bear out Hitler's declaration but it was clearly evident that Hitler was calling the tune. In April the renewal of the Berlin Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality, first signed on April 24, 1926, was ratified by the Reichstag. On April 28, Khinchuk, the Russian ambassador in Berlin, was received first by Goering and then by Hitler and given assurances that there would be no change in relations between the two states which were bound by eco-

conomic ties and common enemies. Litvinov expressed his gratification to the German ambassador in Moscow.

In May, 1933 a high ranking German military delegation headed by General von Brockelberg, was welcomed in Moscow by Klementi Voroshilov, the Commissar of Defence, who expressed the hope that ties linking the German and Red armies would remain intact. However, in the summer and autumn of 1933, on the orders of Hitler, all Soviet-German military cooperation was interrupted and all German army installations were closed down to the openly-expressed regrets of Voroshilov and Tukhachevsky.

Other contacts, however, were maintained. In 1933 Lev Lebedev, a party functionary, visited Germany on secret party business and as early as 1933-1934 the NKVD sent agents to Germany to study Gestapo techniques<sup>4</sup>.

In 1933 the Russians also embarked on a policy of courting the democracies supposedly to form an alliance directed against Germany while, at the same time, keeping the door open to an understanding with the Nazis and cultivating every possible contact.

On November 16, 1933 the USSR established diplomatic relations with the USA; on September 18, 1934 the USSR became a member of the League of Nations and on May 2, 1935 France and Russia



signed a pact of mutual assistance. Simultaneously the Comintern was forging a united front against fascism with the social democrats and left-leaning liberals while Litvinov was campaigning for collective security against Nazi aggression.

There were thus two foreign policies, one openly calling for collective security against Nazi expansion, the second secretly but persistently working to promote a Russo-German rapprochement. The policies of Litvinov were only a smokescreen which obscured Stalin's real desires and intentions.

Behind the drive for an understanding with Hitler was Stalin himself. According to Leon Gelfand, a former counsellor at the Soviet embassy in Rome, who defected to the United States in 1941:

Stalin had been obsessed with the idea of an agreement with Germany since 1933.<sup>5</sup>

On August 17, 1933 Abel Enukidze, secretary of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, remarked to Dirksen, the German ambassador in Moscow, obviously on instructions from above, that "the National Socialist reshaping could have favourable consequences for German-Soviet relations", expressed "complete understanding of the development in Germany" and pointed out the common lines of development and analogous traits between German National Socialism and Soviet Communism.<sup>6</sup>

There were other overtures urging the renewal of

friendly relations. On November 6, 1933 Tukhachevsky remarked to von Tvardowsky, counsellor at the German embassy in Moscow, that it could never be forgotten that the Reichswehr had helped to train the Red Army which would heartily welcome the renewal of collaboration. New overtures were made to German officials in January, 1934 by Voroshilov and Chief of Staff, Egorov, only a month after Hitler announced in December, 1933 that Germany had to rearm because it was the West's bulwark against communism.

After the events of June 30, 1934 when Hitler had a number of his former henchmen eliminated (the night of the long knives), Stalin declared at a meeting of the Politburo that "the events in Germany do not at all indicate the collapse of the Nazi regime". The Politburo decided "at all costs to induce Hitler to make a deal with the Soviet Government".<sup>7</sup>

And while the policy of collective security was being publicly pursued on the international arena and the Russian press was denouncing the Nazi regime, Kalinin, the President of the USSR, declared to Count von Schulenburg, the new German ambassador in Moscow, that:

The outcries in the press should not be given too much importance. The German and Soviet people are linked by many different ties and depend on one another in many ways.<sup>8</sup>

The cynicism with which the Russians carried on the press campaign was revealed by Radek. He explained to W.G. Krivitsky, the director of Russian Military intelligence in Western Europe, that:

What I am writing is one thing – the realities are something else. No one can give us what Germany has given us. For us to break with Germany is simply impossible.<sup>9</sup>

Gustav Hilger, an official of the German embassy in Moscow, related another very interesting incident in this connection. In the spring of 1935, when he visited Kiev, the German Consul there gave a reception in his honour. Among the guests were Vasilenko, Chairman of the Kiev Regional Executive Committee, and Pevzner, President of the Ukrainian State Bank. According to Hilger, Vasilenko told him in the presence of Pevzner that

some workers had come to him not long ago to tell him that they could not understand the current party line concerning Germany. After all Germany was only trying to liberate herself from the oppressive fetters of Versailles. But instead of aiding her to do so, the Soviet Government was making a pact with Germany's oppressors. In short, said Vasilenko, Litvinov's policy does not convince the masses, and history will soon pass over Litvinov.<sup>10</sup>

These were obviously not the sentiments of "workers" or of Vasilenko. Anyone voicing unauthorized opinions on policy in the USSR, and

especially in the 1930s and in the presence of a third party ended up in the GULag or before a firing squad.

Hitler's denunciation of the Versailles disarmament clauses on March 16, 1935 did not slacken Russian advances for closer collaboration. On July 16, David Kandelaki, the Russian trade representative in Berlin, who was conducting trade negotiations, raised with Hjalmar Schacht the question of improving political relations.

In a visit to the German foreign ministry on December 21, 1935, Bessonov, counsellor at the Russian embassy in Berlin, declared that it would be desirable to supplement the 1926 neutrality pact between Germany and Russia with a "mutual non-aggression pact".<sup>11</sup> This is the first time that the Russians had proposed a nonaggression pact to Nazi Germany.

Evgeny Gnedin, son of A. Gelfand (Parvus), a former Russian journalist and diplomat, and first secretary in the Berlin embassy in 1935-1936, has confirmed that in Moscow the attitude to Germany did not conform to the impression made by official Russian propaganda. He wrote that:

I remember that we members of the Berlin embassy staff were somewhat taken aback when Eliava, the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Trade, who was passing through Berlin (in 1936 as I recall) and who had access to Stalin because of long-standing

personal ties, gave us to understand that "at the top" Hitler was viewed "differently" than he was in the Soviet press or by the Soviet embassy staff in Berlin.<sup>12</sup>

Bessonov again raised the question of a pact, this time with Hencke, a high-ranking German foreign ministry official, in July, 1936. The latter explained that his government's view was that nonaggression pacts were only possible between states that shared a common frontier.<sup>13</sup>

The signing of an economic agreement between Germany and Russia in May, 1936 convinced Stalin that the Germans were positively disposed to collaboration. He told Nikolai Yezhov, chief of the Russian secret police that "In the immediate future we shall consummate an agreement with Hitler".<sup>14</sup>

In December, 1936 A.A. Slutsky, chief of the foreign division of the Russian secret police, confided to Krivitsky that:

We have set our course towards an early understanding with Hitler and have started negotiations.<sup>15</sup>

Tension between Germany and Russia was at its height in the years 1936 - 1937. On July 17, 1936 the Spanish civil war began; on November 1, 1936 the Rome - Berlin Axis was announced; on the 24th of the same month Germany and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact. There were also Hitler's vitriolic anti-Bolshevik speeches in the Reichstag.

None of these events slowed down the Russian advances to the Germans.

In December, 1936 and February, 1937 David Kandelaki, the Russian trade negotiator and Stalin's personal agent, and Frederichson, an NKVD agent, met Schacht. The two agents, who worked independently of Litvinov, revealed that they had been entrusted by Stalin and Molotov to present the latter's views. Kandelaki then read a statement to the effect that the Russian Government had never placed obstacles in the way of political talks with Germany, that Russian policies were not in any way directed against German interests and that the Russian Government was ready to enter into negotiations concerning the improvement of German-Russian relations.<sup>16</sup>

Events were reaching a crisis stage in Central Europe in the midst of these Russian overtures to Germany. The multinational state of Czechoslovakia was created in 1919, a child of the Treaty of Versailles. It was strategically located in Europe and had defensive alliances with France and Russia.

The victorious powers had included in the new state about three and a quarter million Germans who had been part of the Austrian Empire. Dissatisfied with being citizens of a Slav state, they continually complained of various forms of discrimination. By 1938, under the influence of the growing power of Nazi Germany, a strong movement developed among the majority for union with

the Reich.

Having occupied Austria on March 12, 1938, Hitler turned his attention to Czechoslovakia. In September, he declared that the plight of the Germans there was intolerable and must be remedied and demanded the secession to Germany of all territories inhabited by Germans. Neither Britain nor France was willing or prepared for a military confrontation with a rearmed Germany, and especially in the interests of maintaining a large German minority within the Czechoslovak state.

In France the strong labour movement would not pressure the government for any action in defence of Czechoslovakia. The French newspapers created "a state of feeling in which resolute action against German aggression became almost impossible".<sup>17</sup>

However, as a result of the purges in the Red Army in which Marshal Tukhachevsky, Deputy Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, and seven other top army officers were executed in June 1937, followed by a mass purge of the officer corps, neither the French nor the British governments nor the Germans, for that matter, took very seriously the possibility of Russian effectiveness in any military confrontation. General Maurice Gamelin, the Commander-in-Chief of the French army, reflected the prevailing skepticism when he asked:

But what can one expect from it (the Russian army) after generals and higher officers have been put to death by the thou-

sands?<sup>18</sup>

And Neville Chamberlain, in a letter to his sister in March, 1939 wrote that:

I must confess to the most profound distrust of Russia. I have no belief whatsoever in her ability to maintain an effective offensive... I distrust her motives which seem to me to have little connection with our ideas of liberty... Moreover, she is both hated and suspected by many of the smaller states, notably Poland, Romania and Finland.<sup>19</sup>

After a series of crises the dispute was settled at a conference in Munich on September 29, 1938 attended by Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier. Russia and Czechoslovakia were not represented because they had not been invited by Hitler who had called the conference. Hitler's demand for the secession of the entire Sudeten territory, inhabited by Germans, was accepted by the participants and forced on the reluctant Czechs. On October 1 the German forces began to occupy the Sudetenland.

The Russians had repeatedly and vehemently declared their readiness to act in concert with Britain and France in defence of Czechoslovakia. Neither the British nor the French took these declarations seriously. Viscount Chilton, the British ambassador in Moscow, reported on April 19, 1938 that:

I personally consider it highly unlikely that



the Soviet Government would declare war merely in order to fulfill their treaty obligations or even to forestall a blow to Soviet prestige or an indirect threat to Soviet security, such for example, as the occupation by Germany of a part of Czechoslovakia.<sup>20</sup>

The Kremlin leaders were well aware that neither the British nor the French, nor they themselves, were prepared to confront Germany militarily; that no aid could arrive in time to halt the German forces massed on the Czechoslovak border; that they had no access route to Czechoslovakia either through Rumania or Poland and could not come to Czechoslovakia's aid; and that they faced a threat in the East from Japan and could not risk military confrontation on two fronts. Moscow expressed its readiness and eagerness to come to Czechoslovakia's aid knowing full well that neither the British nor the French would intervene and that consequently they would be absolved from confronting Germany alone.

Moreover, the Russians did not even make the most preliminary preparations for any potential military action. The Germans were carefully monitoring the situation in Moscow. Stalin was sending Hitler an unmistakable signal, loud and clear. On October 3, counsellor of the German embassy in Moscow, Tuppelskirch, reported that:

Nothing special was observed by us here during the critical days. Whereas other governments adopted preliminary meas-

ures of mobilization, the Soviet Government does not seem to have done anything of the sort.<sup>21</sup>

A week later Tippelskirch further reported that: The Soviet Union also neglected to take such preliminary measures of mobilization as was considered necessary for instance, in Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. Considering that the Soviet Union was under an obligation to render assistance to Czechoslovakia, this attitude must seem particularly striking.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly, the Germans read the message. Moscow was not preparing for any military confrontation with the Reich but rather was continuing its efforts to achieve an understanding and a rapprochement with Hitler. Efforts to this end had been going on long before Munich, but Munich seems to have been a turning point in Russo-German relations. After Munich the two dictators drew closer together. Hitler had disposed of the Czech question. Poland was next on the agenda. But for this he needed Stalin.

The latter was taking new measures to smooth the way and promote an understanding. Tippelskirch reported on October 10 that:

A new purge appears to be taking place in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. The director of one of the Western departments has already been axed and also some heads

of sections of the Western departments have disappeared. The head of the Press Department, Gnedin, has not yet returned from leave. There are also rumors about the head of the Protocol Department, Barkov. According to our observations the same mood of depression prevails in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs at the present time as was noticeable on the occasion of previous purges.<sup>23</sup>

Few were escaping the new purge. David Kandelaki, who was already under a cloud in 1938, was arrested and likely executed. On May 1, E.V. Gershfeld, former counsellor of the Russian embassy in Paris, was taken into custody. Litvinov's personal secretary, Nazarev, was arrested shortly after the foreign commissar's dismissal. On May 10, Gnedin and his deputy, G.N. Schmidt, were arrested. So were M.A. Plotkin, head of the finance department and F.C. Weinberg, head of one of the Western departments.<sup>24</sup> On his way to the GULag, Gnedin met in one of the transit camps Astakhov, the former Charge d'Affairs in Berlin, who later died in the camps.<sup>25</sup>

Already in 1938 Stalin was purging the commissariat of Litvinov's men, men steeped in the concept of "collective security" which had been directed against Germany. The purge in the Munich Crisis, the event that should have been the centre of Moscow's attention, was also significant and also carried a distinct message to Hitler.

### III

## FORGING THE PACT

After the Munich Agreement Litvinov's hopes of achieving collective security suffered a complete collapse and Russian policy openly veered in a new direction. Tension between Russia and Germany began to ease in the late summer of 1938 and mutual recriminations gradually subsided. A German-Russian trade agreement was signed in Berlin in late December. New advances for the improvement of relations were made by the Russians with Stalin himself taking the initiative.

On March 10, 1939, reporting to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Stalin denounced the Western Powers for their attempt to incense Russia against and provoke a conflict with Germany. He defined the policy of the USSR as one of "peace and strengthening business relations with countries" and not allowing itself "to be drawn into conflicts".<sup>1</sup>

There was no more talk of stopping aggression. Stalin was giving Hitler a strong hint that he was open for a Russo-German agreement. Five days after Stalin delivered his report, German troops occupied Czechoslovakia. The report apparently

contributed to a preparation for an understanding. In a speech on April 28, devoted to an attack on Poland, contrary to custom, Hitler did not utter any words of abuse of Russia and Bolshevism.

Meanwhile, on April 17, Merekalov, the Russian ambassador in Berlin, in an interview with Baron von Weizsacker, the German State Secretary, remarked, as reported by the latter, that:

There exist for Russia no reason why she should not live with us on a normal footing. And from normal the relations might become better and better.<sup>2</sup>

The consummation of a pact with Hitler had been on Stalin's agenda for some time. Obviously, any pact with Germany would affect Poland which, after occupation of Czechoslovakia, would be next on Hitler's schedule. The Polish communists would naturally object to the carving up of their country. Consequently, a mass purge of Polish communists living in Russia was carried out between 1937 and 1939. About 50,000 were executed including all twelve members of the central committee. Party leaders still in Poland were invited to Moscow for "consultations". They also perished. And in June, 1938 the party itself was dissolved by the Comintern.<sup>3</sup> Those Russian leaders who could have opposed a pact with Hitler, like Bukharin, were also liquidated.

Russian advances to Hitler were slow in evoking the desired responses. A more dramatic scenario

was then staged. But first it was necessary to make the appropriate preparations. A purge had been in progress in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs since the preceding summer. On May 1 the *Journal de Moscou*, a French language publication which reflected the policies of Litvinov, was suppressed.

Then came a more dramatic move. At the May Day parade in Moscow Litvinov was seen on the reviewing stand in Stalin's closest entourage. On May 2 and 3 he was negotiating with the British ambassador, Sir William Seeds. Then on May 4 Stalin sent another message to Hitler. He pulled the rug from under the negotiations with the British: Litvinov was dismissed and replaced by Molotov.

The next day Schnurre reported that in an interview with Astakhov, counsellor at the Russian embassy in Berlin, the latter touched upon the dismissal of Litvinov and "tried without asking direct questions to learn whether this event would cause a change in our position toward the Soviet Union".<sup>4</sup> The dismissal appears to have contributed immensely to the promotion of an understanding. Hitler later told his generals that "Livinov's dismissal was decisive".<sup>5</sup>

On May 17, in another meeting with Schnurre, according to the latter,

Astakhov stated in detail that there were no conflicts in foreign policy between Germany and Soviet Russia, and that there was no

reason for any enmity between the two countries... he commented on the Anglo-Soviet negotiations to the effect that under the present circumstances the result desired by England would hardly be achieved.<sup>6</sup>

And what was it that England "desired" that "would hardly be achieved"? Between March and May, 1939 Britain had made commitments of direct unilateral military aid to Poland, Romania, Greece and Turkey in the event of unprovoked aggression. On April 4 Britain and France had asked the Russian Government for a declaration of similar aid to Poland and Romania. The Russians countered with a proposal for a broader agreement to include all manner of assistance against aggression to all East European states bordering on the Soviet Union between the Baltic and Black Seas.

During May, negotiations proceeded between Russia and Britain and France. The essential point of controversy was the question of allowing Russian troops passage through Poland and Romania and guaranteeing that the Baltic states would not fall to the Germans in the event of war. This meant that the Russians were asking for approval for the annexation of the Baltic states. The Polish and Romanian governments also refused the Russian request for passage of Russian troops through their territories fearing, and not without good reason, that "passage" could become "permanent occupation".

The Russians did not appear anxious for any understanding with the British. On May 15 Chamberlain had anticipated, in a speech to the House of Commons, a meeting between Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, and Potemkin, the Russian Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, at the forthcoming session of the Council of the League of Nations. Potemkin did not attend the session. Voroshilov was invited by the British Government to attend the army manoeuvres on June 3. He declined the invitation.

While negotiations were proceeding with the British and French, Molotov received Schulenburg on May 20 and during a discussion of trade negotiations, which had broken off, declared that:

The Soviet Government could only agree to a resumption of the negotiations if the necessary "political bases" for them had been constructed.<sup>7</sup>

On June 15 Astakhov took a step that led to more meaningful negotiations. He informed Draganov, the Bulgarian ambassador in Berlin, obviously with the idea that the latter would convey the information, that:

The Soviet Union faced the present world situation with hesitation. She was vacillating between three possibilities, namely the conclusion of the pact with England and France, a further dilatory treatment of the pact negotiations, and a rapprochement with Germany. The last possibility... was



closest to the desires of the Soviet Union... If Germany declared that she would not attack the Soviet Union or that she would conclude a nonaggression pact with her, the Soviet Union would probably refrain from concluding a treaty with England.<sup>8</sup>

This was the second time that the question of a nonaggression pact had been mentioned and it was again the Russians who raised it.

On June 16, the day after Astakhov's conversation with Draganov, which apparently had been immediately reported to Berlin, Ribbentrop told M. Shiratori, the Japanese ambassador, that "Germany intended to sign a pact of nonaggression with the USSR".<sup>9</sup>

What prompted Hitler, who had been opposed to all Russian proposals, to embark on such a momentous venture? He had been preparing an attack on Poland which he wished to launch before Britain and France could make counter preparations. Poland had to be crushed quickly before the Western Powers had time to intervene. He finally fixed the date of the attack for August 26. Before he could proceed Hitler needed an assurance of Russian collusion and he needed it before the attack. The Russians were in a position to demand the maximum of concessions from Hitler. They proceeded to take full advantage of the situation.

When negotiations between Russia and Britain

and France reached a deadlock, the Russians invited the latter to send military missions to Moscow to negotiate a military convention. Meantime an agreement with Germany was on the Russian agenda. The presence of British and French military missions gave Stalin more leverage to exert stronger pressure on the Germans for greater concessions.

The Allied Powers agreed on July 27 to send military missions. That very same day Schnurre invited Astakhov and Babarin, the head of the Russian trade mission, to dinner. There was an open discussion on collaboration and community of interests in foreign policy. In the discussion Schnurre outlined the advantages for Russia of an understanding with Germany in the following words:

What could England offer Russia? At best, participation in a European war and the hostility of Germany, but not a single desirable end for Russia. What could we offer, on the other hand? Neutrality and staying out of a possible European conflict and, if Moscow wished, a German-Russian understanding on mutual interests which, just as in former times, would work out to the advantages of both countries.<sup>10</sup>

The meeting between Schnurre and Astakhov was decisive. The partition of Eastern Europe was sketched out. It was only a question of working out the details. The issue was not the preservation of

peace but the division of Eastern Europe.

On July 29, the German Foreign Office sent Schulenburg a memorandum of the meeting between Schnurre and Astakhov and instructed him to arrange a meeting with Molotov and

... state somewhat more precisely what was expressed generally in the memorandum. This concerns particularly the Polish question. In any development of the Polish question... we would be prepared to safeguard all Soviet interests and to reach an understanding with the Moscow Government. If the talk proceeds positively, in the Baltic question too, the idea could be advanced that we will adjust our stand with regard to the Baltic in such a manner as to respect the vital Soviet interests in the Baltic.<sup>11</sup>

On August 2, Ribbentrop received Astakhov and told him that

... there was no problem from the Baltic to the Black Sea that could not be solved between the two of us... In the case of provocation on the part of Poland we would settle matters with Poland in the space of a week.<sup>12</sup>

Schulenburg again conferred with Molotov on August 3, and confirmed earlier statements by Schnurre regarding German readiness to recognize Soviet interests in Poland and the Baltic. Molotov wanted to know if the Baltic included Lithuania.<sup>13</sup>

On August 14, Astakhov called on Schnurre and informed him that he had received instructions that the Soviet Union was interested in a discussion of questions previously taken up, among them ... the Polish question, the matter of the old German-Soviet political agreements... The Soviet Government proposed Moscow as the place for these discussions since it was much easier for the Soviet Government to continue the conversation there.<sup>14</sup>

The following day Schulenburg delivered a message from his government to Molotov that there were "no real conflicts of interests". Molotov welcomed the declaration and stated that the Soviet Government wished for good relations with Germany and asked:

How did things stand with the idea of the conclusion of a nonaggression pact?... If the German Government was favourably inclined to the idea... a more concrete discussion of these questions should take place at once.<sup>15</sup>

In this report to Berlin Schulenburg noted what was most significant was Molotov's "quite clearly expressed wish to conclude a nonaggression pact with us".<sup>16</sup> On August 16, Schulenburg advised Molotov that "the points brought up... are in accordance with German desires, that is, Germany is ready to conclude a nonaggression pact" and added that the Fuhrer is of the opinion that "a basic and rapid clarification of German-Russian relations...

is desirable" for which purpose Ribbentrop was prepared to come to Moscow anytime after Friday, August 18, "to deal on the basis of full powers from the Fuhrer with the entire complex of ... questions and, if the occasion arises, to sign the appropriate treaties".<sup>17</sup>

In response to the German proposals, Molotov replied on the 17th that with a nonaggression pact there should also be concluded a "special protocol which would define the interests of the signatory parties in... the question of foreign policy and which would form an integral part of the pact". Molotov expressed satisfaction at the proposed trip of Ribbentrop and suggested that the German side

... take up at once the preparation of a draft for the nonaggression pact or for the reaffirmation of the neutrality treaty... as well as for the protocol: the same would be done on the Soviet side.<sup>18</sup>

The Soviet Government finally showed its hand. From rapprochement it proceeded to suggest a nonaggression pact and then a "special protocol". Rapprochement and a nonaggression pact were only the steps to something even more important.

By this time Hitler was under extreme tension fearing the outbreak of hostilities with Poland before a pact was concluded. Schulenburg was instructed on August 18 to see Molotov without delay and to urge that Ribbentrop make the journey to Moscow "immediately".

A trade treaty was signed in Berlin on August 19. On the same day Molotov handed Schulenburg a draft of a nonaggression pact with a postscript which read:

The present pact shall be valid only if a special protocol is signed simultaneously covering the points in which the High Contracting Parties are interested in the field of foreign policy. The protocol shall be an integral part of the Pact.<sup>19</sup>

He suggested the pact be signed in a week. This was not soon enough for Hitler. On August 20 he sent a personal message to Stalin agreeing to the Russian draft of the nonaggression pact and requesting that he see Ribbentrop on the 22nd or the 23rd at the latest. Stalin received the message on the 21st and immediately sent his agreement. When Hitler received Stalin's message he was overjoyed, hammering on the wall with his fists and shouting: "I have the world in my pocket".<sup>20</sup>

While secret negotiations between Moscow and Berlin were proceeding feverishly to conclude the nonaggression pact in time for Hitler's attack on Poland, which Hitler had postponed to September 1, discussions were also taking place between the Russians and the British and the French. The two military missions had arrived in Moscow on August 11. On the 17th Voroshilov suggested that the negotiations be terminated because of the Polish refusal to allow passage of Russian troops. However, another session was held on August 21 at which

Voroshilov suggested a break in the talks "not for three or four days but for a longer period". Voroshilov gave as the reason the autumn manoeuvres, which consumed a great deal of the time of the members of the Russian delegation, and declared that if affirmative replies were received to the "cardinal questions", then there would be another meeting, otherwise "I do not see that there will be any chance of meeting again".

On the 22nd Voroshilov saw General Doumenec, the head of the French military mission, by which time the French were prepared to give an affirmative answer to the "cardinal question" of allowing Russian troops to cross Polish territory. Voroshilov asked to see the "document". When General Doumenec gave a verbal assurance, the Russian marshal questioned that and added:

Let us wait until everything has cleared up... we must not exclude the possibility, during this time, of certain political events. If the position clears up, a rapid settlement would be possible, but only on the assumption that no political occurrence intervenes.<sup>21</sup>

But the "political occurrence" did intervene. *Pravda* announced on August 22 that Ribbentrop was coming to sign a nonaggression treaty. He arrived midday on August 23 with a message from Hitler that henceforth "all the problems of Eastern Europe were to be handled exclusively by Germany and Russia".<sup>22</sup> Hitler agreed by telephone to the text

of the secret protocol defining the respective spheres of influence. The pact was signed late at night. According to an official German report everyone was jubilant and:

In the course of the conversation, Herr Stalin spontaneously proposed a toast to the Fuhrer, as follows: "I know how much the German nation loves its Fuhrer; I should like therefore to drink to his health".<sup>23</sup>

The pact itself was a straightforward agreement of nonaggression between the two powers and non participation by either signatory in any bloc directed against the other. Of special significance was the fact that the pact was "to enter into force as soon as it was signed". (Full text in Appendix I) There was also no stipulation as in other treaties, to which the USSR was a signatory, that the provisions should only apply in the case of a defensive war.

Even more significant was the secret protocol, an integral part of the pact. It was agreed upon in "strictly confidential conversations" during which the "respective spheres of influence... in the event of a territorial and political rearrangement" were clearly defined: the Russian sphere to include Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Bessarabia and the territory east of the Narew, Vistula and San Rivers of the Polish state; Lithuania was to be part of the German sphere. The fate of Central Poland was not decided.



On August 24, the day after the signing of the pact, *Pravda* called it an "act of peace" which would contribute to the easing of tensions in the present international situation". And Molotov, in his report to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on August 31, 1939 stated as reported in *Pravda* the following day, that:

The Soviet Union signed a pact with Germany fully assured that peace between the peoples of the USSR and Germany is in the interests of all peoples, in the interests of universal peace. Every sincere supporter of peace will realize this... it is difficult to overestimate the internal significance of the Soviet-German Pact... It is a turning point in the history of Europe, and not only Europe.

It was a turning point indeed; it opened the door to war. The very next day, September 1, Germany invaded Poland!

For six years the denunciation of Bolshevism and Soviet Russia had been the common ingredient of the speeches of every Nazi leader including Hitler. The Anti-Comintern Pact had epitomized German policy since its inception in 1936. During the same period Moscow had publicly made the formation of an anti-fascist alliance appear as the main objective of its policy.

And now, suddenly and without warning, the pact! The announcement of its signing struck the

world like a bolt out of the blue. It should not have come as such a shock and surprise. In spite of public outbursts of animosity there had always been varying degrees of cooperation between the two powers since the end of World War I on a wide range of matters.

One area in which they had a common interest was Poland. Both had claims to territories comprising the Polish State. Hitler who had annexed territories inhabited by Germans: the Saar in 1935 and Austria in 1938, was ready by 1939 to proceed against Poland.

Moscow had a choice: form an alliance with the Western Powers to defend Poland or with Germany to dismember her. The Russian price for an alliance with Britain and France was a free hand in the Baltic states and Finland and the right to march into Poland and Rumania in the event of an attack by Germany. At the bargaining table Hitler offered Stalin more.

In connection with the signing of the pact the official Soviet explanation contains the following:

During the negotiations... with Britain and France, the Soviet Union did everything in its power to reach an understanding with them. It was forced to accept the German offer of a nonaggression pact only after it became convinced that it was not possible to sign either a mutual assistance pact or a military convention with Britain and

France.<sup>24</sup>

The fact of the matter was that negotiations were already going on with the Germans when the British and French emissaries arrived in April. The British and French military missions, which were invited by the Soviet Government, arrived on August 11 to negotiate a military convention with the Soviet army chiefs. However, in the meantime a political understanding between Moscow and Berlin had already been arrived at. There was only the question of how the territory was to be divided. For this purpose Ribbentrop was to come to Moscow.

As regards being forced to accept the "German offer of a nonaggression pact", the idea of a Nazi-Soviet rapprochement had been incubating in the minds of the Moscow leaders since 1935 or even earlier. Moscow concluded the pact with Berlin not because there was no other way out of the existing international situation, but because this was the way out that it had long desired and worked so assiduously to achieve.

The result could only have been different if Britain and France were able to offer Moscow a free hand in the Baltic States and Bessarabia and in part of the territory that comprised the Polish state, all without any risk of war.

The pact was obviously directed, first of all, against Poland. With its conclusion Germany was

protected against a major conflict on its eastern front; the way was clear for an attack on Poland. Already in 1933 Hitler had emphasized at a conference of his ministers that:

We can not do without Russia's cover for our rear with respect to Poland.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, the pact not only did not restrain but encouraged Hitler to attack since there was no stipulation that the provisions should only apply in the case of a defensive war. And since Hitler had already set the date for the attack on Poland for September 1, it was imperative that the pact become effective immediately. Moscow willingly obliged. A stipulation was included in the last article that it was "to enter into force as soon as it was signed". These departures from traditional Soviet pacts clearly indicate that Stalin was quite aware that the nonaggression pact would result in aggression against Poland and conspired to facilitate the attack.

The pact can perhaps be best characterized in the words of Litvinov, who, speaking before the Assembly of the League of Nations on September 14, 1935, declared that:

We know of another political conception that is fighting the idea of collective security and advocating bilateral pacts, and this not even between all states, but only between states arbitrarily chosen for this purpose. This conception can have nothing in common with peaceful intentions. Not every

pact of nonaggression is concluded with a view to strengthening general peace. While nonaggression pacts concluded by the Soviet Union include a special clause for suspending the pact in cases of aggression committed by one of the parties against any third state, we know of other pacts of nonaggression which have no such clauses. This means that a state which has secured by such a pact of nonaggression its rear or its flank, obtains the facility of attacking with impunity, third states.<sup>26</sup>

## IV REAPING THE REWARDS OF PERFIDY

The Nazi attack on Poland in the early hours of September 1, 1939, set in motion a series of events which were the culmination of the agreement contained in the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Two days later, as the German blitzkrieg rolled on inexorably, Schulenburg suggested to Molotov that the Red Army move into the territory designated as the Russian sphere of influence by the secret protocol of the pact (Text in Appendix II). Molotov replied two days later that:

We agree with you that at a suitable time it will be absolutely necessary for us to start concrete action. We are of the view, however, that this time has not yet come... it seems to us that through excessive haste we might injure our case and promote unity among *our* opponents.<sup>1</sup>

On September 9 Ribbentrop again requested the Russians to occupy their allotted territory in the Polish state. Moscow was slow to move for two reasons. The Russians were taken completely by surprise by the unexpectedly rapid German advance and secondly, they did not wish to appear as aggressors before the world. According to

Schulenburg:

Molotov stated that the Soviet Government had intended to take the occasion of the further advance of German troops to declare that Poland was falling apart and that it was necessary for the Soviet Union, in consequence, to come to the aid of the Ukrainians and Belorussians "threatened" by Germany.<sup>2</sup>

No sooner was the pact put to the test than the Russians began to display their "integrity" and their "faithfulness" as a partner. They were ready to project themselves as being motivated by lofty humanitarian ideals in this act of aggression which was being carried out with their connivance and concurrence. The Germans rejected the proposed Russian communique as being contrary to their true intentions.

Stalin wished to reap the profits of war but at the same time, he wished to appear neutral and to avoid aggravating the feelings of indignation which had been aroused on all sides by his signing of the pact. It was thus necessary to intervene at just the "right moment". The fall of Warsaw was considered to be that moment. On September 14 *Pravda* began preparing public opinion for the invasion with an editorial in which it noted that Poland "had suffered a military collapse" and drew attention to the fact that in Poland there were eight million Ukrainians and three million Belorussians who were subjected to "shameless exploitation by the

Polish landlords”.

The Germans were concerned that the Russians move in to occupy their sphere to relieve the *Wehrmacht* of “the necessity of annihilating the remainder of the Polish army”. In addition, since the Germans would not undertake any administrative operations in the Russian sphere “there might be the possibility of the construction of new states there”.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the Ukrainians and Belorussians might announce the formation of their respective independent states, an act which could complicate the occupation. Consequently, Ribbentrop requested the Russian Government to set the date and the hour on which its army would begin the advance so that the Germans might govern themselves accordingly.

When informed of the fall of Warsaw, Molotov was ecstatic. He phoned Schulenburg and declared that:

I have received your communication regarding the entry of German troops into Warsaw. Please convey my congratulations and my greetings to the German Reich Government.<sup>4</sup>

A joint Russo-German communique was drawn up on September 8 declaring that the operation of Russian and German forces in Poland did “not involve any aims which are contrary to the interests of Germany and Soviet Union or to the spirit or letter of the Nonaggression Pact”.<sup>5</sup>



But Russian historians and diplomats, ignoring the facts, which are often so inconvenient for them, give quite a different explanation for their invasion of territory that was part of the Polish state. They explain that:

With the German armies drawing ever nearer the Soviet frontiers, the Soviet Government was faced with the urgent problem of stopping their further advance eastward. It could not allow the German armies to reach the Soviet frontier.. Another duty... was to prevent the enslavement by the Nazis of the Ukrainian and Belorussian population which had been residing in Poland since 1920.<sup>6</sup>

The invasion by the Russians on September 17, shortened Polish resistance and prevented the orderly withdrawal of its forces to the south. The Red Army's tactics were especially designed, according to Lieutenant General Anders, "to make the formation of a Polish army abroad impossible" and resulted in "the loss of at least 200,000 to 300,000 soldiers who later would have been of great service in the West."<sup>7</sup>

In this report to the Supreme Soviet on October 31, 1939 Molotov gloated over the collapse of Poland, declaring that

... a short blow against Poland at first on the part of the German army and then the Red Army, and nothing remained of that monstrous brat of the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>8</sup>

With the destruction of the Polish state arose the question of negotiating a settlement regarding the status of the Polish territory west of the Russian demarcation line. The Germans favoured creating a small exclusively Polish state. Stalin considered avoiding anything that in the future could cause friction between the two powers. He proposed that all Polish territory in question be added to Germany in return for which Germany would relinquish her claim to Lithuania in favour of Russia.

On September 27 Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow with a large retinue of advisors for the signing of the treaty. He was accorded a spectacular welcome at the airport, being greeted by a group of top officials, representatives of the Red Army and a guard of honour. The airport was decorated with flags bearing the hammer and sickle and the swastika.

In the late afternoon of September 28 Molotov gave a banquet in honour of Ribbentrop. Stalin as well as many top Russian leaders such as Voroshilov, Kaganovich and Mikoyan were present. Stalin was in a most cheerful mood. Ribbentrop later remarked to friends that when he was in the Kremlin, he felt as though he were among old drinking buddies.<sup>9</sup>

A Boundary and Friendship Treaty was signed on September 28 embodying Stalin's proposal. He thus added Lithuania to his vast empire without giving anything in return and simultaneously circumventing any problems that a Polish state might

have caused in his future relations with Hitler. In addition there was an agreement by which Russia was to supply Germany with raw materials for which Germany would deliver manufactured goods over an extended period. The Russians agreed to provide railway transport for goods between Germany and Romania, Iran, Afghanistan and the Far East. There was also a secret protocol that each power would not tolerate any Polish agitation on territory occupied by it against the other state.<sup>10</sup>

The fate that befell Poland as a result of the pact and the subsequent treaties between Germany and Russia had been advocated for Poland by Fredrich Engels in a letter to Karl Marx on May 23, 1851. He wrote:

Take away from the Poles in the West as much as possible; under pretext of defence, garrison their fortresses with Germans, let them make a mess of things for themselves, send them into the fire, eat up their land... and if the Russians can be got to move, form an alliance with them, force the Poles to give in.<sup>11</sup>

Whether Hitler or Stalin was aware of Engels' formula for the treatment of Poland is not known. However, it would seem that either hardly needed any lessons from Engels.

The Red Army occupation of what had been part of the Polish state was followed by the arrival of NKVD (Russian secret police) detachments under

General Serov, Beria's deputy. People on proscribed lists, which had been prepared beforehand, were rounded up, taken in cattle trucks to railway stations and shipped off under the most inhuman conditions to Siberia. It is estimated that between 1939 and 1941 about one and a half million Poles, Ukrainians, Belorussians and Jews, men, women and children, were deported. Large numbers perished during the journey or in Siberia. Others were arrested and executed without even a hearing. (Descriptions of massacres in Western Ukraine in Appendix III).

The Russians were particularly interested in destroying the native intelligentsia with special emphasis on the Poles. If the Allies forced Hitler to accept peace terms, the revival of Poland would certainly be on the agenda. Stalin wished to destroy the Polish intelligentsia to forestall any resurgence of Poland as a nation. In April, 1940 the Russians murdered about 5,000 captured Polish officers in Katyń forest near Smolensk. Another 10,000 simply disappeared without a trace.

Having overcome Poland, Hitler embarked on a peace offensive. Moscow added its strident voice to the false chorus. On September 29, the day after the signing of the Boundary and Friendship Treaty, the two powers issued a joint statement declaring the agreement had

... established a firm basis for lasting peace in Eastern Europe... the ending of the present war... would coincide with the interests

of all nations. Therefore both governments are directing their common efforts... to achieve that end... However, in case the efforts of both governments are unsuccessful then it will be clear that England and France bear the responsibility for the continuation of the war. Furthermore, if the war continues the governments of Germany and the USSR will consult each other regarding necessary measures.<sup>12</sup>

The next day *Pravda* amplified and commented on the joint statement declaring that there was no justification for the war, that it was "quite meaningless" and called upon Britain and France "to end a war begun against the will of their peoples".

This was followed on October 19, 1939 by a statement of support for Germany by Stalin which was to be made public by Schulenberg. In it Stalin asked to be quoted as follows:

... a strong Germany is the absolute prerequisite for peace in Europe whence it follows that the Soviet Union is interested in the existence of a strong Germany. Therefore the Soviet Union cannot give its approval to the Western Powers creating conditions which would weaken Germany and place her in a difficult position.<sup>13</sup>

Moscow acted as a full partner and ally of Hitler. Molotov exploited every opportunity to voice support for Hitler's peace offensive and to lay the blame

for the war on France and Britain. Speaking to the Supreme Soviet on October 31, he declared that ... an ideology cannot be destroyed by force, cannot be eliminated by war. Therefore it is not only senseless but criminal to conduct a war for "the destruction of Hitlerism under the false flag of a struggle for democracy."<sup>14</sup>

A month later, on November 30, Stalin added his voice to the campaign for immediate peace. He declared, as reported in *Pravda*, that:

It was not Germany that attacked Britain and France but Britain and France that attacked Germany... The British and French governments have bluntly rejected both the German proposal and efforts of the USSR to achieve an early end of the war.

The communist propaganda agencies were also marshalled into the peace offensive on behalf of Hitler. The campaign was launched with the publication of the joint declaration of the Russian and German governments on September 28, 1939 and shifted into high gear after Molotov's report to the Supreme Soviet on October 31 and the publication of the Comintern Manifesto "To the proletarians and Working People Throughout the World" on November 7. The communist parties suddenly ceased denouncing Nazism as the scourge of the age and began describing the current war as a contest between imperialist powers and called for an end to the conflict.

Germany also received diplomatic support from the Russian Government and press. On September 16, 1939 Moscow recognized Slovakia, a German protectorate that had formed part of the state of Czechoslovakia, and its plenipotentiary in Moscow, while, at the same time, ordering M. Fierlinger, the representative of Czechoslovakia, to leave.

The Allied declaration of war against Germany was accompanied by a naval blockade to cut off the latter's sources of supplies. The Russians opposed the blockade and twice, on October 25 and December 11, 1939, launched strong protests.

The benefactors were not slow in showing their appreciation. In December Hitler and Ribbentrop greeted Stalin on his sixtieth birthday. In thanking his well wishers Stalin declared that the friendship of the peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union was "sealed by blood".<sup>15</sup> But it had rather been the alliance between the two dictators that had been sealed by blood – the blood of innocent and helpless victims.

Having firmly implanted its control over the Ukrainian and Belorussian areas taken from Poland, Moscow turned its attention to the Baltic. The three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, had been part of the Tsarist Empire since the eighteenth century. During World War I they were under German occupation. With the defeat of Germany the three states achieved their independence in spite of Bolshevik Russian attempts to submerge

them in the new Soviet empire. The Russian press left no doubt as to the designs regarding the Baltic. On December 25, 1918 *Izvestia* wrote that:

Soviet Russia must gain access to the Baltic coast and replant the Red Flag of the proletarian revolution there... The Baltic Sea and the former occupied territories of Lithuania, Latvia (including Kurland and Livonia), and Estonia are in the way of pressure exerted by our revolution upon Western Europe... This separating wall between the workers' revolution in Russia and Germany must be torn down and destroyed. Soviet troops must occupy Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia... The conquest of the Baltic Sea and its coast will enable Soviet Russia to exert influence upon the Scandinavian countries in the interest of the Socialist Revolution... The Baltic Sea must become a Soviet Sea. All efforts must be directed toward the attainment of this urgent political objective.<sup>16</sup>

Moscow deemed that the most opportune time to eliminate the "separating wall" had arrived. Although the armed forces of the Baltic countries were small, Stalin proceeded cautiously. On September 24 Molotov confronted K. Selter, the Foreign Minister of Estonia, with a demand for the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact giving Russia the right to establish bases on Estonian territory. When the Estonian protested Molotov would not be moved but declared with foreboding that:



The situation needs immediate attention. We cannot wait long. I advise you to accede to the wishes of the Soviet Union in order to avoid something worse. Do not compel the Soviet Union to use force in order to achieve its aims.<sup>17</sup>

Then he proceeded to allay the fears of the Estonian Government by reassuring promises that:

The assistance pact with the Soviet Union would not bring any perils. We do not want to impair your sovereignty or form of government. We are not going to force communism upon Estonia. We do not want to hurt the economic system of Estonia. Estonia will retain her independence, her government, parliament, foreign and domestic policy, army and economic system. We are not going to touch all this... You may be sure that you will never regret you signed this pact with us. Our Bolshevik word is like steel... When the Bolsheviks promise something, we shall keep it.<sup>18</sup>

The Estonians had no choice. On September 28 they signed a mutual assistance pact by which Russia obtained the right to set up naval, military and air bases on Estonian territory to be garrisoned by 25,000 Red Army troops.

On October 5 Latvia, whose population was less than two million, was forced to sign a similar pact, but the number of Red Army troops to be stationed

in that country was 30,000. On October 10, after stubborn resistance, Lithuania, with Russian troops massed on her borders, also signed. The number of troops to be stationed in that helpless country was 50,000.

When the western press launched a barrage of unfavourable comments castigating Russia for its arbitrary imposition of the pact on the Baltic States, Molotov, in an address to the Supreme Soviet, declared that:

The pacts with the Baltic States in no way imply the intrusion of the Soviet Union in the internal affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as some foreign interests are trying to make believe... These pacts are inspired by mutual respect for the governmental, social and economic system of each of the contracting parties. We stand for exact and honest fulfillment of agreements signed by us on a basis of reciprocity and declare that foolish talk of Sovietization of the Baltic States is useful only to our common enemies and to all kind of anti-Soviet provocateurs.<sup>19</sup>

To soften the blow and assuage the apprehensions of the populations of the unfortunate republics, all three pacts contained the following clause:

Realization of this pact shall not affect to any extent the sovereign rights of the Contracting Parties, in particular their state organization, economic and social systems, military measures and, in general, the prin-

ciple of non-intervention in internal affairs.<sup>20</sup>

There was still Finland. No time was to be lost. On October 12, two days after Lithuania signed, Finnish representatives were summoned to the Kremlin. Stalin demanded bases and islands in the Gulf of Finland and other territorial adjustments. The Finns were in a hopeless situation: they could not receive support from Germany which was in alliance with the USSR; there was no prospect of military support from any other quarter. In spite of this the Finns stood firm. The Russians became impatient. Molotov remarked that:

We civilians do not seem to be making any progress. It is the soldier's turn to speak.<sup>21</sup>

First, however, preliminary preparations were necessary. A new government of the "Finnish Democratic Republic" was formed on Russian soil, with Otto Kuusinen, a Finnish communist and prominent official of the Comintern, who had led the unsuccessful Bolshevik attempt to seize power in Finland in 1918, as its head and foreign minister.

The USSR had always paraded as an uncompromising enemy of aggression and a staunch supporter of its victims. On February 6, 1933 the USSR submitted to the Disarmament Conference then in session, a draft resolution in which it defined an aggressor as

any country which declared war against another country, invaded the territories of

another country without declaration of war and carried on military operations on land, on sea and in the air.<sup>22</sup>

And in his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU in March, 1939 Stalin proclaimed that:

We stand for the support of nations which are victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their countries.<sup>23</sup>

These declarations were now conveniently shelved by Stalin. On November 26 the Russians staged a provocation on the Finnish border and broke off diplomatic relations with the Finnish Government. On November 29 they recognized Kuusinen's "National Government" and the next day, without any declaration of war, five armies with over half a million troops, supported by heavy artillery, masses of tanks and 3,000 planes, launched a massive offensive along the whole length of the front. The Finns not only stopped the assault but launched a counter attack that drove back the invading forces and delayed their eventual advance for more than a month.

The Russians had planned to stage a blitzkrieg in Finland on the German model. They calculated on a short campaign. In Moscow everyone from Stalin down thought that the Red Army would be in Helsinki in a week. The counsellor of the Soviet embassy in Berlin predicted that "It would be all over in three days".<sup>24</sup>

By 1940 the campaign had bogged down and Moscow was alarmed, especially since the British and French were preparing to aid the beleaguered Finns. On February 1, 1940 the Soviet forces launched a massive new offensive in Southern Finland. It was not till March that the Finns, short of tanks, planes, artillery and even ammunition for light arms, were forced to capitulate. Daladier announced that 100,000 French and British troops would be on the way but it was too late.

Moscow, which had planned to add the whole of Finland to its expanding empire, was forced by the staunch resistance of Finland and the decision of France and Britain to come to her aid to curb its ravenous appetite. By treaty on March 22, 1940 Finland ceded to the USSR strips of territory north of Lake Ladoga along its southern border, in the north central and northern areas as well as a naval base at Hango and islands in the Gulf of Finland.

The Russo-Finnish treaty did not raise open objections in German quarters. Both partners had been busy in their particular spheres of influence. On the surface relations between them appeared harmonious. Ribbentrop, who had visited Moscow twice, raised the question of a return visit by Molotov. He instructed Schulenburg that the invitation should also be extended to Stalin and promised that:

The Führer would not only be particularly happy to welcome Stalin in Berlin, but he would also see to it that he would get a

reception commensurate with his position and importance, and he would extend to him all the honors that the occasion demanded.<sup>25</sup>

Relations continued to run smoothly. On April 9, 1940 the Germans invaded Norway and Denmark. Schulenburg was instructed by Ribbentrop to deliver a memorandum to Molotov informing him that German forces were planning to occupy the two countries to forestall a reported imminent British-French invasion. According to Schulenburg, Molotov replied that he understood the measures that were forced upon Germany. In conclusion Molotov said literally that:

We wish Germany complete success in her offensive measures.<sup>26</sup>

On April 11 the Soviet Government also gave its blessing to the new Nazi military venture through its official organ, *Izvestia*, which wrote that:

There can be no doubt that Germany has been forced to act in Denmark and Norway because of prior moves by Britain and France... The objection has, of course, been raised that Germany has violated the rules of international law, and has treated the pact of nonaggression with Denmark as a scrap of paper. It is absurd to begin wailing about the legality or illegality of Germany's actions in Scandinavia when the sovereignty of the Scandinavian countries has been violated by the British and the French. War has its own logic which is stronger than

any other.<sup>27</sup>

A month later, on May 10, Hitler launched an attack on France through the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg. Schulenburg reported that Molotov, on being informed of the invasion, appreciated the news and added that "he understood that Germany had to protect herself against an Anglo-French attack. He had no doubt of Germany's success".<sup>28</sup>

On May 16 *Pravda* went further, justifying the invasion on the grounds that the British and French were planning to make Holland a base for an attack on vital German centers. It concluded that:

We now see how great a responsibility for rejecting Germany's peace proposals and for starting a new imperialist war in Europe rests on the shoulders of the Anglo-French imperialists.

The role of the communist parties in assisting the Nazi military campaigns by means of their extensive and vociferous propaganda against Britain and France was more than significant. In Britain on October 3, 1939 William Gallacher, Britain's only communist MP, called for immediate negotiations for peace in the House of Commons. By the beginning of October the French party had also fallen into line and was denouncing the Anglo-French imperialists, calling for "immediate peace" and promoting an anti-war movement. Its

effect was to undermine not only the morale of civilian population but also the front line troops among whom the communists also carried on anti-war propaganda thus contributing to the fall of France.

In the meantime Russian attention was again turning to the Baltic. For the first six months the conduct of the Red Army troops had been disciplined and correct and relations with the Russian authorities had been without incident. In April, a month after the signing of the peace treaty with Finland, the Russian attitude began to change. On May 16, 1940, less than a week after the German offensive in the West, an article appeared in *Izvestia* with an ominous foreboding for the Baltic States:

The recent war events (occupation of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg) once more proved that neutrality of small states, which do not have power to support it, is a mere phantasy. Therefore, there are very few chances for small countries to survive and maintain their independence. All considerations of small countries in the question of justice and injustice in relations with the Big Powers, which are in the war "to determine if they are to be or not to be", are at least naive... We should once more remind them that the policy of neutrality of some small countries could not be called anything but suicide.<sup>29</sup>



On May 15, 1940 Molotov presented an ultimatum to the Deputy Prime Minister of Lithuania, Kreve-Miskevicius. When the latter began voicing protests, Molotov declared in all frankness that:

You must take a good look at reality and understand that in the future small nations will have to disappear. Your Lithuania along with the other Baltic nations, including Finland, will have to join the glorious family of the Soviet Union. Therefore you should begin now to initiate your people into the Soviet system which in the future shall reign everywhere, throughout all Europe, though put into practice earlier in some places, as in the Baltic nations, later in others.<sup>30</sup>

The foreign minister warned that the people might resort to armed resistance and Germany might interfere. Molotov retorted that:

Germany swallowed the occupation of the Baltic States without choking, and she will have to digest their incorporation; they are having too much trouble in the West now to want a war with the mighty Soviet Union... If the Russian Tsars, beginning with Ivan the Terrible, were trying to reach the Baltic Sea, they were doing this not for their own ambitions, but because this was required for the development of the Russian state and the Russian nation. It would be unpardonable if the Soviet Union did not seize this opportunity which may never recur. The

leaders of the Soviet Union have decided to incorporate the Baltic States into the family of Soviet republics.<sup>31</sup>

The following day, June 16, 300,000 Red Army troops marched into Lithuania. On the same day Latvia and Estonia received similar ultimatums. By June 17 Russian troops had occupied both countries. To assist in the reconstruction of their governments, the three states each received a Soviet gauleiter to supervise the process. On August 5, the Baltic states were "admitted" as constituent republics of the USSR becoming new colonial acquisitions of the Soviet Russian Empire.

When the Baltic States achieved their independence after World War I, Soviet Russia signed peace treaties with them by which it recognized "unreservedly" their "sovereignty" and "independence" and pledged through nonaggression pacts to refrain from acts of aggression against them. Soviet propagandists heaped condemnation on Tsarist imperialist ambitions and foreign conquests. Karl Radek, official spokesman for the Soviet Russian government, wrote in 1934 that

...Tsarism, or any other bourgeois regime in Russia, would necessarily resume the struggle for the conquest of Poland and of the Baltic states... The Soviet Union, on the contrary, is most anxious to establish friendly relations with these countries, considering their achievement of independence a positive and progressive historical

factor.<sup>32</sup>

Only six short years later Soviet Russia broke every treaty it had signed with the three Baltic states by its unprovoked aggression and forceful annexation. To justify the brutal act *Izvestia*, another official spokesman for the government, wrote that:

Any rational arguments as to the legality or illegality of measures against small states in an area when the imperialist Great Powers are waging a life and death struggle can only be regarded as naive.<sup>33</sup>

With occupation a new reign of terror was unleashed on the Baltic countries such as the Ukrainian and Belorussian territories had experienced after their "liberation" by the Red Army. The campaign of deportations was launched by a "strictly secret" Order No. 001223 *Regarding the Procedure for Carrying Out the Deportation of Anti-Soviet Elements From Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia*, signed by General Ivan A. Serov, Beria's deputy. The document outlined in detail how the deportations were to be organized and the procedures to be followed in arresting, assembling and dispatching the deportees.<sup>34</sup>

There were also summary forms for regular reports from local operatives to the central authorities listing the number of persons in each category that had been arrested. Among those to be arrested were former government officials, policemen,

prosecutors, judges, army officers, Trotskyites, Socialist Revolutionaries, leading social democrats, landlords, owners of large commercial businesses, factories or apartment blocks and many others.

Most of those deported perished in the GULag. In addition to those deported, many were arrested and summarily executed (Execution order in Appendix IV). President Anton Smetona of Lithuania managed to escape; Karl Ulmanis, president of Latvia and Konstantin Pats, president of Estonia were both arrested and perished in Russian prisons. The numbers of those who perished from the three Baltic countries run well over half a million.

Having occupied the Baltic countries, the Russians turned their attention to Bessarabia. In 1917 Bessarabia, which had belonged to the Russian Empire, broke away to become part of Romania. On April 13, 1939 Britain and France had given Romania unilateral guarantees of military assistance in case of attack. Moscow, therefore, proceeded cautiously without risking any major action that might involve it in a conflict. On June 23, 1940, the day after France concluded an armistice with Germany, Molotov informed Schulenburg that "the solution of the Bessarabian problem brooked no delay" and that Moscow was also claiming Bukovina because of its Ukrainian population.<sup>35</sup> Germany agreed to support the Soviet claim to Bessarabia but voiced reservations regarding Bukovina. The Germans applied pressure on Romania to accept

the Russian ultimatum. On June 28, the Red Army occupied Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

Meantime, with Hitler in control of Western Europe, the position of Britain was most unenviable. Sir Stafford Cripps, the new British ambassador to Moscow and an uncritical admirer of the USSR, embarked on an attempt to turn Stalin away from the Nazi alliance. He approached the latter with important propositions and declarations, stating that:

Germany was striving for hegemony in Europe and wanted to engulf all European countries. This was dangerous to the Soviet Union as well as England. Therefore, both countries ought to agree on a common policy of self protection against Germany, and on the reestablishment of the European balance of power...

Stalin replied that he "did not see any danger of the hegemony of any one country in Europe and still less of any danger that Europe might be engulfed by Germany".<sup>36</sup> He not only rejected unceremoniously Cripps' proposal but had Molotov deliver a copy of the notes of the conversation to Schulenburg.

The German alliance had given Stalin large territories with the promise of more to come at little cost. A weakened Britain could not offer anything to pry Stalin from the German alliance in which he was involved politically, economically and militarily. On September 28, 1939, after the collapse of

Poland, the Soviet Government had agreed ... to promote by all means the trade relations and the exchange of goods between Germany and the USSR... under which the Soviet Union will supply raw materials to Germany for which Germany... will make compensation through delivery of manufactured goods...<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, on February 11, 1940 Molotov and Ribbentrop signed a German-Soviet Commercial Agreement by which Moscow agreed to supply Germany with raw materials over 18 months totaling in excess of 650 million Reichsmarks. In return Germany agreed to deliver to the Soviet Union industrial products, processes, installations and war material.

The most important raw materials to be supplied to Germany in the first eighteen months after the signing of the trade agreement were the following:

1,000,000 tons of grain for cattle, and legumes, in the amount of 120 million Reichsmarks

900,000 tons of mineral oil in the amount of approximately 115 million Reichsmarks

100,000 tons of cotton in the amount of approximately 90 million Reichsmarks

500,000 tons of phosphates

100,000 tons of chrome ores

500,000 tons of iron ores

300,000 tons of scrap iron and pig iron

2,000 kg. of platinum

Manganese ore, metals, lumber, and numerous other raw materials.<sup>38</sup>

In addition the Russians granted Germany the right of transit for German traffic to and from Romania, Iran, Afghanistan and other countries of the Far East. The freight rates for soy beans purchased from Manchukuo were reduced by 50 per cent. Another much needed raw material transported over the Soviet railways to Germany was raw rubber. Russia also undertook to act as purchaser for Germany of metals and other raw materials in the rest of the world.<sup>39</sup>

The material received by the USSR from Germany did not substantially increase Moscow's military potential. For example, the Russians received the unfinished German battle cruiser, Lutzow, which was towed to Leningrad. The work of the German engineers who were working to complete it was interrupted by the events of June 22, 1941 and the unfinished hulk was still lying in the harbour at the end of the war.

However, the agreement was a great boon to the German military. Schnurre declared on February 26, 1940 that:

The agreement means a wide open door to the East for us... If we succeed in extending and expanding exports to the East in the required volume, the effects of the English blockade will be decisively weakened by the incoming raw materials.<sup>40</sup>

Six months later he reported that:

The supplies from the Russians have heretofore been a very substantial prop to the German war economy... Our sole economic connection with Iran, Afghanistan, Manchukuo, Japan and beyond that, with South America, is the route across Russia, which is being used to an increasing extent for German raw material imports.<sup>41</sup>

Hitler told his generals on August 22, 1940 that:

We need not be afraid of a blockade. The East will supply us with grain, cattle, coal, lead and zinc.<sup>42</sup>

After a study of the subject, one historian concluded that it was questionable whether without ... Soviet aid, particularly in the matter of oil supplies and rubber transit, the German attack in the West in 1940 would have been as successful as it was and the attack on the Soviet Union would have been possible at all.<sup>43</sup>

The commercial and trade relations were accompanied by Soviet cooperation in the naval field providing extensive assistance to the Germans of another kind. In October, 1939 the Russians worked with the Germans, using Soviet slave labour, to build a German naval base on Russian territory named Basis Nord, near Murmansk. While it was being constructed the Germans were using Murmansk itself.



Basis Nord was used by U-Boats operating against British shipping in the North Sea and as a supply base for the German attack on Norway. A German supply ship, the Jan Wellem, brought supplies for the German forces at Narvik, thus playing an important role in providing support for the invasion of Norway. The base was also used to equip German auxiliary cruisers for raids on British shipping. The German liner, Bremen, and others found refuge there in eluding the British blockade in the North Sea.

From Basis Nord the Germans also planned to use the Northeast Passage, the sea route around Siberia to the Pacific. In August, 1940 the Komet, code named Schiff 45, a German raider disguised as a merchant ship, started out on the route. Assisted by a Soviet ice-breaker, the Schiff 45 passed through to the Bering Sea and into the Pacific in September. The Russians also transported one shipment of supplies for the raider across the Trans Siberian railway. The Schiff 45 sank or captured 64,000 tons of Allied shipping before returning to Germany around South America.

The uncompleted cruiser, Lutzow, plans for the battleship, Bismarck, and for a large destroyer and various naval equipment, which the Russians received, was hardly adequate recompense for the Russian support and assistance for German naval operations. The navy was the weakest branch of Germany's armed forces. The aid provided by Russia greatly enhanced its effectiveness.

Why did Stalin collaborate so closely with Hitler and use every possible occasion to justify Hitler's aggression; why did Moscow fulfill its political, economic and military commitments to Germany so assiduously and go to its maximum limits in supplying Germany with raw materials to support the Nazi war machine; why did it even purchase raw materials in world markets for transshipment to Germany and collaborate so willingly in providing facilities and support for German naval operations against the Allies; why did Stalin act as a loyal ally, prepared to go to almost any length in support of Hitler short of becoming involved in actual war?

Once Stalin had agreed to the pact he was committed to a German victory over the Poles. The latter were overcome and Poland dismembered. But there were still her allies against whom Germany stood as a bulwark. When the Russians attacked Finland and the Allies sent war material and then in early 1940 began preparations to send an expeditionary force, the threat of Poland's allies became real.

Peace had not yet been concluded with Finland when new apprehensions began troubling Russian minds. The Germans were receiving their iron ore from Sweden. In the winter when the Baltic was frozen, the ore was shipped by rail to the Norwegian port of Narvik which was clear of ice. The ore was then transported to Germany through Norwegian territorial waters.

Rumors began to circulate early in 1940 that the British and French were planning to invade Norway to cut off Germany's supply of iron ore. If this was so, the Russians would be most likely to know about it since they had some highly-placed agents in the British government (Philby, Burgess, Maclean). Should the British and French occupy Norway they would be on the northern borders of both Finland and Russia which could revive the case of Finland and Poland, a most unpleasant prospect for Russia.

The Russians, apparently apprehensive over the possible allied occupation of Norway, began to show a lack of cooperation with their German allies. However, when Schulenburg advised Molotov that German forces were invading Norway, Molotov was elated, wishing Germany complete success. His attitude had changed completely.

In a memorandum on April 11, Schulenburg discussed Molotov's sudden change of attitude and presented his explanation for the commissar's sudden about face:

For some time we have observed in the Soviet Government a distinct shift which was unfavorable to us. In all fields we suddenly came up against obstacles... the Soviet Government suddenly withdrew its promise already given with regard to the "North Base" (Basis Nord)... These obstacles... reached their climax in the suspension of petroleum and grain shipments...

I suspect that the tremendous clamor of our enemies and their sharp attacks on neutrals – particularly on the Soviet Union – were not without effect upon the Soviet Government, so that it feared being forced by the Entente into a great war for which it is not prepared, and that for this reason it wanted to avoid anything that might have furnished a pretext to the English and French for reproaching the Soviet Union with unneutral behaviour or partisanship for Germany... I decided to call on Herr Molotov... During this talk it became apparent that the Soviet Government had again made a complete about-face... Herr Molotov was affability itself, willingly received all our complaints and promised relief... I was completely amazed at the change. In my opinion there is only one explanation for this about-face: our Scandinavian operations must have relieved the Soviet Government enormously – removed a great burden of anxiety...<sup>44</sup>

The Russians were no less apprehensive of an Allied victory on the continental mainland. They supported the German campaign against France no less enthusiastically, mobilizing the Communist Party of France to undermine the resistance to the German invasion. An Allied victory over Germany would not only challenge Russian acquisitions in Poland and the Baltic but would open the road to the Balkans and place the Allies on the southern

borders of the Soviet Russian empire stopping any further expansion into Romania or the rest of the Balkans. Consequently, as long as there was any serious challenge to Germany on the continent, the Russians, in order to safeguard their new imperial acquisitions, were bound to support Germany.

There did not appear to be any dark clouds on the horizon to mar future Soviet-German relations. Even after France had capitulated and Britain had withdrawn from the mainland Hitler was able to declare in a speech before the Reichstag on July 17, almost a month after Russia's seizure of Bessarabia and the northern part of Bukovina, that the pact ... had established precisely and for all time their respective zones of interest, and what henceforth were to be regarded as being German or Russian interests... Neither Germany nor Russia has made one step, to this time, outside their zone of interest.<sup>46</sup>

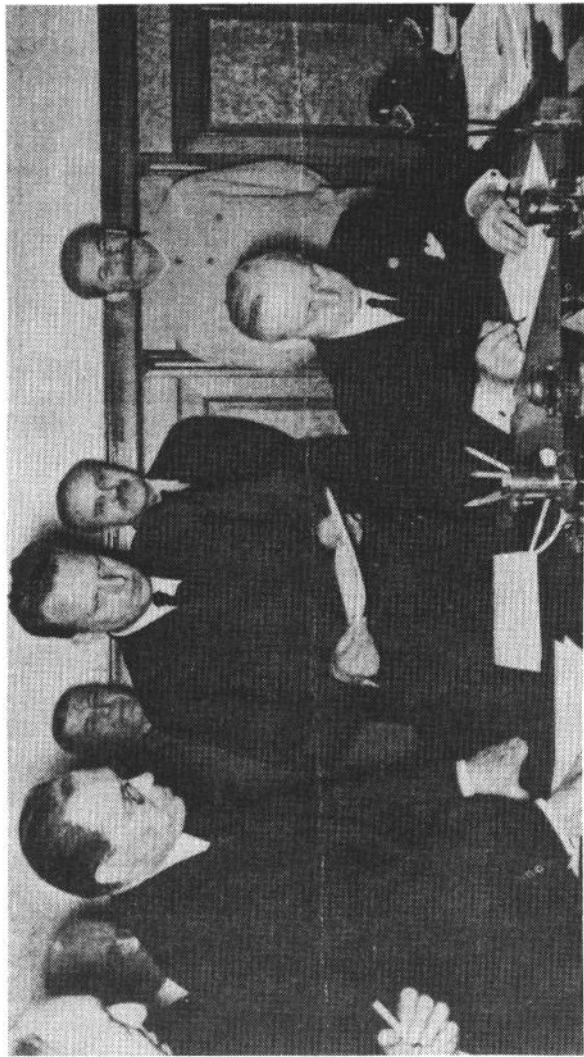
## V TENSION AND CONFLICT

With the fall of France not only was the balance of power in Europe radically altered but relations between Russia and Germany began undergoing some fundamental changes. Russia was suddenly faced by a single great power in Europe. Suspicion, dissatisfaction and distrust was also growing on both sides. The Russians had anticipated a protracted war in the West between Germany and the Allied Powers. They noted, not without some trepidation, the rapid advance of the Wehrmacht and the inability of the British and French forces to withstand the assault. Moreover, Germany was reaping the greater benefit from the pact having expanded its occupation to nearly all of Western Europe.

Although the Russians had calculated each move cautiously, they had moved with considerable speed in implementing some of the terms of the pact. The ink was scarcely dry on the signatures to the agreement when they began their manoeuvres in the Baltic, first by imposing pacts on Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and then by an attack on Finland when the latter refused a pact.

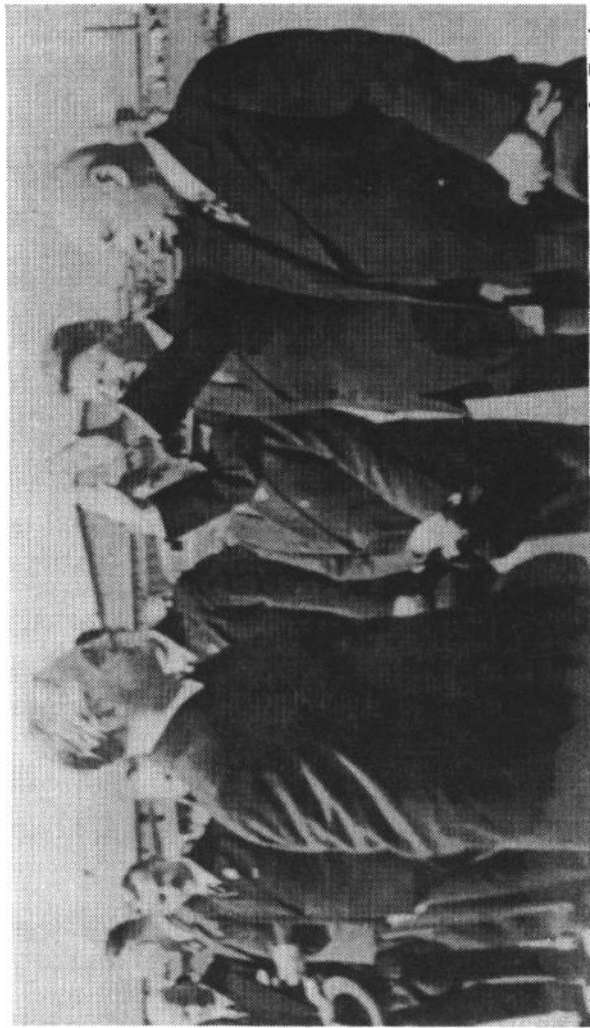


General Hans Von Seeckt, Chief of the German Army Command 1920-1926, who was the initiator and the guiding spirit behind the establishment of military collaboration with Russia after World War I.

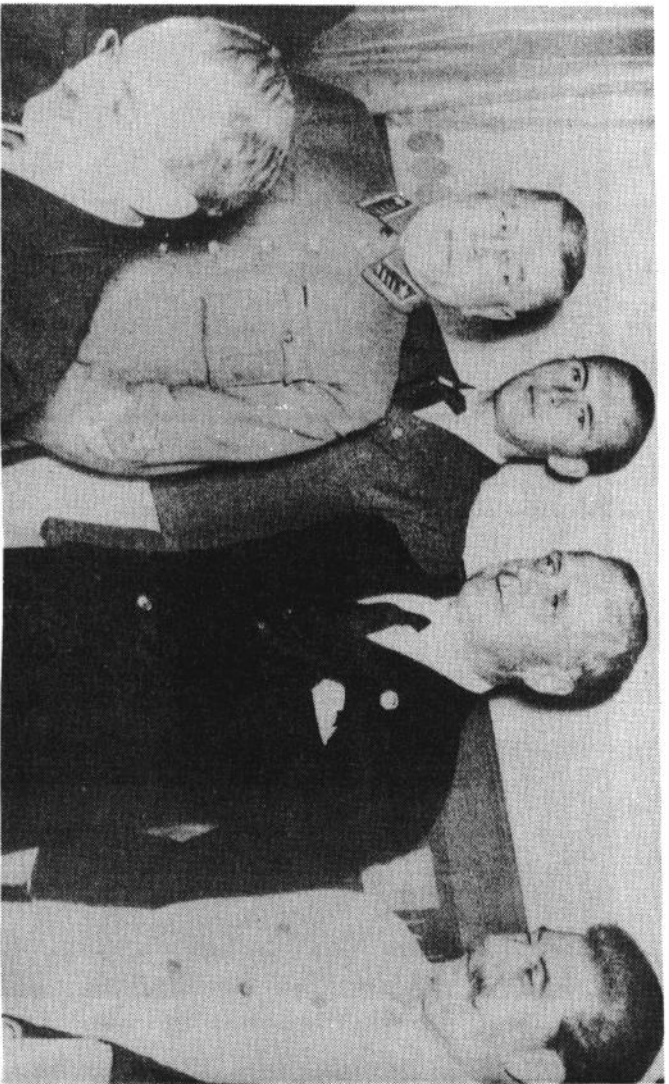


Stalin and Molotov beam as Ribentrop signs the Pact. On his right are Skvartsev (Russian Ambassador to Germany) and Hliger. Between them in the rear is General Shaposhnikov.

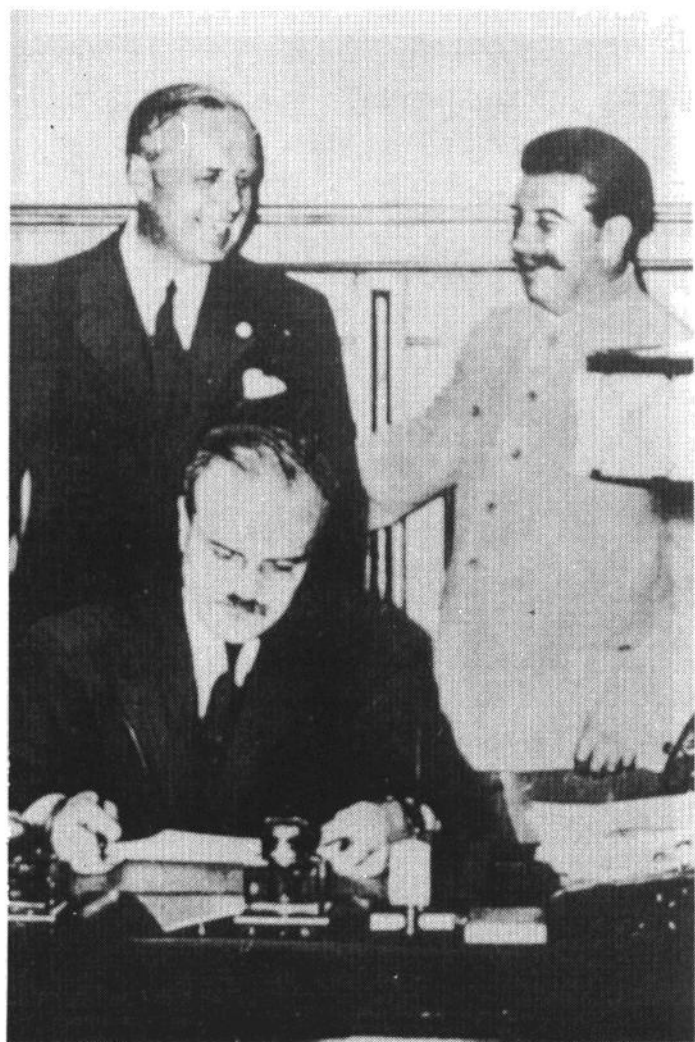




On his arrival in Moscow on August 23, 1939 Ribbentrop is met by V. Potemkin, Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs (on right) and other Russian officials.



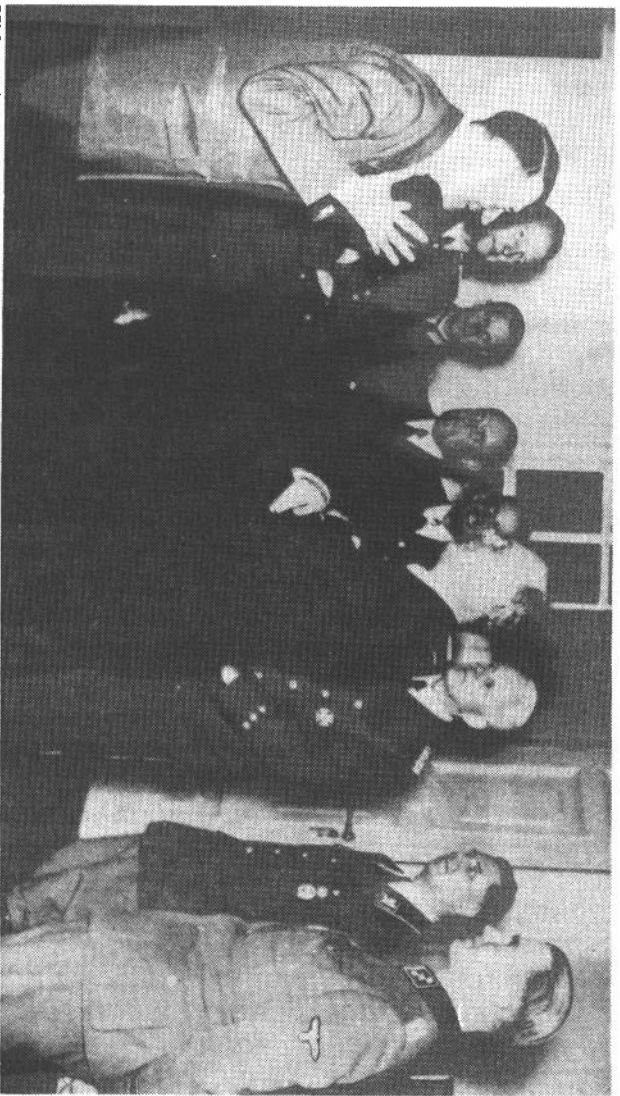
Stalin and Ribbentrop smile as Molotov signs the Pact. General Shaposhnikov, Chief of Staff of the Red army, looks on. Behind him is Richard Schulze, a member of Ribbentrop's retinue who was drawn into the picture by Stalin.



Congratulations are in order as Molotov sits down to sign the Pact.



Beaming with satisfaction, Ribbentrop and Stalin pose after the signing of the Nonaggression Pact.



**Hitler welcomes Ribbentrop with an ecstatic reception on his return from Moscow after the signing of the Pact.**



Molotov being greeted on his arrival in Berlin on November 12 by Ribbentrop. Hilger is interpreting.

Hitler viewed the Russian moves with considerable annoyance. In 1939 he had needed Stalin's collusion in the dismemberment of Poland and his neutrality in 1940 during the assault against Western Europe. With the fall of France and the evacuation of the British from the continent Hitler no longer faced a Western front and consequently had no apprehension about his Eastern flank. In addition, he was master of Western Europe and its vast resources and was no longer as dependent on Russian raw materials.

Moreover, Hitler had not realized that Stalin would begin extending Russia's hegemony over her allotted sphere of influence so quickly. Moscow had turned out to be forceful and dynamic, much to the dislike of Hitler. It was not only the timing of their moves, but the way the Russians rushed them through that was disturbing to the Germans.

By the time of the French campaign in mid 1940, Hitler had developed a strong distrust of Stalin whom he regarded "as a cold-blooded blackmailer" who "would, if expedient, repudiate any written treaty at any time".<sup>1</sup> Nor did Hitler have any faith in pacts, which "last only as long as they are useful in fulfilling their purpose". Russia would observe them only "so long as she considers them to her advantage".<sup>2</sup>

The Russian moves had been careful, cautious and calculated. There were the Allies to consider. With the collapse of France it was safe to take the

next step in the implementation of the terms of the pact. The Russians proceeded to move quickly and decisively. By June 17 their armies had occupied the Baltic states.

The new Russian moves to extend their influence and add new territorial acquisitions to their expanding empire further irritated the Fuhrer. Stalin thus embarked on a collision course with Hitler.

By the time Stalin had decided to occupy Bessarabia the idea of a war against Russia had matured in Hitler's mind. During the French campaign Hitler was already thinking of settling accounts with Stalin. In preparation for the invasion of Britain, the Luftwaffe had lost air control over the English Channel. Hitler decided to shelve his plans for the invasion of Britain and turned his attention eastward, resolving not to allow the Russians to advance any further in Europe.

It is true that when Russia announced her intention to annex Bessarabia as part of her sphere of influence, Hitler reluctantly consented. But both Germany and Italy were disturbed by the move. Count Ciano, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote in his diary on June 24, 1940, three days before the Russians occupied Bessarabia, that:

Russia is preparing to attack Rumania... Germany can do no more than acquiesce, but it is clear that Russian policy is increasingly anti-German. The capital in which there is the greatest amount of conspiracy



against a German victory is Moscow. The situation appeared quite otherwise when, in August and September, the Bolsheviks signed pacts with the Nazis. At that time they did not believe in a German triumph. They wanted to push Germany into a conflict and Europe into a crisis because they were thinking of a long and exhausting struggle between the democracies and Hitler.<sup>3</sup>

Next on Moscow's timetable was Finland. In March, 1940 the defeated Finns had been granted relatively mild peace terms because of Russian fears of British and French intervention. In May, 1940 after the defeat of France, the Russians launched a campaign of newspaper attacks and various pressures on Finland in preparation for another military invasion, this time to engulf the whole country as they had the Baltic States.

The Germans had made no move when Russia attacked in 1939. However, after the fall of France Hitler began showing an interest in Finland. There was the Petsamo nickle mines in the north in which both the Germans and the Russians were interested (Memorandum in Appendix V). But there were also other considerations. In any war against Russia Hitler wanted the support of Finland. He, therefore, undertook to protect it as a future ally. On August 18, 1940 Germany signed an arms purchase agreement with Finland through which she obtained large quantities of anti-tank mines.

On September 22 Germany concluded an agreement with Finland for the transit of troops to Norway.

The Russians had also been showing a cautious interest in the Balkans hoping to extend their influence through Bulgaria. In October, 1939 they had offered the latter a nonaggression pact which was declined. Russia also indicated that she would support Bulgaria's claim to Dobrudja, the south eastern part of Romania with the cities of Constanza and Tulcea. This would deprive Romania of a port on the Black Sea and extend Bulgaria to the border of the Russian Empire. This offer Bulgarians also declined.

To forestall further Russian expansion into the Balkans Hitler and Mussolini intervened. They forced Romania to cede part of Transylvania to Hungary and part of Dobrudja to Bulgaria and then on August 20, 1940 guaranteed the new Romanian borders by the Vienna accord. In September a German military mission arrived in Romania followed by Germans troops in October.

Serious friction had also been developing in other areas of the Balkans between Russia and the Axis Powers. In May, 1940 a number of trade agreements were signed with Yugoslavia whose trade delegation in Moscow was to have diplomatic immunity and its premises extra territorial status. To underline its interest in the Balkans Moscow radio announced on June 6, 1940 that:

The Soviet Government has made it un-

equivocally clear to Italy that it will not remain passive in the face of a threat to the Balkans. The foreign policy of Soviet Russia is based upon a sincere desire to maintain peace, and also upon the fact that the independence of certain states is a vital condition for Soviet security. The Italian Government would do well to take this warning into account.<sup>4</sup>

On June 24 Russia established diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia and promised to assist with war materiel if the latter resisted Germany.<sup>5</sup> There was also considerable controversy over the control of navigation on the Danube. The problem remained unsolved further widening the gap between Russia and Germany.

On September 27, 1940 Japan and the Axis Powers signed the Tripartite Pact (Full text in Appendix VI) which redefined the relations between them. It recognized the primacy of Germany and Italy in Europe and Japan in Eastern Asia; the terms of the pact did not affect the political status between the signatories and Russia; the other two were to come to the assistance of the third if it should be attacked by a power not at present involved in the European conflict or the Sino-Japanese war.

The Russians were disturbed and annoyed by the pact. They had indicated quite conclusively that they did not intend to have the future of

South-Eastern Europe decided without their participation. The Russian attitude also caused anxiety in German circles. On October 17, 1940 Schulenburg handed Molotov a note from Ribbentrop to Stalin in which he tried to explain and rationalize the German moves in Finland and the Balkans and added:

I should like to state that in the opinion of the Fuhrer... it appears to be the historical mission of the Four Powers – The Soviet Union, Italy, Japan and Germany – to adopt a long range policy and to direct the future development of their peoples into the right channels by delimitation of their interests on a world-wide scale.<sup>6</sup>

Ribbentrop then suggested Molotov visit Berlin for a discussion of the issues involved. There were apparently two reasons for the invitation. Hitler wished to determine more clearly Russia's position on prevailing issues and to perhaps iron out existing differences and revitalize the relationship between the two powers by a new outline of spheres of influence.

Molotov accepted the invitation and arrived in Berlin on November 12, accompanied by Dekanozov, the Russian Gaulaiter of Lithuania, Merkulov, Beria's deputy and others who were described by a German official as "good gangster types for a film". He stayed two days and conferred with Ribbentrop and Hitler. In their discussion they suggested Russo-German cooperation on the basis of a rede-

fining of their respective spheres of influence and proposed that Russia join the Tripartite Pact and turn southward to the Persian Gulf for a natural outlet to the open sea.

Hitler declared that the war with Britain was as good as won and that "the British Empire would be apportioned as a gigantic world wide estate in bankruptcy".<sup>7</sup> Hitler opened up a vast prospect before Molotov which was realizable on condition that:

All the countries that could possibly be interested in the bankrupt estate would have to stop all controversies among themselves and concern themselves exclusively with the partition of the British Empire.<sup>8</sup>

Molotov agreed that participation of Russia in the Tripartite Pact was "entirely acceptable in principle provided that Russia was to cooperate as a partner and not merely as an object".<sup>9</sup> However, he insisted that current outstanding issues be settled and "that all these great issues of tomorrow could not be separated from the issues of today and the fulfilment of existing agreements. The things that were started must first be completed before they proceeded to new tasks"<sup>10</sup>. The question he had in mind here was, of course, that of Finland which Molotov wanted settled "within the framework of the agreement of last year... on the same scale as in Bessarabia and in the adjacent countries..."<sup>11</sup>

There were also other issues Molotov wanted

clarified which included Russian Balkan and Black Sea interests involving Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. In addition there was the question of Southern Bukovina, a nonaggression pact with Bulgaria and a Russian base on the Dardanelles. Molotov's demands were presented in terms of open power politics coinciding with the traditional Tsarist objectives.

In the final discussion with Molotov, Ribbentrop made some definite proposals: a ten-year agreement, to be made public, between Russia and the members of the Tripartite Pact by which Russia and Germany undertook to cooperate politically and economically; to respect each other's spheres of influence; to consult on emerging problems and to refrain from joining any hostile combination directed against any one of them. Besides the pact there were also to be three secret protocols delineating the spheres of influence of each of the four powers, with Russian aspirations to be centred in the direction of the Indian Ocean; an agreement between Russia, Germany and Italy on the question of Turkey and the Dardanelles and a nonaggression pact between Russia and Japan.

Molotov left behind an atmosphere of indignation and hostility. "He struck Hitler as not being a diplomat but a 'mathematics teacher'. Molotov was never ruffled... He stuck to the facts, never wandering from his argument, and confronted Hitler as an equal".<sup>12</sup> He found Hitler and Ribbentrop patient, polite and restrained. The overconfidence that this generated in him often overflowed into blunt forth-

rightness and aggressiveness and sometimes even into sarcasm.

Whatever hopes Hitler and Ribbentrop entertained of diverting Russian aspirations of imperial expansion in the direction of Asia and the Indian Ocean were dashed. Molotov made it clear that Russia was also determined to pursue a policy of expansion in Europe. His visit served to underline the deep conflict of interest of the two powers in Europe.

Each had revealed his plans to extend his hegemony into identical areas causing irrevocable conflict. Molotov knew that Hitler would not stand for further Russian expansion into Finland. Hitler feared that if he became engaged in a final conflict in the West with Britain, Stalin could utilize the opportunity to annex Finland, move into Bulgaria and occupy the Dardanelles.

Hitler was furious at the open display of Russian greed. Stalin's demands confirmed everything he had suspected about the Russians. They were totally untrustworthy allies. Hitler resolved on the destruction of the Russian Empire before it became an uncontrollable menace to German plans. The clash with Russia was apparently hastened by the personal impression Hitler received from Molotov's visit. According to General Keitel, Molotov's demands

... alarmed the Fuhrer. Molotov was considering making war in Finland a second time

so as to occupy the whole country and he was thinking of expanding in the direction of the Dardanelles. The Fuhrer saw in these schemes the beginning of a great encircling movement against Germany. Just then he was receiving reports on the tremendous expansion of Soviet war industries, and this worried him a great deal.<sup>13</sup>

After Molotov's return from Berlin the Russian Government presented its conditions for joining the Tripartite Pact in a memorandum which Molotov handed Schulenburg on November 25, 1940. These included the withdrawal of German troops from Finland, the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact with Bulgaria, the establishment of a military and naval base within range of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, recognition of Russian aspirations in the general direction of the Persian Gulf and the renunciation by Japan of any rights to concessions for coal and oil in Northern Sakhalin. Instead of two secret protocols proposed by Ribbentrop, the memorandum insisted on five. (Full text of memorandum on Appendix VII)

Molotov's memorandum was a diplomatic coup for Hitler. The Russians had disclosed their plans and the direction of their intended expansion. They described these plans clearly and precisely. Hitler obtained irrefutable evidence of Russian aggressive ambitions which he could use to influence countries so threatened and to arouse in them fear of a Russian aggressive move the minute a favour-



able opportunity presented itself.

Hitler never replied to the Russian memorandum. Instead he transformed the Tripartite pact into a basis for the further consolidation of his position in Europe. Stalin attempted cautiously to use Russian influence in the Balkans to counter the extension of German hegemony. However, on November 20, Hungary joined the Tripartite Pact, followed by Romania three days later. Russia tried again unsuccessfully on November 25, to offer Bulgaria a nonaggression pact.

When rumours began to circulate of an impending German invasion of Bulgaria, Dekanozov, the Russian ambassador in Berlin, handed Weizsacker a memorandum on January 17, 1941, which warned that the Russian Government considered

... the territory of Bulgaria and of the Straits as the security zone of the USSR... the Soviet Government will consider the appearance of any foreign armed forces on the territory of Bulgaria and of the Straits as a violation of the security interests of the USSR.<sup>14</sup>

On February 27, 1941, in spite of the Russian memorandum, Bulgaria signed an undertaking to join the Tripartite Pact on March 1. Simultaneously German troops entered the country. On March 25 the Belgrade Government also agreed to become a member of the pact. Two days later it was overthrown with the support of the pro-Russian

faction. On the night of April 5-6, the Soviet Government signed a Friendship and Nonaggression Pact with M. Gavrilovic, the Yugoslav minister in Moscow. Hitler's reaction was swift and decisive. On the morning of April 6, barely six hours after the signing of the pact, the Germans attacked Yugoslavia destroying its air force on the ground. On April 17, the Yugoslav army surrendered unconditionally. Ten days later, after having invaded Greece, the German army entered Athens.

In the meantime the Germans were interested in involving the Japanese in a war with Britain. They encouraged Japan to come to an understanding with Moscow so that she could turn southward to attack Singapore. While on a tour of Europe, Y. Matsuoka, the Japanese foreign minister, also paid a visit to the Russian capital on April 7. After lengthy discussions he signed a pact of neutrality and friendship with Russia. This removed the threat of a Russian attack in Manchuria and cleared the way for a Japanese move against Britain and the United States in the Far East.

The Russians were also anxious for an understanding with Japan. Since the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact Hitler had treated Stalin as an equal. As the Russian Empire expanded, thanks to the pact, to take in the Baltic states and parts of Finland and Romania, Stalin became bolder and more avaricious. Since Hitler had extended his hegemony into Western Europe, he seemed to feel that Russia was also entitled to expand, first into

Finland and then into the Balkans, and, of course, southward to the Indian Ocean.

When Stalin laid claim to the Balkans he came into a head-on conflict with Hitler. In spite of Russian protests, Germany continued her penetration of the Balkan states. When the German armies invaded Yugoslavia, Stalin was convinced that the Serbs would put up a stiff resistance prolonging the German campaign. With the rapid collapse of resistance in Yugoslavia, as was previously the case in Poland and then in France, and the consequent German occupation of Greece, Stalin found himself facing the whole German army which was being built up by Russian supplies and now also had the resources of Europe to draw upon. In the face of this German threat in the West, a Pact with Japan safeguarding her eastern borders was most welcome in Moscow.

Up to the time of the signing of the Yugoslav treaty the Russian attitude to Germany had been stiffening. However, with the collapse of Yugoslavia Stalin's attitude to Germany suddenly changed to displays of friendship and acts of accommodation and appeasement.

The first occasion when this became manifest was the departure of Matsuoka from Moscow a few hours after the signing of the pact. Stalin and Molotov, in an unprecedented act, went to see him off at the station. In an open public display of friendship Stalin threw his arms around Schulenburg's

shoulders and exclaimed:

We must remain friends and you must do everything to that end.

Then turning to Hans Krebs, the German military attache, he shook hands with him and declared:

We will remain friends with you whatever happens.<sup>15</sup>

The significance of the episode was easily understood. Following this, displays of friendship for and loyalty to Germany became quite frequent. On April 20, Moscow recognized the pro-German Iraqi Government of Rashid Ali the day after he attacked the British aerodrome at Basra and five weeks after he carried out an anti-British coup. On May 6, 1941 Stalin replaced Molotov as head of state which was interpreted as a gesture of rapprochement with Germany. On May 7, one month after having signed a pact with him, the Russians asked Gavrilovic to leave. The same treatment was accorded the diplomatic representatives of Belgium, Norway and Greece, whose countries had also been occupied by Germany.

The Russians became more punctual in their deliveries of goods, in some cases in advance of the agreed upon dates. They were also less pressing for the goods they were to receive in exchange. Traffic of goods imported for Germany proceed on schedule. A special freight train for the transportation of rubber was placed at Germany's disposal on the

Manchurian border. In April, 1941 2,000 tons of rubber crossed Siberia in regular trains and 2,000 more in special trains.<sup>16</sup>

Schnurre was under the impression that ... we could make economic demands on Moscow which would even go beyond the scope of the treaty of January 10, 1941, demands designed to secure German food and raw material requirements beyond the extent now contracted for.<sup>17</sup>

And General Thomas, head of the Economics and Armaments branch of the German High Command, reported that

... Russians delivered their supplies on schedule right up to the start of the attack, and even during the last few days cargoes of rubber from the Far East were rushed through by express train.<sup>18</sup>

Stalin's attempts to appease Hitler only confirmed the latter's conviction of Russia's weakness and Stalin's fear. Already during the French campaign the idea of settling accounts with Stalin had been occurring to Hitler. By the beginning of August, 1940 he had issued directives for the preparation of an offensive in the spring of 1941. After Molotov's visit to Berlin Hitler became resolved on war. He declared that in view of "Russia's inclination to interfere in Balkan affairs... it is necessary to eliminate at all costs the last remaining enemy on the continent".<sup>19</sup> Consequently, in December full

preparations began for an attack scheduled for May 15, 1941. later postponed to June 22 and coded "Operation Barbarossa".

In the meantime the Russians received ample warnings with full details of the German preparations and the date of the invasion. Sumner Welles, the US Under-Secretary of State, twice, in January and March, 1941, conveyed to Konstantin Uman-sky, the Russian ambassador in Washington, information on the impending German invasion.<sup>20</sup> There were also clear and precise warnings from Winston Churchill.

Accurate reports also piled up from Russian intelligence and diplomatic sources on both the German preparations for and the date of attack. Richard Sorge, the famous Russian secret agent in Tokyo, dispatched numerous reports between April and June containing accurate information on German plans. Not only did Stalin refuse to act but abuse was often heaped on informants. When, shortly before the attack, Sir Stafford Cripps, the British ambassador in Moscow, asked to see Stalin and then Molotov, both refused to see him. When he saw Vyshinsky, the Deputy-Commissar for Foreign Affairs, the latter branded him "a provocateur, for implying that Germany would turn against her Soviet friends".<sup>21</sup>

Denials by Russian officials of an impending German invasion were frequent. On June 14, Molotov handed Schulenburg a *Tass* dispatch, published

that day in *Pravda* (Full text in Appendix VIII), which stated that:

Even before the return of the English Ambassador Cripps to London, but especially after his return, there have been widespread rumors of an "impending war between the USSR and Germany"... These rumors are a clumsy propaganda manoeuvre of the forces arrayed against the Soviet Union and Germany, which are interested in a spread and intensification of the war... rumours of the intention of Germany to break the Pact and to launch an attack against the Soviet Union are completely without foundation.<sup>22</sup>

A week later, on June 21, Schulenburg handed Molotov a communique accusing Russia of hostility to Germany and concluding that the "Führer has... ordered the German Armed Forces to oppose this threat..." (Full text in Appendix IX)

The next day, in the early hours of June 22, over three million German soldiers, nourished by food supplies obtained from Russia and supported by more than 3,000 tanks, 7,000 pieces of artillery and 2,000 warplanes, propelled by oil supplied by Russia, on tires manufactured from rubber hauled across Siberia at transit rates reduced by an obliging Russian Government, blitzed their way into the territories of the Russian Empire, annihilating the ill-prepared and ill-equipped Soviet defence forces and raining death and destruction on the defence-

less civilian population.

And so Russia, against her will, was drawn into the war that its nonaggression pact with Hitler had first unleashed against Poland.



## VI BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

The Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact was not simply the result of circumstances which had emerged in the summer of 1939, but the consequence of developments dating back to the early days of the post-World War I period. Two powers, both outcasts from the European community of nations, were drawn together by a number of common interests. Among these were strong incentives to establish economic and trade relations and to rebuild and expand their ruined economies. However, what appeared paramount in drawing the two powers together was their desire to dismember Poland and their opposition to the Versailles settlement by which the new Poland was created.

In order to challenge Poland it was necessary for the two powers to rearm, which Germany was forbidden to do by the Treaty of Versailles. The feat was accomplished, however, with the cooperation and on the initiative of the Soviet Russian Government by allowing Germany to establish military training bases and proving grounds, and to build industries for the manufacture of armaments and munitions on Russian territory.

The cooperation of Russia in laying the basis for

the rearming of Germany was consciously directed not for peace but for war, a war for a new partition of Poland. Furthermore, it was this cooperation between Russia and Germany that laid the foundation for the mighty military power that Hitler later fashioned and with which he was able to challenge the Versailles settlement, to achieve the incorporation of Austria into the German Reich, to break up and occupy Czechoslovakia and to prepare the army and the Luftwaffe for the subsequent attack against Poland and for the ensuing military campaigns of the Second World War.

Shortly after coming to power in 1933, with the witting or unwitting aid of the Communist Party of Germany, Hitler terminated all military cooperation with the Russian Government and the Red Army to the deep regret of the top Russian army command. Hitler's strident and bellicose utterances against Bolshevism and Soviet Russia aroused fear in Stalin. But while Litvinov publicly spearheaded a campaign for "collective security" in the form of an alliance with the Western Powers against Hitler, Stalin never wavered from his desire to come to an understanding with Hitler and took advantage of every opportunity to make advances for some form of rapprochement.

Three events played a decisive role in convincing Hitler that the Russians were serious in desiring an understanding and helped to bring the two dictators together: Russia's indication that she had no intention of challenging Germany over Czechoslo-

vakia during the Munich Crisis in September, 1938 by failing to make any military preparations; Stalin's declaration at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 10, 1939 that his policy was one of peace and the strengthening of trade relations with all countries and finally, the replacement of Litvinov, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, by Molotov.

The Russians initiated negotiations with the British and the French for an alliance in April, 1939 and then for a military convention in August. However, with the conclusion of the Munich agreement it was evident that the Russian campaign for collective security was dead. Stalin confirmed this in his report on March 10 to the Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU five days after which the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia. Under these circumstances there was little likelihood of an agreement between Russia and the Western Powers, and moreover, in defence of Poland for whose partition the Russians had been conniving and conspiring with the Germans since the end of World War I.

Furthermore, there were numerous indications that the Russians were not seeking an alliance against Hitler. Among these were the stalling tactics, the irresponsible Russian demands, the arrogant and high-handed treatment of the British and French negotiators and finally Voroshilov's abrupt cancellation of further negotiations. The presence of the British and French was simply used as a lever to pry more concessions from Hitler in the negotia-

tions that were being simultaneously conducted with the Germans.

While the question of a pact between Russia and Germany had first been raised in December, 1935 and possibly earlier, by Bessonov, the counsellor at the Russian embassy in Berlin, the question had been constantly revived since by the Russians. Hitler, however, was not prepared for a rapprochement until he was ready to deal with Poland and needed Stalin's collusion and neutrality to avoid becoming involved in a two-front war. Thus, just as in the immediate post-World War I period, so now, the Polish question was the determining factor in drawing together Russia and Germany. And the paramount consideration of both Hitler and Stalin in forging the pact was not to promote peace but to open the way for an attack to overcome and dismember the Polish state.

The negotiations began on April 17, 1939 in Berlin between Merekalov, the Soviet Russian ambassador, and Weizsacker, the German state secretary, on the initiative of Merekalov while negotiations were also being conducted with the British and French in Moscow. When it became clear to the Russians that a pact with Hitler was certain, Voroshilov abruptly and unceremoniously terminated discussions with the British and the French.

The initiative for the steps that eventually led to the signing of the pact came from the Russians. It

## ==== **BY WAY OF CONCLUSION** ====

was Moscow's emissaries who had patiently and persistently pressed first for an understanding and rapprochement with Hitler and then for a pact; it was Moscow and not Berlin, as the Russians claim, that initiated the conversations that eventually led to the signing of the pact; it was Molotov and not Ribbentrop who insisted on a secret protocol to the pact specifying the countries and territories that were to be assigned to the Russian sphere of influence; it was the Russians who drew up the draft of the pact and of the protocol; it was Moscow which announced that Ribbentrop was arriving to sign a pact and it was in Moscow that the pact was signed.

For over half a decade the Russians had been aggressively and vociferously advocating an alliance with the democracies to halt Nazi aggression. When, in August 1939, Stalin was given a choice, he turned his back on Britain and France and instead signed a pact with Hitler not to stop aggression but to promote it.

In planning to launch an attack on Poland Hitler was aware that he faced the threat of a war with the Allied Powers. He feared risking such a conflict if Russia remained neutral. Consequently, Germany's first advantage from the pact was the assurance that it would fight on only one front. Hitler understood and appreciated this fact declaring before his military commanders in November, 1939 that:

What has been desired since 1870 and regarded as impossible of achievement has

come to pass. For the first time in history we have to fight only on one front.<sup>1</sup>

Whether Hitler would have invaded Poland without an understanding with Stalin is debatable, but he certainly would have been less apt to do so. Moreover, the pact deprived the British and the French of the restraining pressure they might have been able to bring to bear on Hitler.

What is certain, however, is the fact that the signing of the pact opened the way to immediate aggression and war. Hitler and Stalin must bear the full responsibility for the terrible carnage in which forty or more millions perished. But while Hitler's associates paid for their crime on the scaffold, Stalin and his accomplices lived out their lives (some continue to do so) in relative luxury and comfort.

The agreement also provided Hitler with other advantages. By the trade treaties signed in conjunction with the pact, Germany obtained supplies and raw materials that nullified to a great extent the effect of the Allied blockade of Germany. Without these supplies Hitler could not have carried on the military campaigns with such speed and efficiency on such a grand scale for such a prolonged period of time.

For the Russians the pact had other advantages. It enabled Russia to regain all the territories that had been part of Imperial Russia with the exception

of the major portion of Finland. Moreover, all this was acquired with relatively little military effort.

While the clauses of the nonaggression pact were made public, the existence of the protocol itself was secret. Communists and their sympathizers went to great lengths to deny its existence. A prominent British fellow traveller and labour MP, by way of proof that there was no secret protocol, wrote that "Molotov in his speech to the Supreme Soviet denied that there was any secret agreement."<sup>2</sup> And at the Nuremburg war crimes trial, each time a reference was made to the protocol either by the defence or by the witnesses, Rudenko, the chief prosecutor for the USSR, protested.<sup>3</sup>

Hitler's lingering mistrust of Stalin and the Russians was confirmed early in their collaboration. As the German forces blitzed their way eastward across Poland Ribbentrop invited Molotov to take steps to occupy the eastern areas of the Polish state assigned to Russia by the secret protocol. Stalin revealed his perfidy and duplicity in the conduct of international relations by proposing a communique that the Red Army was marching into the territory of the Polish state to "protect" Ukrainians and Belorussians who were "threatened" by advancing German forces, thus trying to brand the Germans as villains and to exalt Russians as saviours.

Having allied himself with Hitler to dismember Poland, Stalin was committed to a German victory

in the war with the Allies. He had cooperated with Hitler in the defeat and partition of the Polish state but there were still Poland's allies – Britain and France. Stalin continued his collaboration with Hitler in the campaigns against the Allied Powers.

The fall of France removed the fear of confrontation over the destruction of Poland, but it created another problem for the Russians: They faced Germany on the continent alone. And Hitler, having overrun Western Europe, turned his attention to the Balkans where Russia had been manoeuvring to extend her influence for over a century.

In the negotiations between Molotov and Hitler and Ribbentrop in Berlin on November 12–13, Soviet Russia, which, according to previous declarations would take “no part in the struggle for the redistribution of the world... never under any conditions would it participate in the plundering of other nations”, became quite agreeable to joining the Tripartite Pact on her terms and to participating in the dismemberment of the British Empire as she had in the partition of Poland.

Hitler and Stalin, having much in common, showed mutual admiration and respect for each other. Both rulers were dictators, their methods were similar and their aims were to expand their respective empires. In spite of this the pact could hardly have been expected to last. It was merely a temporary arrangement to promote the immediate interests on which the two powers could agree.



However, there were too many other interests that were irreconcilable. Germany wanted *Lebensraum* in the east and hegemony in the Balkans. Russian ambitions were not quite so modest. They nursed a mad dream of a world empire to be achieved with the collaboration of the national communist parties.

The immediate cause of the breach between Russia and Germany was the conflict of interests between the two imperialist powers. It was based on the same clash over spheres of influence, especially in the Balkans and the Dardanelles, that had led to a breach between Imperial Germany and Tsarist Russia in 1914.

It would appear that Stalin had greatly miscalculated the relative strengths and weaknesses of the armed forces of Germany and the intensity and length of the German campaigns against Poland, Britain, France and Yugoslavia. When France fell and Russia was left to face Germany alone on the continent, Russian opposition stiffened. However, when Hitler acted swiftly and decisively in the Balkans and rumors began to circulate of an impending German invasion, the Russians became accommodating which Hitler attributed to fear and cowardice.

Hitler suspected, and not without good reason, that Stalin wanted to involve Germany in a protracted war, which would wear down the German armed forces, and then step in at a decisive moment

when those involved were exhausted. In a meeting with Matsuoka in Berlin on March 31, 1941 less than three months prior to the German attack on Russia, Ribbentrop declared that:

The Soviet Union wanted the war to last as long as possible... Therefore, the exceedingly rapid defeat of France did not suit that sly politician, Stalin, very well. He wanted a long war that would tire out the peoples and make them ripe for Bolshevik influence. That was the true aim of Russian policy which should never be lost sight of.<sup>4</sup>

Stalin facilitated the eventual German attack on Russia in two ways. Firstly, he supplied the Nazi war machine with oil and the raw materials necessary for its operation, and secondly, he insisted on the elimination of a Polish buffer state which resulted in a contiguous Russo-German border thus placing the German armed forces on the very borders of the Russian Empire.

When Germany attacked Russia on June 22, 1941, the latter was automatically thrust into an unwilling alliance with the Western Powers to become "our gallant ally". Stalin declared that: "The war has been forced on us".<sup>5</sup> Had Germany not attacked, Russia would have continued to adhere to the terms of the pact and to supply Germany with raw materials and oil in her war against the Allied Powers. According to his daughter, Stalin often reminisced, not without some nostalgia and regret, about the period of his alliance with Hitler:

Ech, together with the Germans we would have been invincible.<sup>6</sup>

Russian policy was based wholly on perfidy, deceit and the cowardly use of superior force to subjugate smaller nations. Russia aided and abetted aggression by Hitler against smaller states while Molotov declared that such states could not remain neutral because they were incapable of defending their neutrality. At the same time the breaking of promises, covenants and treaties by the Russians during the period of Nazi-Russian collaboration was on a scale unprecedented in history.

The conduct of Russian rulers clearly indicated that the so called USSR was not a state dedicated to the promotion of a just society and was not motivated by a desire to liberate oppressed proletarians or to ameliorate the condition of the populations in the areas she occupied. On the contrary, the Russians were impelled by imperialist ambitions. They came as the cruelest of conquerors, executing, imprisoning or exiling those they feared most and oppressing under a harsh dictatorship those that remained.

The pact, which unleashed World War II in which Russia became involved against her will, transformed her from a semi-Asiatic empire to a military power dominating Eastern Europe. When the war ended Russia emerged as one of two super powers. But it was the only power that had extended herself territorially beyond her 1939 borders. She retained

without apparent objections from the Allies, all the territories she had occupied as a consequence of the pact with Hitler. This included part of Finland, the three Baltic States, the Ukrainian and Belorussian areas from Poland, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from Romania. After the war ended, Russia obtained the Kurile Islands and the southern part of Sakhalin Island in the Pacific and the cities of Darien and Port Arthur in the Far East. In addition the Russian Empire extended its hegemony in Europe over East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania and for a time (to 1955) over Austria.

Russia's new territorial acquisitions and her emergence as a super power has had far reaching consequences for the free world. The war's end did not halt Russian expansion. Previously a European and Asiatic power, Russia began after the war to extend, through her newly-acquired power, her influence and her hegemony into the farthest corners of every continent, confronting the free world with imperial ambitions far greater than those of Hitler's Germany.

Her policy is perhaps best described by an internationally famous philosopher, highly revered in Russia, who wrote in 1867 that

... The policy of Russia is changeless... Its methods, its tactics, its maneuvers may change, but the polar star of its policy – world domination – is a fixed star.<sup>7</sup>

# APPENDIX

## Appendix I Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact August 23, 1939

The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, desirous of strengthening the cause of peace between Germany and the USSR, and proceeding from the fundamental provisions of the Neutrality Agreement concluded in April, 1926 between Germany and the USSR, have reached the following agreement:

Article I. Both Contracting Parties obligate themselves to desist from any act of violence, any aggressive action, and any attack on each other, either individually or jointly with other powers.

Article II. Should one of the High Contracting Parties become the object of belligerent action by a third power, the other High Contracting Party shall in no manner lend its support to this third power.

Article III. The government of the two High Contracting Parties shall in the future maintain continual contact with one another for the purpose of consultation in order to exchange information on problems affecting their common interests.

Article IV. Neither of the two High Contracting Parties shall participate in any grouping of powers whatsoever that is directly or indirectly aimed at the other party.

Article V. Should disputes or conflicts arise between the High Contracting Parties over problems of one kind or another, both parties shall settle these disputes or conflicts exclusively through friendly exchange of opinion or, if necessary, through the establishment of arbitration commissions.

Article VI. The present treaty is concluded for a period of ten years, with the provision that, in so far as one of the High Contracting Parties does not denounce it one year prior to the expiration of this period, the validity of this treaty shall automatically be extended for another five years.

Article VII. The present treaty shall be ratified within the shortest possible time. The ratification shall be exchanged in Berlin. The agreement shall enter into force as soon as it is signed.

Done in duplicate, in the German and Russian languages.

Moscow, August 23, 1939

For the Government of the German Reich:

*V. Ribbentrop*

With full power of the Government of the USSR:

*V. Molotov*

## **SECRET SUPPLEMENTARY PROTOCOL**

On the occasion of the signature of the Nonaggression Pact between the German Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the Undersigned plenipotentiaries of each of the two parties discussed in strictly confidential conversations the question of the boundary of their respective spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. These conversations led to the following conclusions:

1. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.

2. In the event of a territorial rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the sphere of influence of Germany and the USSR shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula and San.

The question of whether the interest of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish state and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments. In any event both governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement.

3. With regard to Southeastern Europe attention

is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political disinterestedness in these areas.

4. This protocol shall be treated by both parties as strictly secret.

Moscow, August 23, 1939

For the Government of the German Reich:

**V. Ribbentrop**

With full power of the Government of the USSR:

**V. Molotov**

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Source: *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941*. Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office, Government Printing Office, Washington 1948, pp. 76-78



**Appendix II**  
**German Invitation to the Russians to**  
**Occupy the Eastern Regions**  
**of the Polish State**

**The Reich Foreign Minister to the German**  
**Ambassador in the Soviet Union**

Berlin, September 3, 1939

**Very Urgent! Exclusively for Ambassador.**  
**Strictly secret! For Chief of Mission or his represen-**  
**tative personally. Top secret. To be decoded by**  
**himself. Strictest secrecy!**

We definitely expect to have beaten the Polish army decisively in a few weeks. We would then keep the area that was established as German sphere of interest at Moscow under military occupation. We would naturally, however, for military reasons, also have to proceed further against such Polish military forces as are at that time located in the Polish area belonging to the Russian sphere of interest.

Please discuss this at once with Molotov and see

if the Soviet Union does not consider it desirable for Russian forces to move at the proper time against Polish forces in the Russian sphere of interest and, for their part, to occupy this territory. In our estimation this would be not only a relief for us, but also, in the sense of the Moscow agreements, in the Soviet interest as well.

In this connection please determine whether we may discuss this matter with the officers who have just arrived here and what the Soviet Government intends their position to be.

*Ribbentrop*

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Source: *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, p. 86.

### **Appendix III**

## **The Mass Murders in Western Ukraine by the Russian Secret Police**

### **How the NKVD Rampaged in Stanislav**

As evidence that there were thousands and thousands of victims there is the colossal stack of bloodied shirts and trousers piled against the wall of the NKVD building... The favoured room of the NKVD is the torture chamber. The cement floor with a run-off in the center is totally blood stained; the blood has dried and turned black; there are signs of blood on the walls.

In the room there is a variety of "instruments": pincers, pliers, hammers, corsettes with impregnated nails that were put on the chests of those tortured, "security jackets" which did not allow the prisoner to run, an electric chair with various wires, electric lamps which affected the eyes and the head, not to mention other instruments.

Photos can hardly convey an idea of the cruel treatment meted out to the prisoners. Faces smashed by rifle butts, gouged out eyes, broken ribs, spines or bones, burned corpses – all this only a small part of the cruelty that could be discerned from the faces and bodies of the innocent murdered victims...

The victims of earlier atrocities were thrown into a large hole in the yard of the prison. In the cellars of the prison three large cells were opened where the corpses were piled to the ceiling. The bodies had decomposed; the faces could not be recognized.

It is difficult to assess exactly how many martyrs perished in the prisons of the Stanislav region. The figure of 2,500 would hardly be close to the number; it is much higher...

### **The Massacre of Prisoners in Chortkiv**

When the German army entered Chortkiv a terrible scene arose before the eyes of the German soldiers and the local citizens: in the large prison beyond the town, surrounded by high walls, there lay many cruelly-massacred bodies. The large courtyard (3/4 of a hectare) was also excavated and other bodies dug up from the earth, so that in a short time in the prison environs the corpses of the unfortunate Ukrainian prisoners were laid out. During the excavation of the corpses it became evident that the NKVD members covered one layer of corpses with soil and placed a second and third

layer... Over them the surface was rolled down so that it looked normal.

The cells were also full of corpses. In one cell there was even a cement floor so that no one would presume that victims were buried under it. Many corpses were also found in the ditches around the prison.

The number of bodies in the Chortkiv prison was about 800. But very few of the victims could be recognized. They were in such a state of decomposition and were so savagely mutilated that it was impossible to recognize them.

To indicate with what cruelty the NKVD sadists treated their victims, it should be noted that some victims had had their ears cut off and their eyes gouged out. The cells everywhere were full of blood-stained clothes. Blood had even spurted onto the ceiling...

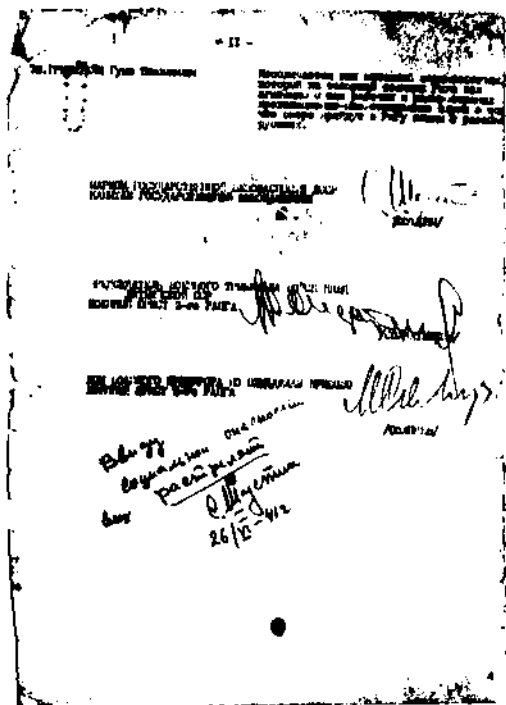
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Source: Mylena Rudnytska, *Zakhidna Ukraina pid Bolshovykamy 1939-1941* (Western Ukraine Under the Bolsheviks 1939-1941), New York 1958, pp. 486-487, 490.

**Appendix IV**

**Last Page of a List of Seventy-eight  
Latvians Condemned to Death**



The summary order, dated June 26, 1941 and signed by S. Shustin, Russian commissar of the secret police on Latvia, reads: In view of the social danger they present, to be executed.

Source: *These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940-1941*, Second edition, Latvian National Foundation, Stockholm 1982, p.XXXXVIII

## **Appendix V**

### **Foreign Office Memorandum**

**October 8, 1940**

**To the Office of the Reich Foreign Minister.**

In the matter of the granting of the Petsamo nickel concession the Finnish Government finds itself exposed to daily increasing pressures from the Soviet Government. The Finns are afraid that bad intentions lie concealed behind Molotov's persistence. If the Finnish Government yields to Russian pressure and by national emergency legislation cancels the present Canadian nickel concession and gives it to the Soviet Government, an unpleasant and unfavourable situation would arise for us. Our own nickel interests, which had been established in the negotiations with the Finnish Government, would be completely wiped out, as Russia will not respect the German-Finnish agreements. With the transfer of the nickel concession Soviet Russia will acquire exclusive territorial in-

fluence in this area as well and thereby border directly on the area of Kirkenes, which is protected by our troops. The military, and the Reich Marshal in particular, have voiced the hope that we shall not lose Petsamo. The deputy of the Reich Marshal, Lt. Col. Veltjens, has among other things, obtained an option for the nickel concession, as compensation for the German supplies of arms.

Up to now the Foreign Office has been telling the Finns that Germany will confine herself to carrying out the German-Finnish nickel contracts and will not on her own initiative take up the question of the concession with the Russians. It will now be necessary to go beyond that and to strengthen the Finnish will to resist. They should be told we were in favour of their holding the question of the concession in abeyance and not definitely concluding the matter by the transfer to Russia. It is not necessary to comply with the wish of the Finns that we support their attitude in Moscow.

Minister Schnurre requests an opportunity to report personally on this situation and on the present status of the delivery of arms to Finland. The matter is urgent, since otherwise it must be expected that the Finns will give in.



## **Appendix VI**

### **The Tripartite Pact September 27, 1940**

**... The Governments of Germany, Italy and Japan  
Have Agreed as follows:**

#### **Article I**

Japan recognizes and respects the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe.

#### **Article II**

Germany and Italy recognize and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in Greater East Asia.

#### **Article III**

Germany, Italy and Japan agree to cooperate in their efforts on aforesaid lines. They further undertake to assist one another with all political, economic and military means when one of the three Contracting Powers is attacked by a power at present not involved in the European war or in the Chinese-Japanese conflict.

Article IV

With the view to implementing the present Pact, Joint Technical Commissions, members of which are to be appointed by the respective Governments of Germany, Italy and Japan, will meet without delay.

Article V

Germany, Italy and Japan affirm that the aforesaid terms do not in any way affect the political status which exist at present as between each of the three Contracting parties and Soviet Russia.

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Source: Frederick H. Hartman, *Basic Documents of International Relations*, First edition, McGraw-Hill 1951, p. 142.

**Appendix VII**  
**The Russian Government's Conditions for**  
**Joining the Tripartite Pact**  
**The German Ambassador in the Soviet**  
**Union (Schulenburg) to the German**  
**Foreign Office**

**Telegram**  
**Very Urgent**  
**Strictly Secret**

**Moscow, November 26, 1940**

**For the Reich Minister in person.**

**Molotov asked me to call on him this evening and in the presence of Dekanozov stated the following:**

**The Soviet Government has studied the contents of the statements of the Reich Foreign Minister in the concluding conversation on November 13 and takes the following stand:**

The Soviet Government is prepared to accept the draft of the Four Power Pact which the Reich Foreign Minister outlined in the conversation of November 13, regarding political collaboration and reciprocal [support] subject to the following conditions:

1. Provided that the German troops are immediately withdrawn from Finland, which, under the compact of 1939, belongs to the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. At the same time the Soviet Union undertakes to ensure peaceful relations with Finland and to protect German economic interests in Finland (export of lumber and nickel).

2. Provided that within the next few months the security of the Soviet Union in the Straits is assured by the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, which geographically is situated inside the security zone of the Black Sea boundaries of the Soviet Union, and by the establishment of a base for land and naval forces of the USSR within range of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles by means of a long term lease.

3. Provided that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union.

4. Provided that Japan renounces her rights to concessions for coal and oil in Northern Sakhalin.

In accordance with the foregoing, the draft of the protocol concerning the delimitation of the spheres of influence as outlined by the Reich Foreign Minister would have to be amended so as to stipulate the focal point of the aspirations of the Soviet Union south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf.

Likewise, the draft of the protocol or agreement between Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union with respect to Turkey should be amended so as to guarantee a base for light naval and land forces of the USSR on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles by means of a long term lease, including – in case Turkey declares herself willing to join the Four Power Pact – a guarantee of the independence and of the territory of Turkey by the three countries named.

This protocol should provide that in case Turkey refuses to join the Four Powers, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union agree to work out and to carry through the required military, and diplomatic measures, and a separate agreement to this effect should be concluded.

Furthermore there should be agreement upon:

- a) a third secret protocol between Germany and the Soviet Union concerning Finland (see Point 1 above).
- b) a fourth secret protocol between Japan and the Soviet Union concerning the renunciation by Japan of the oil and coal conces-

sion in northern Sakhalin (in return for an adequate compensation).

c) a fifth secret protocol between Germany, the Soviet Union and Italy, recognizing that Bulgaria is geographically located inside the security zone of the Black Sea boundaries of the Soviet Union and that it is therefore a political necessity that a mutual assistance pact be concluded between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, which in no way shall affect the internal regime of Bulgaria, her sovereignty or independence.

In conclusion Molotov stated that the Soviet proposal provided for five protocols instead of the two envisaged by the Reich Foreign Minister. He would appreciate a statement of the German view.

*Schulenburg*

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Source: *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, pp. 258-259.

**Appendix VIII**  
**Russian Denial of Rift With Germany on**  
**June 14, 1941, Eight Days Before**  
**the German Invasion:**  
**TASS Despatch Handed by Molotov to**  
**Schulenburg and Broadcast and Pub-**  
**lished in the Press the Following Day**

Even before the return of the English Ambassador Cripps to London, but especially after his return, there have been widespread rumors of "an impending war between the USSR and Germany" in the English and foreign press. These rumors allege:

1. That Germany supposedly has made various territorial and economic demands on the USSR and that at present negotiations are impending between Germany and the USSR for the conclusion of a new closer agreement between them;
2. That the Soviet Union is supposed to have declined these demands and that as a result Ger-

many has begun to concentrate her troops on the frontier of the Soviet Union in order to attack the Soviet Union;

3. That on its side the Soviet Union is supposed to have begun intensive preparations for war with Germany and to have concentrated its troops on the German border.

Despite the obvious absurdity of these rumors, responsible circles in Moscow have thought it necessary, in view of the persistent spread of these rumors, to authorize TASS to state that these rumors are a clumsy propaganda maneuver of the forces arrayed against the Soviet Union and Germany, which are interested in a spread and intensification of the war.

TASS declares that:

1. Germany has addressed no demands to the Soviet Union and has asked for no new closer agreement, and that therefore negotiations cannot be taking place;

2. According to the evidence in the possession of the Soviet Union, both Germany and the Soviet Union are fulfilling to the letter the terms of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact, so that in the opinion of Soviet circles the rumors of the intention of Germany to break the Pact and to launch an attack against the Soviet Union are completely without foundation, while the recent movements of German troops which have completed their operations in the Balkans, to the eastern and northern parts of Germany, must be explained by other mo-



tives which have no connection with Soviet-German relations;

3. The Soviet Union, in accordance with its peace policy, has fulfilled and intends to fulfill the terms of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact; as a result all the rumors according to which the Soviet Union is preparing for a war with Germany are false and provocative;

4. The summer calling-up of the reserves of the Red Army which is now taking place and the impending maneuvers mean nothing but a training of the reservists and a check on the operations of the railroad system, which as is known takes place every year; consequently, it appears at least nonsensical to interpret these measures of the Red Army as an action hostile to Germany.

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Source: *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, pp. 345-346.

## **Appendix IX**

### **German Communiqué to Moscow on June 21, 1941, One Day Prior To the Invasion of Russia**

**The Soviet Ambassador in Berlin is receiving at this hour from the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs a memorandum giving in detail the facts which are briefly summarized as follows:**

**I. In 1939 the Government of the Reich, putting aside grave objections arising out of the contradiction between National Socialism and Bolshevism, undertook to arrive at an understanding with Soviet Russia. Under the treaties of August 23 and September 28, 1939, the Government of the Reich effected a general reorientation of its policy towards the USSR and thenceforth adopted a cordial attitude toward the Soviet Union. This policy of goodwill brought the Soviet Union great advantages in the field of foreign policy.**

**The Government of the Reich therefore felt en-**

titled to assume that thenceforth both nations, while respecting each other's regimes and not interfering in the internal affairs of the other partner, would arrive at good, lasting, neighbourly relations. Unfortunately it soon became evident that the Government of the Reich had been entirely mistaken in this assumption.

II. Soon after the conclusion of the German-Russian treaties, the Comintern resumed its subversive activity against Germany, with the official Soviet Russian representatives giving assistance. Sabotage, terrorism, and espionage in preparation for war were demonstrably carried out on a large scale. In all the countries bordering on Germany and in the territories occupied by German troops, anti-German feeling was aroused and the German attempt to set up a stable order in Europe was combated. Yugoslavia was gladly offered arms against Germany by the Soviet Russian Chief of Staff, as proved by documents found in Belgrade. The declaration made by the USSR on conclusion of the treaties with Germany, regarding her intention to collaborate with Germany, thus stood revealed as deliberate misrepresentation and deceit and the conclusion of the treaties themselves as a tactical maneuver for obtaining arrangements favorable to Russia. The guiding principle remained the weakening of the non-Bolshevist countries in order the more easily to demoralize them and, at a given time, to crush them.

III. In the diplomatic and military fields it became obvious that the USSR - contrary to the declaration made at the conclusion of the treaties

that she did not wish to Bolshevize and annex the countries falling within her sphere of influence – was intent on pushing her military might westward wherever it seemed possible and on carrying Bolshevism further into Europe. The action of the USSR against the Baltic States, Finland, and Romania, where Soviet claims even extended to Bukovina, showed this clearly. The occupation and Bolshevization by the Soviet Union of the sphere of influence granted to her clearly violated the Moscow agreements, even though the Government of the Reich for the time being accepted the facts.

IV. When Germany, by the Vienna Award of August 30, 1940, settled the crisis in Southeastern Europe resulting from the action of the USSR against Romania, the Soviet Union protested and turned to making intensive military preparations in every field. Germany's renewed efforts to achieve an understanding, as reflected in the exchange of letters between the Reich Foreign Minister and Herr Stalin and in the invitation to Herr Molotov to come to Berlin, brought demands from the Soviet Union which Germany could not accept, such as the guarantee of Bulgaria by the USSR, the establishment of a base for Soviet Russian land and naval forces at the Straits, and the complete abandonment of Finland. Subsequently, the policy of the USSR directed against Germany became more and more obvious. The warning addressed to Germany regarding occupation of Bulgaria and the declaration made to Bulgaria after the entry of German troops, which was of a definitely hostile nature, were as significant in this connection as was the

promise to protect the rear of Turkey in the event of a Turkish entry into the war in the Balkans, given in March 1941.

V. With the conclusion of the Soviet-Yugoslav treaty of Friendship of April 5 last, which was intended to stiffen the spines of the Yugoslav plotters, the USSR joined the common Anglo-Yugoslav-Greek front against Germany. At the same time she tried rapprochement with Romania, in order to induce that country to detach itself from Germany. It was only the rapid German victories that caused the failure of the Anglo-Russian plan for an attack against German troops in Romania and Bulgaria.

VI. This policy was accompanied by a steadily growing concentration of all available Russian forces on a long front from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, against which countermeasures were taken by Germany only later. Since the beginning of the year this has been a steadily growing menace to the territory of the Reich. Reports received in the last few days eliminated the last remaining doubts as to the aggressive character of this Russian concentration and completed the picture of an extremely tense military situation. In addition to this, there are the reports from England regarding the negotiations of Ambassador Cripps for still closer political and military collaboration between England and the Soviet Union. To sum up, the Government of the Reich declares, therefore, that the Soviet Government, contrary to the obligations it assumed,

1) has not only continued but even intensi-

fied its attempts to undermine Germany and Europe;

2) has adopted a more and more anti-German foreign policy;

3) has concentrated all its forces in readiness at the German Border. Thereby the Soviet Government has broken its treaties with Germany and is about to attack Germany from the rear, in its struggle for life. The Fuhrer has therefore ordered the German Armed Forces to oppose this threat with all the means at their disposal.

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Source: *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, pp. 347-349.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Kolasky was born in Northern Ontario to parents who had migrated to Canada before World War I from the Ukrainian province of Bukovyna then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He left home at 15 to seek work during the Great Depression. Like many of his generation he became a radical and joined the Communist Party. As the depression eased he found work in the building trades and continued his education, subsequently earning a BA (Hon.) at the University of Saskatchewan, an MA in History at the University of Toronto and a B Ped at the University of Manitoba. He then taught high school in Manitoba and Ontario.

In 1963 he was selected for leadership training by the Ukrainian pro-communist organizations and the Communist Party of Canada and sent to the Higher Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine in Kiev where he spent the next two years.

Soviet reality soon shattered his illusions. He became aware of a growing movement of dissent with which he became associated. In 1965 he was arrested by the KGB, questioned and later expelled from the USSR.

In 1968 appeared his first book, *Education in Soviet Ukraine: A Study in Discrimination and Russification*. Based on Soviet documents, collected by the author in the USSR and secretly channeled to Canada, the book became a sensation and a best seller.

The author has traveled widely in Canada, the United States and Australia appearing on radio and TV and lecturing at universities and other forums on European affairs and national and other problems within the USSR.

John Kolasky's account of the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact lifts the veil from a crucial act of collaboration between dictators that made WW II virtually inevitable and condemned millions of Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians and Jews to death or a lifetime of Russian communist misrule.

Illustrated, easy to read and understand, the book traces German-Russian military cooperation back to 1921. In a world of intrigue and deceit the dictators Stalin and Hitler rediscovered the short-term advantages of such collaboration. Their infamous 1939 Nonaggression Pact led to the fall of Poland and France as Stalin supported Hitler in his war against the democracies. It ended abruptly when Hitler turned against the Russian dictator. The facts are so remarkable, and have so often been denied, that the author supports them with the texts of key documents.

To ignore this account of infamy would be to invite history to repeat itself.