


1956

## Russo-German Negotiations Leading to the Second World War

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### Recommended Citation

Staar, Richard F. (1956) "Russo-German Negotiations Leading to the Second World War," *Journal of the Arkansas Academy of Science*: Vol. 9, Article 10.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.uark.edu/jaas/vol9/iss1/10>

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RUSSO - GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR\*

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"Russian policy is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." -- Winston Churchill.

"Our policy is simple and clear." -- Iosef Stalin.

German troops occupied all of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939 and violated the Munich Agreement. This occurred despite the fact that the new Czech frontiers (after the annexation of the Sudetenland by Hitler) had been jointly guaranteed by England, France, Germany and Italy. When the Reich notified the USSR of the new occupation, the latter protested and branded the German aggrandizement as "arbitrary, violent and aggressive." Furthermore, the Russians stated that they would not recognize the annexation of the Czech and Slovak provinces in any form whatsoever.

Despite the Soviet protest, events moved rapidly forward. Germany forced Lithuania to cede the port and region of Memel (Klaipeda) only one week later. A German-Rumanian agreement was signed on 23 March which in reality transformed the latter country into a Nazi agrarian appendage. This same month also witnessed the first open German demands upon Poland.

These happenings should have resulted in a natural rapprochement between Russia on the one hand and Britain and France on the other. Only a strong alliance among these three powers could have stopped Hitler and maintained the peace. A defensive pact, drawn

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\*A paper presented at the thirty-ninth annual meeting of the Arkansas Academy of Science on April 22, 1955.

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

up in clear terms and announcing that the Big Three would use force if necessary against further aggression, possibly might have prevented Germany from launching the Second World War.

Instead of this rapprochement, on 17 April 1939 Soviet Ambassador Alexei Merekalov visited the State Secretary at the German Foreign Office, Baron Ernst von Weizsaecker, for the first time since presenting his credentials on 5 June 1938. During the ensuing conversation, the Russian diplomat stated a significant principle. He is reported to have said that

Russian policy has always followed a straight line. Ideological differences of opinion have influenced Russian-Italian relations hardly at all, and neither do they need to disturb Soviet relations vis à vis Germany. Soviet Russia has not utilized the current disputes between Germany and the Western Democracies against us [i.e. against the Germans] and does not wish to do so. There is no reason why Russia could not maintain normal relations with us. Even normal relations can be improved.<sup>1/</sup>

This meeting was followed up on 5 May, when Georgi Astakhov, Counselor of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, was invited to call on Dr. Karl Schnurre, head of the East European and Baltic Section in the Auswaertiges Amt Commercial Policy Division. The Russian made it clear that his country desired a resumption of trade negotiations. In Schnurre's words, "Astakhov then began to speak about the removal of Litvinov<sup>2/</sup> and attempted to ascertain, without posing a direct question, whether this event would lead us [i.e. the Germans] to change our attitude toward the Soviet Union."<sup>3/</sup>

On May 17, Astakhov again called on Schnurre and repeatedly cited Italy as well as the view expressed by Count Ciano that there were no obstacles to a

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

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normal development of political and economic relations between the two countries (Italy and the USSR), even after creation of the Axis. Astakhov also mentioned the Treaty of Rapallo. In reply to one of Schnurre's queries, the Russian characterized the Anglo-Soviet negotiations begun in March with these words: "On the basis of their current status, England would not achieve its desired goal."<sup>4/</sup>

Three days later, Count Werner Friedrich von der Schulenburg (German Ambassador to the USSR) was received by Foreign Affairs Commissar Molotov. On the topic of commercial talks, Molotov stated that the Soviet Government could only agree to their resumption "when the necessary political basis had been created."<sup>5/</sup> He would not give any more definite information. The German Ambassador reported to Weizsaecker that the Russians apparently wanted to obtain further proposals of a political nature.

It was not until 30 May that the Germans actually decided to negotiate with the USSR. In a telegram of that date Weizsaecker informed Schulenburg that, contrary to hitherto planned tactics,<sup>6/</sup> Germany had made the decision to resume definite contact with the Soviet Union.

In describing his conversation with the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin, Weizsaecker reported in this same telegram that he (Weizsaecker) agreed with Molotov's view; i.e., political and economic matters could not be completely separated and that there was a definite connection between the two.

I told the [Russian] Chargé d'Affaires that from our viewpoint economics and politics cannot be completely separated in Russo-German relations and emphasized that I was speaking with him because of British attempts to draw Russia into [the English] camp and that we [Germany] would be compelled to take into consideration the political orientation of Moscow.<sup>7/</sup>

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

---

The Kremlin probably decided to investigate what the Germans would offer them. This is a logical explanation for the lengthy visit two weeks later which the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires paid to the Bulgarian Minister (Dragonov) in Berlin. The two men had not been on an intimate footing before this occasion of 14 June.

Astakhov told the Bulgarian that the USSR was vacillating among three possibilities: (1) a conclusion of a pact with the West, (2) further procrastination in these talks, or (3) a rapprochement with Germany. The Russian diplomat plainly stated that the USSR really desired to achieve the last of these three aims.

In a Foreign Office memorandum Dr. Ernst Woermann, Undersecretary of State and Head of the Political Division, reports Dragonov as having told him that:

The Chargé d'Affaires [Astakhov] mentioned Mein Kampf in this connection. If Germany were to make a declaration that it would not attack the Soviet Union or [that it would] conclude a non-aggression pact with the latter, then the Soviet Union would abstain from any agreement with England. However, the Soviet Union does not know what Germany really desires, apart from certain very nebulous approaches.<sup>8/</sup>

The implication here is quite easy to discern. There was no reason for the call and for the ensuing conversation other than to have Dragonov report the whole matter to the German Foreign Office, which he immediately did. A broad hint was thus provided by the Kremlin to the effect that it was ready to talk business with Berlin.

The Germans immediately took up the offer and arranged for a meeting between their Legation Counselor in Moscow, Gustav Hilger,<sup>9/</sup> and the Soviet Foreign Trade Commissar, Anastas I. Mikoyan. This took place

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

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on 17 June, Hilger having just returned to his post from Berlin. The German offer included the sending of Herr Schnurre to Moscow with authority to negotiate expansion and strengthening of economic relations.

Schulenburg characterized these talks and Mikoyan's tactics as follows:

Mikoyan does not wish to break off our talks, but desires to maintain the negotiations firmly in hand, so as to control their procedure at all times. It apparently does not fit into the current picture of the Soviet government's over-all policy to resume commercial talks, especially when trips by a German envoy plenipotentiary to Moscow create a sensation.

In other words, the USSR manifested little confidence in the good intentions of the Reich. It was apparently believed by top Soviet policy makers that Nazi moves were only Scheinmanoever, intended to influence London and Paris by an ostentatious resumption of trade negotiations with Moscow at this time. Russia possibly feared that after acquiring what political advantages it could from such a move, the Reich would allow these commercial talks to collapse.

The Germans were also busy with their own efforts to make certain that the West would not enter into a pact with Moscow. In the words of a Rumanian diplomat ". . .the real apostle of reconciliation between German National Socialism and Russian National Bolshevism was Nazi Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. . ."11 During the third week of July, Ribbentrop sent his best economic negotiator, Dr. Wohltat to London allegedly for conferences with Robert Hudson, Secretary of the Department for Overseas Trade, on matters of secondary importance.

Wohltat also met a number of times with Sir Horace Wilson, Prime Minister Chamberlain's trusted confi-

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

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dant. The news leaked out that the two men were conferring on a general settlement. Britain was reportedly ready to provide Germany with a loan of one billion pounds sterling. In return, Hitler was to limit his rearmaments, restore Czechoslovakia, and so on. When questioned in the House of Commons, Neville Chamberlain admitted that conferences had taken place, but that his subordinates had acted on their own initiative. Soviet suspicions were aroused, however, just as Ribbentrop presumably had planned.

On 22 July, the Soviet press carried a report to the effect that Soviet-German negotiations on commerce and credit had been opened in Berlin and that they were being conducted between "Comrade" Babarin, Deputy Commercial Representative and Chief of the USSR Trade Mission, and Herr Schnurre.<sup>12/</sup>

Four days later, the German representative invited Babarin and the USSR Chargé d'Affaires Astakhov to dinner. During the conversation, Schnurre took great pains to convince his two guests that there was no threat menacing the USSR on the part of Germany. He even cited Molotov as having declared in his 31 May speech that the Anti-Comintern Pact was really a camouflage for an alliance aimed against the Western democracies.<sup>13/</sup> In a memorandum Schnurre quoted himself as having reasoned with the Russians with these words:

The time is now appropriate but not for the conclusion of a pact with London. One must consider this in Moscow. What can England offer Russia? In the best case participation in an European war and the enmity of Germany, which is hardly a goal to be striven toward by Russia. What can we Germans offer, on the other hand? Neutrality and remaining outside of a possible European conflict and, if Moscow desires, a German-Russian understanding on mutual interests which, just as in earlier times, can

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

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be worked out for the benefit of both countries.<sup>14/</sup>

Schnurre further indicated that he thought Moscow had not made up its mind as to which side it would lean toward. He considered this condition to be an explanation for Russia's receptive attitude, the delay in economic negotiations, as well as the retention of USSR Ambassador Alexei Merekalov in Moscow. Another reason probably involved the excessive distrust which the Russians harbored toward Germany.<sup>15/</sup> All in all, Schnurre concluded that the Nazis should consider the stalemate in Anglo-Soviet talks as a great success for themselves.

The Germans, in the meantime, had been executing their plans with great care. Ribbentrop saw Astakhov on 2 August and gave him to understand that the Reich was favorably disposed toward Russia. He made it plain that if Moscow took a positive attitude, there would be no problem between the Black Sea and the Baltic which could not be settled by the two countries to their mutual satisfaction.

The German Foreign Minister's words included a reference to Poland: "If there is provocation on the Polish side, we will settle our score within one week's time. In such circumstance, I made a slight hint that we would want an understanding with Russia on Poland's fate."<sup>16/</sup> He further told Astakhov that if the Kremlin were interested, Molotov could continue the talks with Schulenburg in Moscow.

On 4 August, The German Ambassador to Moscow called on the Soviet Foreign Affairs Commissar. He repeated all of the arguments used previously by Ribbentrop vis à vis Astakhov in Berlin. Molotov stated that the USSR's policy was defensive and aimed at creating a protective front against aggression. He accused Germany of supporting and promoting the war-like attitude of the Japanese through the Anti-Comintern Pact.



ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

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As a result of this conference, lasting one and a quarter hours, Schulenburg was convinced that the Soviet Union would sign with England and France, "providing that they agree to all Soviet demands."<sup>17</sup> However, he did think that his statements had made some impression upon Molotov, but that it would take a considerable effort to swing the USSR over to the German side.

Ten days later, a telegram from Schnurre to Schulenburg outlined Molotov's latest instructions to Astakhov: the Soviets were interested in discussing the problems of the press, cultural relations, Poland, and former political agreements, in addition to economic matters. This was exactly what Ribbentrop had been awaiting. He despatched a long telegram to Schulenburg on the same day, instructing the latter to contact Molotov and indicate Hitler's readiness to send his foreign minister to Moscow in person for the purpose of setting forth the Fuehrer's views to Stalin.

During the interview with Schulenburg, Molotov brought up a report from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Rome concerning a conference held with Count Ciano at the end of June. The Italian Foreign Minister had informed the Russian during this meeting that there was in existence a plan for the improvement of German-Soviet relations. It consisted of the following three points:<sup>18</sup>

- (1) Germany would not refuse to influence Japan concerning an improvement of its relations with the Soviet Union and a cessation of border conflicts.
- (2) Furthermore, the possibility was raised of a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union and a mutual guarantee of the Baltic States; and
- (3) Germany was prepared for a commercial agreement on a broad basis with the Soviet Union.

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

Schulenburg explained that this information had originally emanated from a report by August Rosso, Italian Ambassador to the USSR, and that it was based primarily on the man's own deductions. They were, however, partly correct. Molotov replied that it was not of the greatest importance whether Rosso's report had actually all been true; the USSR had gained the impression from the negotiations held with Germany that the latter country really had an earnest intention of bringing about a change in mutual relations.

Several concrete questions were brought up, which Moscow wanted elucidated. A significant one pertained to the idea of entering into a non-aggression pact. Was the German Government's attitude positive in this connection, or had the problem not been studied more closely? Molotov said that the USSR wanted to know whether the Reich was prepared to sign a non-aggression pact! This was an important question and had to be answered before Ribbentrop's proposed trip to Moscow.

The Nazi Foreign Minister telegraphed Moscow in reply the very same day he had received the above-mentioned dispatch. Hitler wanted Stalin to know that he was ready (bereit) to conclude an irrevocable non-aggression pact with the USSR for 25 years, to jointly guarantee the Baltic States, to influence Russo-Japanese relations in the direction of an improvement.<sup>19</sup>

Schulenburg was told to stress the need for speed, since Germany would not endure Polish "provocation" indefinitely and thus a clash could come at any moment. Hitler was giving Ribbentrop plenipotentiary authority to negotiate all Russo-German problems and to sign the appropriate treaties. **The latter could leave Berlin for Moscow at any time after 18 August.**

When the German Ambassador saw Molotov and read him the new communication, the Russian transmitted to him the USSR's answer to the note of 15 August.

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

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After the usual protestations of Soviet good will, peaceful intentions, and a corresponding criticism of Nazi foreign policy regarding Russia, the message contained a repetition of the previously enunciated Soviet principle that different political systems can peacefully exist side by side.

Finally, Molotov came to the heart of the matter and set down the following practical approach:<sup>20</sup>

- (1) First a commercial agreement must be concluded. What has been commenced, must also be brought to completion.
- (2) Then after a brief period of time, the Germans can choose between a non-aggression pact or a reaffirmation of the Rapallo neutrality treaty of 1926. In either case, a protocol must be attached. It must include, i. a., the German declaration of August 15th.
- (3) As far as the planned trip of the German foreign minister to Moscow is concerned, the Soviet government prizes this suggestion very highly. The proposed dispatch of such a prominent statesman emphasizes the genuineness of the German government's intentions. These stand in marked contrast to England, who in the person of Strang had sent a second-rate official to Moscow. A journey by the Reich's foreign minister, however, would necessitate thorough preparation.

On 18 August, Berlin ordered its Ambassador to see Molotov and to emphasize Hitler's opinion that quick results were indispensable since German-Polish relations were becoming more acute by the day. The first stage, in the development suggested by Moscow was completed at Berlin in the form of a Russo-German trade agreement (actually signed on 19 August). It

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

was, therefore, time to take up the second point. The German view was that "the non-aggression pact should be simple and contain these three [sic] parts:"<sup>21/</sup>

- (1) Germany and the USSR will under no circumstance engage in war or in any other application of force against each other.
- (2) This pact will come into force immediately with the signatures and is valid irrevocably for a period of 25 years.

Schulenburg was told to oppose appropriately any new Russian objections. He was to emphasize that Ribbentrop would be in a position to sign a special protocol, including spheres of influence or other foreign policy matters, and that only a personal meeting could make such a settlement possible. The German Ambassador was to state plainly the need for an immediate visit by Ribbentrop to Moscow, in view of the probable outbreak of war with Poland.<sup>22/</sup>

On 19 August, none of Schulenburg's arguments for speed seemed to have any effect on Molotov. The Soviets demanded first things first; i.e., the signing and proclamation of the economic agreement. Next, they wanted a specific statement of the points to be covered by the protocol. The German draft of the non-aggression treaty was not exhaustive at all in Soviet eyes. It definitely bore the imprint of haste and improvisation.<sup>23/</sup>

Only thirty minutes after he had left the Kremlin, Schulenburg received word to call on Molotov again that same afternoon. He was told that it would be acceptable to the USSR for Ribbentrop to arrive in Moscow on 26 or 27 August, providing the economic agreements are proclaimed the following day (i.e., on 20 August).

The text of a Soviet draft non-aggression treaty was also handed to the German for transmittal to his government. It was by far more elaborate than that

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

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of the Reich, containing a preamble and five articles as well as a postscript concerning the special protocol.<sup>24/</sup> With the exception of the last reference, the draft followed the model of that series of pacts which the USSR had concluded in the 'thirties with Poland, Latvia, Estonia and other border states.

Instead of being satisfied with the Russian proposal, Berlin began to press Moscow to move up its Schedule. Hitler sent a personal telegram to Stalin on 20 August as an ultimate recourse. He expressed his satisfaction with the commercial agreement and openly stated that, in his opinion, a non-aggression pact with the USSR would mean the establishment of a long-range policy. The Fuehrer accepted the Soviet draft treaty and indicated that the supplementary protocol could only be settled by a personal appearance in Moscow of a responsible German statesman.<sup>25/</sup> The crisis with Poland was again mentioned as the reason for speed. Then, Hitler suggested that Ribbentrop be received in Moscow on 22 or at the latest 23 August.

The Germans were aware of Britain's probable attitude in the event of a Nazi-Polish conflict as far back as April (see Chamberlain's comments in Parliament on the Angle-Polish Treaty of Mutual Assistance<sup>26/</sup>). Confirmation of British support for Poland arrived as late as the middle of August in a secret dispatch from the German Ambassador to the Court of St. James:

Should Germany from any military consideration - ex. gr. in order to forestall an attack believed to be planned by Poland - feel herself forced to take military action against Poland, the fact would have to be reckoned with that Britain would come to Poland's aid. Nor is it likely that Britain would remain neutral if in such a war with Germany Poland were very soon defeated. Here, too, Britain would make her

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

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decision, not from consideration of safeguarding her world position.<sup>27/</sup>

This was probably the reason, therefore, behind the German drive for a pact with the USSR, a pact that would break the threatening encirclement. Schulenburg received Molotov's reply from Stalin only two hours after Hitler's telegram had been delivered. This was in the form of a personal message from Stalin to Hitler, agreeing to Ribbentrop's arrival on 23 August. Molotov added orally that the Soviet government desired the publication of a brief communique on the following day concerning the contemplated pact and the arrival of the Reich's Foreign Minister.

Ribbentrop was in Moscow on the appointed date, having flown from Berlin. He reported directly to Hitler that the Soviets demanded German recognition of two Baltic Sea ports (Libau and Windau) as being within the Russian sphere of influence and requested the Fuehrer's immediate consent. Three hours later, the acquiescence was transmitted to Moscow by telephone.<sup>28/</sup>

The Nazi Foreign Minister described the conversations he had held with Stalin and Molotov during the night of 23/24 August in a long memorandum. The discussions covered Italy, Japan, Turkey, England, France, the Anti-Comintern Pact, the attitude of the German people toward a possible Russo-German non-aggression pact.<sup>29/</sup> The treaty as well as the secret additional protocol were both signed at this session in The Kremlin.

A week later, Molotov submitted the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact to the USSR Supreme Soviet (legislature) for ratification in the course of a speech during the 31 August meeting of the fourth special session. He reviewed the Anglo-French negotiations which had lasted four months in Moscow and claimed that the West had ignored the prime requisite for such negotiations: "reciprocity and equality of ob-

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

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ligations."<sup>30/</sup> Then turning to the pact with Germany the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs stated that it had been signed in accordance with Stalin's foreign policy theses as presented to the XVIII Communist Party Congress only a few months before:

- (1) To continue the policy of peace and of strengthening business relations with all countries;
- (2) To be cautious and not to allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them.

The main importance of the agreement with Germany was characterized by Molotov as the fact that the two largest states in Europe "have agreed to put an end to the enmity between them, to eliminate the menace of war and to live at peace with one another. . . Even if military conflicts in Europe should prove unavoidable, the scope of hostilities will now be restricted. . ." <sup>31/</sup> The joint session of the Union Soviet and the Soviet of Nationalities (both of which bodies make up the USSR Supreme Soviet) unanimously adopted a resolution approving the government's foreign policy and ratifying the pact with Nazi Germany.

Unlike other non-aggression treaties, which the USSR had signed in the past, this one (according to Article 7) came into force "immediately upon signature." <sup>32/</sup> Comparing the German and Soviet drafts, it can be observed that the foregoing stipulation represented point number two in the former. The Russian draft, on the other hand, contained in Article 5 the statement that the pact was to come into force upon ratification which is the usual procedure in treaty relations. Hitler had a reason <sup>33/</sup> for demanding immediate enforcement of the pact.

Another unusual characteristic of the Nazi-Soviet

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

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treaty was the absence of any clause whereby either of the signatory powers could denounce it, if the other party were to commit an act of aggression against a third power. Previous treaties of this type, entered into by the USSR, had included such an "escape" clause. It was quite obvious that the Russians were aware of the imminent attack against Poland.

Article III of the pact stated: "The governments of both signatory parties will remain in contact with each other in the future for consultation, in order to inform themselves mutually on problems which touch upon their common interests." These consultations were to prove important in the very near future, when further negotiations and agreements took place.

The secret additional protocol to the Russo-German pact of 1939 was not made public until 1948; i.e., three years after the United States Army had captured the archives of the German Foreign Office. The top secret negotiations, which resulted in this protocol, were concerned with spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. Definite agreement was reached on the following points:<sup>34/</sup>

- (1) The line of demarcation in the Baltic States was to run along the northern boundary of Lithuania. <sup>/</sup>This gave the USSR a free hand to launch its attack on Finland toward the end of 1939 and to occupy the three Baltic States (including also Lithuania in violation of the secret protocol) in 1940.<sup>7</sup>
- (2) In Poland the boundary was to run along the Narew, Vistula and San Rivers. Both states were later to agree whether a "rump" Poland was to be created or not.
- (3) In South-Eastern Europe, the Russian interest and German "disinterest" in Bessarabia were acknowledged.



ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

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- (4) The protocol was to be kept in strict secrecy.

From this brief resumé concerning the way in which the Nazis conducted their negotiations, it is clear that Hitler was pressed for time. The Soviets presumably knew this,<sup>35/</sup> but themselves were faced with a dilemma. They were certainly afraid of Germany because of the many speeches and other pronouncements on the Drang nach Osten theme. They did not trust England, since the British had given at least one indication of a desire to channel Nazi aggressive aims eastward.

The official Soviet diplomatic history book for this period states that by signing the pact Germany

. . .demonstrated to the whole world its recognition of USSR might and the fear of possible participation by the Soviet state in a struggle against Germany on the side of the Anglo-French bloc. It is self-understood that the agreement with Germany never constituted proof of confidence by the Soviet government in fascist Germany.<sup>36/</sup>

It must be remembered that the leit-motif of power politics has always been expediency. The Kremlin was acting in its own best interests, and that has always been its most important consideration in foreign affairs.

Soon after the German invasion of the USSR, an explanation of why the pact was signed came from Stalin himself when he spoke over Radio Moscow on 3 July 1941 to the nationalities of the Soviet Union. He stated that a pact of non-aggression is essentially an agreement for peace and that the Russian government could not have refused a German proposal for a pact. Then, Stalin asked the rhetorical question: "What did we win by signing the pact?" He concluded that

## RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

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. . . We secured our country peace for a year and a half, and the opportunity of preparing its forces to repulse fascist Germany should she risk an attack on our country despite the pact. This was a definite advantage for us and a disadvantage for fascist Germany.<sup>37/</sup>

Perhaps this was one of the motivations, although the Russians were certainly not prepared for the German onslaught when it came.

### FOOTNOTES

1/ Department of State, Das Nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Sowjetunion (Wash., D.C.: GPO, 1948), St. S. No. 339, p. 2. Henceforth cited as Deutschland und S.U. All excerpts translated by R.F.S.

The more important of these documents have been published in English by R. J. Sontag and J. S. Beddie (eds.), Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941 (Wash., D.C.: GOP, 1948).

2/ Maxim Litvinov, a Jew, was replaced on 4 May 1939 by Vyacheslav Molotov, a Slav, as USSR Foreign Affairs Commissar. This has been interpreted as an indication that Stalin was ready to negotiate with the anti-Jewish Hitler.

Churchill in his memoirs describes the resulting change in German attitude as follows: "The Jew Litvinov was gone, and Hitler's dominant prejudice placated. From that moment the German Government ceased to define its foreign policy, as anti-Bolshevism, and turned its abuse upon the 'pluto - democracies.'" W. S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), p. 367.

3/ Deutschland und S.U., To W IV 1493, p. 3. See also The French Yellow Book (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1940), Item No. 125, 9 May 1939, p. 157.

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

- 4/ Deutschland und S.U., e.o. W IV 1870/39, p. 6.
- 5/ Ibid., Zu Tgb. No. A/1023, p. 7. (Italicized in source. R.F.S.)
- 6/ These tactics had included an offer concerning a joint invasion of the USSR and subsequent partition of that country by Germany and Poland. At the beginning of May 1939, when Acting Foreign Affairs Commissar Vladimir Potemkin was visiting Warsaw, Polish Foreign Minister Jozef Beck told him that Poland had rejected the German offer. Kurjer Polski, Warsaw, 11 May 1939, as quoted in D. J. Dallin, Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 16.
- 7/ Deutschland und S.U., No. 101, p. 17. For a brief description of the Anglo-French negotiations with the USSR, see M. Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941 (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), II, 224-76.
- 8/ Deutschland und S.U., No. 16, p. 23.
- 9/ See the memoirs of this man G. Hilger, The Incompatible Allies (New York: Macmillan, 1953), especially pp. 288-314.
- 10/ Deutschland und S.U., telegram No. 113, 27 June 1939, pp. 27-28.
- 11/ G. Gafencu, Prelude to the Russian Campaign (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1945), p. 37.
- 12/ Deutschland und S.U., Schulenburg to Foreign Office, No. 136, 22 July 1939, p. 36.
- 13/ Molotov's speech before the third session of the USSR Supreme Soviet was entitled "O mezhdunarodnoi polozhenii i vneshnei politike SSSR" and appeared in Pravda, Moscow, No. 156 (7841), 7 June 1939.
- 14/ Deutschland und S.U., memorandum from Schnurre, W 121g, 27 July 1939, p. 38.
- 15/ See the study by J. S. Reshetar, Jr., Problem of Analyzing Soviet Behavior (New York: Doubleday, 1955), especially p. 6.

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 RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS
 

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- 16/ Deutschland und S. U., Ribbentrop to Schulenburg, No. 166, 3 August 1939, p. 43.
- 17/ Ibid., Schulenburg to Foreign Office, 3 August 1939, p. 46.
- 18/ Ibid., Memorandum from Schulenburg, No. 36, 16 August 1939, p. 60.
- 19/ Ibid., Telegram from Ribbentrop to Schulenburg, p. 61.
- 20/ Ibid., from Schulenburg to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 182, 16 August 1939, pp. 66-67.
- 21/ In the text, Ribbentrop refers to three points; however, there were apparently only two. Ibid., Ribbentrop to Schulenburg, Telegram No. 185, 18 August 1939, p. 72.
- 22/ For a critical appraisal of Polish foreign policy during this period, see S. Mackiewicz, Colonel Beck and His Policy (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1944), p. 138.
- 23/ This answer, of course, was being given to the previous German note. In this whole series of exchanges, it is striking that Molotov has absolutely no power of decision. He has no latitude in the negotiations and can only voice a decision when his government has passed judgment on the matter. A good example of this follows.
- 24/ Deutschland und S.U.; for full text, see p. 72.
- 25/ Ibid., Ribbentrop to Schulenburg, 20 August 1939, pp. 73-74.
- 26/ House of Commons Official Report, Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series, vol. 345, columns 2296-7, 6 April 1939. See also The British War Blue Book (New York: Ferrar and Rinehart, 1939), p. 48.
- 27/ Dirksen to Weizsaecker on 18 August 1939 in the Dirksen Papers (1938-1939): Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War (New York: International Pub., 1948), II, p. 142. Although this source was published

ARKANSAS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

under Soviet auspices, there is no reason to suspect that the particular document cited above is not genuine.

- 28/ Deutschland und S.U. See footnote 1 on p. 80.
- 29/ Ibid., marked "Very Secret! State Secret!" on pp. 80-84.
- 30/ V. M. Molotov, The Meaning of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact (New York: Workers' Library Pub., no date), p. 7.
- 31/ Ibid., p. 12.
- 32/ Deutschland und S.U., p. 85.
- 33/ Hitler's reason, of course, was that "D" Day for the German armies deployed against Poland had been set for 25 August. A former German diplomat has described the exact time, when the first order (later postponed) for invasion of Poland was issued: ". . .Henderson's [British Ambassador] auto may not have even left the courtyard of the Reich's Chancery, when Hitler - it was about 14:30 o'clock (24 August) - gave the final order for invasion to his adjutant, Colonel Schmundt, [and set the time] at five o'clock the next morning. H.B. Gisevius, Bis zum Bittern Ende (Zurich: Fritz und Wasmuth Verlag, A. G., 1946), II, p. 132. Trans. by R.F.S.
- 34/ Deutschland und S.U., p. 72.
- 35/ Already in the fall of 1938, Georgi Dimitrov (Comintern Secretary) had published a chronological chart of Hitler's plan for conquest as follows:

Austria .....	spring 1938
Czechoslovakia .....	fall 1938
Hungary .....	spring 1939
Poland .....	fall 1939
Yugoslavia .....	spring 1940
Rumania, Bulgaria .....	fall 1940
France, Benelux .....	spring 1941
USSR .....	fall 1941

RUSSO-GERMAN NEGOTIATIONS

- Bolshevik, Moscow, XXI-XXII (1938), p. 51, as quoted by Dallin, op. cit., p. 11.
- 36/ V. P. Potemkin (ed.), Istoriya diplomatii (Moscow: Ogiz, 1945), III, p. 690. Trans. by R.F.S.
- 37/ I. V. Stalin, O velikoi otechestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soyuza (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1944), 4th ed., p. 9. Trans. by R.F.S.