

V. THE GERMAN-SOVIET NON-AGGRESSION PACT *

How does the Communist Party in America reconcile the Soviet Government's new friendship for the Nazi German Reich when it is opposed to fascism in all forms?

The Soviet-German Pact is an agreement between two powers not to attack each other; this is quite independent of opinions about the governmental or economic system in each country. It has been the basis of Soviet foreign policy since the existence of that government to maintain peaceful relations with all powers, to abstain from all aggression, and wherever possible to express this in mutually-agreed pacts with other powers. American Communists, as well as the Soviet Union, have consistently advocated organized collective security among all governments wanting to maintain peace, so as to present aggressors with the certainty of a solid front against them. But it became clear, after months of protracted negotiations in Moscow, that Mr. Chamberlain would never agree to a system of organized collective security, that after destroying the League of Nations he was by no means ready to establish a substitute for it, that he was merely trying to inveigle the Soviet Union into war without a single guarantee that Mr. Chamberlain would not repeat, at a moment chosen by him, his exploit of 1938 at Munich. Mr. Chamberlain, despite the sharpest warnings, evidently considered that he had the Soviet Union in his pocket and could dispose of its forces at his own sweet pleasure. The Soviet Union was finally forced to proceed to organize peace in its

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own way. That this way is effective is proved by the admitted smashing of the axis world alignment, which was the chief danger to American interests, the immediate lessening of international tensions, and the improved position in world affairs of the two greatest and most peaceful powers, the Soviet Union and the United States. This is disappointing to those who wanted to entrap the Soviet Union, and the United States finally, into a war policy. As long ago as May 4, 1938, I denounced such a policy, in a debate at Madison Square Garden, when I said: "Anyone who advocates world peace in this practical way will be charged with being in favor, in reality, of a preventive war against the fascist powers. . . . But what do we actually propose? We propose to make peace profitable and war unprofitable. We do not propose war or any steps that would lead to war." The Soviet-German Pact is a big step in the application of such a policy, failing its general application which had been refused. If President Roosevelt's admirable appeals for peaceful settlements obtain any results, it can only be along the line of similar agreements by other nations. The Soviet-German agreement is thus the best current example of the way to peace. Duff Cooper, British imperialist, complained in this morning's papers, that Chamberlain "has allowed Russia to slip off the hook." It is in the interests of world peace that not only Russia, but the U.S. as well, shall never be impaled on Chamberlain's hook. Jules Sauerwein, French nationalist and surely no Communist, wrote this morning to prove that even the position of France has been greatly improved by the Pact and its consequences. Japan is crying with rage, along with Chamberlain, but that should not cause Americans to lose any sleep.

Is it true that while there are vast differences between the communist, Nazi and socialist forms of government, they are essentially the same totalitarian systems of government or state capitalism and naturally there is sympathy between them?

No, this line of propaganda is completely false, and has the great disadvantage of causing people who believe it to completely misunder-

stand what is going on in the world. The Soviet Union represents the common ownership of the national economy by the whole people; the Nazi and fascist systems represent the complete domination by a few monopoly capitalists. The Soviet Union represents greatest cultural and economic progress; the Nazi and fascist systems represent retrogression in culture and economics. And so on. No, there is no point of sympathetic contact between the communist and Nazi system, although it should be emphasized that there is deep sympathy and common interests between the Russian and German peoples.

How would you, Mr. Browder, as a Communist, view the Russian economic support of Hitler and his axis allies in a war against the so-called Democratic or Peace Front?

I cannot conceive of any such support, especially since the present pact has cracked the axis, and I propose that the U.S. Government should take the lead in working out an international agreement, whereby our country, the Soviet Union, and every other country that could be induced to join, would concertedly withhold our economic resources from all war-makers. That would mean, of course, that the U.S. would finally have to halt its shameful war-trade with Japan, which has been sustaining the criminal war against the Chinese people.

I took care to say "so-called" Democratic Front because in communist terminology I have seen France called the Bourgeois Republic and Britain a caste-ruled Commonwealth, but they do champion representative government as Stalin professes to do. Then in a showdown, which would seem ultimately inescapable, which side would the Communists take?

We Communists support the preservation and extension of democracy, without idealizing the forms in which it has developed in France or Britain, or even in the U. S. We will always be found in support of democracy against every anti-democratic and reactionary attack. If the so-called "democratic powers" will make it possible, on

conditions of equality, for the Soviet Union to join such a front internationally, that would improve the situation very much. But today the press, and many public commentators, seem to be happy at what they consider an opportunity to violently push the Soviet Union out of any alignment with the democratic powers, although they hopefully speak of their ambitions to draw Mussolini onto their side. That is a very peculiar conception of a democratic front, to speak mildly.

Do you think it would be to Stalin's advantage to view complacently or even to facilitate war between the axis and the democratic powers and so gain ultimately by their mutual exhaustion?

No, I think that the Soviet Union, which of course includes Stalin, wishes to do everything possible to limit and extinguish the wars that are going on, and to prevent the outbreak of any general war. The concept contained in your question was taken not from any Soviet thought or action, but directly copied from Chamberlain's expressed plan to embroil Germany and the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet Union does not copy Chamberlain in any way.

Is it true that there is a common bond between the Totalitarians, Nazis, Fascists, and Bolsheviks, as to their common persecution and detestation of religion?

No, it is not true. The very conception of religious freedom was first introduced into Russian life by the Soviet Revolution of 1917, while in Germany it was the Nazi regime which wiped out centuries of progress toward religious freedom. The very form of this question, despite its wide prevalence, displays a complete lack of knowledge of the history of religion in the various countries.

In 1917, in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty by which Russia deserted the Allies in the World War, when Germany supported Lenin and Trotsky in the Bolshevik Revolution, was there not a curious parallel made in this new so-called Non-Aggression Pact between Nazi Germany and communist Russia? Both these covenants were decidedly not open

covenants openly arrived at, but secret agreements suddenly revealed. How does this thought of diplomatic dealing square with communistic professions of fellowgoing with democratic processes in international relations?

First, I must straighten out the facts of history. Brest-Litovsk was the result of the Allies deserting Russia, not the other way round. Next, Germany did not support the Bolshevik Revolution, but made deadly war against it, invading and seizing great territories. Further, there is little value in any analogy between those days and the present, because Brest-Litovsk was forced upon a weak Russia, because of her weakness, while the pact under present discussion arises from the great strength of Russia, and her emergence, as the Soviet Union, as the most decisive force in world politics. There is such a world of difference, that all attempts at analogy will fail, even when we get our historical facts straightened out.

The Communists of France have decided unanimously to go along with their government. Then, as in the last World War, it is not patriotism against hegemony, based on the communist claim that all governments should be one in accord, a popular front, or to put it briefly, Mr. Browder, doesn't communism go out the window when patriotism comes in the door?

I think I get the general drift of your question, and the answer is no, that communism and patriotism do not exclude one another. The Communists of France, of course, have not decided to go along with their government; they have decided unanimously to fight for the interests of their country, but that means they must try to force their government to change its course, and finally come to an agreement with the Soviet Union instead of playing the Chamberlain game. American Communists fight for American national interests, without in any way weakening their communist principles, and that is one of the reasons we are happy at the Soviet-German Pact, because it has improved the position of our own country also. If patriotism means, not idle boasting and arrogant assumptions of superiority over

other people, but the defense of the interests of the great majority of the working people of the nation, then the Communists of this and every other land are among the best patriots.

How do you think Stalin's treaty with the Reich changes the Communist's attitude toward Japan, for in one case Stalin makes friends with Hitler, the god of one system, while making war on the Japanese Emperor, the sun-god of another system, both truly totalitarian?

Again I think we must straighten out the facts. The Soviet Union is neither making war against nor friends with either Hitler or the Japanese Emperor; just as our own President's peace policy, despite reactionary slanders, is neither making war nor adopting favored friends. It is striving to maintain peaceful and friendly relations with both the German and the Japanese peoples. Long ago it offered a pact of non-aggression to Japan, but the Japanese Government rejected it, and has indulged in a long series of provocations which have strained the relations between the two countries. The Soviet Union has given, and continues to give, assistance to nations which have been attacked by Japan and Germany, and which fought for their national independence. The Soviet Union is itself not afraid of any attack, from any quarter, for it is fully prepared to deliver two blows for any one that it receives, and such preparedness is the surest guarantee of peace in the present-day world. As for the American Communists, as distinct from the Soviet Union—after all we are Americans, and cannot speak for but only about the Soviet Union—we think that the United States could well afford to develop its own particular application of the consistent peace policy shown by the Soviet Union. We would also have our difficulties with Mr. Chamberlain, as well as with Japan and Germany, but I cannot agree with those who think that Americans are too stupid to hold their own in the great puzzle of international relations. I think that our country too, following our President's admirable initiative, can help organize peace in the world, instead of helplessly drifting into war.