

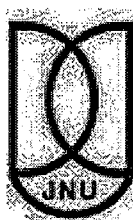
SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS NAZI GERMANY,

1933-1941

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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## DECLARATION

I declare the dissertation entitled "SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS NAZI GERMANY, 1933-1941", submitted by me in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any degree of this university or any other university.

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## CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*DEDICATED TO MY PARENTS*

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## **Abbreviations**

CPSU- Communist Party of Soviet Union

DBFP- Document(s) on British Foreign Policy

DGFP- Document(s) in German Foreign Policy

DMZ- Demilitarized Zone

KGB- Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Bezopasnosti

KPD-German Communist Party

NSDAP-National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (National Socialist Workers' Party)

OKH- Oberkommando des Heeres

RSHA-Reichssicherheitshauptamt

SD-Sicherheitsdienst

SS- German Secret Police

TASS-Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza

USSR- Union of Socialist Soviet Republic

VSNKH- Verkhovnyi Soviet Narodnogo Khoziaistva or Supreme Council for the National Economy

## **Introduction**

Seven decades have passed since the beginning of the Second World War but the question is why the memory of the war remains still very clear in our mind? It is because the sacrifices and suffering inflicted by the war were so great unlike any other war that even today millions of people continue to give serious attention to the mention of such event. Until now the blame game is on and cannot corner down as to who started the war, the western powers were refused to accept that it originates from them and thwarting towards Russia. In the midst of this blame game on the seventieth anniversary last year Angela Merkel declared it was Germany who started the Second World War.

On the seventy first anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War it is noteworthy to once again revisit history because knowledge of history gives one a deeper understanding of the present society. So I think it is logical and legitimate to look back the common links between Hitler and Stalin, their ideological differences and its spheres of foreign policy influences, for it could present as an issue, radically new perspectives on old issues.

This is a study of the relationship between Soviet Union and Germany. The historical legacy of Russo-German relations suggests a complex mixture of enmity and entente, alternately presenting both opportunities and threads which ultimately led to the outbreak of the Second World War. Though Germany and Soviet Union were portrayed as the devilish actors on stage, it was the policy of unseen hands that aggravated the war.

The relationship between the two countries could be traced back from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a period of European renaissance. E.H Carr has highlighted in his book “the Soviet impact on the western world” how European influences poured into Russia and had shaped Russian history for more than hundred years. He said western influences could be seen from different nationality but German influence was different and one of the strongest. According to him

“French intellectuals brought to the Russian ruling classes the rationalist and cosmopolitan doctrines of the enlightenment; Italian architects left their mark in the palace and mansions of Petersburg and beyond;

British merchants who had made the first contact with the Russia as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century were succeeded by British engineers and technicians of all kinds but the most powerful influence came from Germany. The dynasty was predominantly German in blood; the court was German; the German ruling class in the Baltic provinces provided an altogether disproportionate share of able generals and administrators; and the whole of Russians officials life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had acquired a strong Germanic tinge finally the 19<sup>th</sup> century come the western industrial technique and western capitalist finance-a process not yet completed in 1914” (E.H.Carr,1946:107)

This is how E.H Carr portrayed the influence of Germans on the life of Russians, the closest European relations Russians shared in the past was with the Germans.

There is a big policy change in the Soviet Union in the period when Hitler consolidated the power in January 1933, Soviet Union realized the potential danger that is looming in their way by the Nazis ideology of anti-Semitism, anti-communism the Soviet Union switched from an anti-western and anti-capitalist policy to apparent cooperation with the Western powers, and entered the League of Nations in September 1934. In the following year, Moscow also called for "Popular Fronts," that is, alliances between communists and social democrats in European countries.

The shift in policy or Soviet spheres of influence policy was most conspicuous with a distinctive character and motivation during the outbreak of the War. In the short period of war the foreign policy acquired many faces, in the beginning of the war, policy was one of a limited spheres of influence agreement with Nazi Germany designed to meet immediate and urgent security needs later on there was a Soviet achieved its foreign policy objectives in the Balkans as a counter to German hegemony in Europe following the fall of France in June 1940. At the end of the War, the policy of Grand Alliance construction of a sphere of influence across Eastern Europe followed by the unilateral imposition of a Soviet's sphere of influence which ultimately led to the cold war.

### **Significance of the study**

Historical studies of the event are considered important in many ways, the record of the past always tells us something about what the alternatives will be, it provide no unfailling

guide to the future. The study of Stalin and Hitler's totalitarian dictatorships could serve as a vital reminder of the perils of dictatorships and warning to any nation that would place its future in the hands of a single ideologue. We should read history deeply not for the sake of mucking up to remember the event but to learn from the experience of man in order to make history anew.

The foreign policy of a country is determined by its geographical location, geopolitics, sense of collective security, territory, climate, resources, tradition, population etc. In long run the policy of any state is often determined by their economic and social system, in the same way Soviet foreign policy is guided by the such principles, the conception of the soviet view of international relation has rested on Lenin's theory of imperialism which originated from Marx as prof. Tulsi Ram (2003) stated "The most crucial factor in the framework of Soviet policy constitutes ideas, concepts and programmes that originated from Marx, developed by Lenin and later by the Communist International (Comintern)", Lenin was the first one to implement socialist foreign policy in practice after the October revolution in Soviet Union.

Socialist foreign policy contrasted with that of the Capitalist foreign policy as argued by Gromyko, Khvostov and Ponomaryov in their book History of Soviet Foreign Policy; according to them the driving force behind capitalist foreign policy is the desire of the ruling class to consolidate the exploiting system and expand the sphere of exploitation by seizing markets, strategic position and foreign territories by subjugating others. While socialist foreign policy rested on the planned economic development, society free of exploitation, egalitarian patriotism and dedicated to the interest of the country with internationalism, thus socialist foreign policy primarily fulfills the domestic needs and further it aided in strengthening the defensive wall of socialism in the world, thereby protecting the vital interest of all countries. Socialist policy contributes towards the social emancipation of all mankind, hence keeping this in mind on November 8, 1917; the first foreign policy act of the new socialist state adopted the decree on peace.

### **Purpose of the study**

The nature and purpose of the study is to find the historical development of events in understanding the historical relevance of Soviet Union's policy towards Nazi Germany from Hitler's reign till the end of World war second

It is of great interest to know the alliance of Hitler who preached hatred to communism and Stalin who always condemned of Nazism or fascism in a common platform. The ideological difference took backseat in the face of immediate gain between the two power regimes. The clash of interest of the Soviet Union with that of Nazis was imminent in the long run. The Soviet impending suspicion of invasion by Nazi Germany despite Non-aggression pact clearly shaped the Soviet Policy toward Hitler's regime. Therefore, it is of great interest to understand the impact of the policy and its changes at various points in the history, their significance and their relevance in the history of the world.

The importance of the Nazi-Soviet pact for the future course and evolution of Soviet spheres of influence policy cannot be over-emphasized. It initiated a practice and tradition of such deals, including secret ones. It defined what the content of a sphere of influence agreement became for the Soviets basically, exclusive freedom of political and diplomatic maneuver in a country or designated area. It also provided the context and stepping stone for an ambitious attempt in 1940 to significantly expand the Soviet sphere of influence on the USSR's western borders. The emergence of a specific Soviet policy of spheres of influence in the Balkans was prompted by a developing crisis in relations with Germany in summer 1940.

### **Scope of the study**

In terms of scope the study will be limited to the period 1933 to 1941, when Hitler came to power in January 1933, the soviet foreign policy took a drastic change having realized the potential danger of the Nazi's ideology of anti-Semitism and anti-communism, Soviet Union breaks their isolation and in cooperated with the western powers with their interplay of political manipulation. The sudden drastic change took the volte-face of the

previous foreign policy and thus it remains incomplete without the re-examination of the successive Soviet foreign policy. Though the main emphasis of Soviet policy was always on securing peace, in the pretext of facilitating peace Soviet Union had undergone different phase of manipulation to suit the vagaries of the prevailing situation.

### **Background**

The first foreign policy act of the new socialist state after the October revolution was the adoption of the decree on peace, the main concern of this policy was to prevail peace to the war torn state. Soviet Union was desperately in need of time to heal the wounds inflicted by the war, and critically in search of economic restoration which will pave way to the building of socialism, so in order to flourish their economy Lenin adopted the New Economic Policy (NEP) through this policy Soviet can influence on the international revolution and this policy will become the epitome of the economic development for a future socialist states. Soviet leaders realized that peace and economic co-operation with the other countries are the favorable international conditions required by the Soviet Russia before socialism could be built successfully and hence several measures were taken up to promote economic development; their economic maneuvers includes various contacts with the western countries and trade pact negotiation on the diplomatic level.

However the imperialist attitude towards Soviet Russia was to subjugate and prolong her isolation by not according her recognition and despites Soviet's much negotiation and concession to strengthen peace they signed trade agreements but "the imperialist refused to establish normal diplomatic relations" ( Gryomko:171) with her. In the absence of political relations the economic treaties were signed by the imperialist world in the early nineteenth century "the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement of March 16,1921, paved the way to the Soviet-German Trade Agreement which was signed on May 6, 1921" ( ibid) and in the following year the similar agreements were signed with other European capitalist countries, however with the economic upsurge of Soviet union through the adoption of New Economic Policy and the growing popularity among the working class and oppressed people and their growing international influence induced the western powers to extend de jure recognition to the USSR(ibid : 201) from the mid 1920,and thus,

in 1924-25 the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with 13 countries in different continents, signed a number of trade agreements.(ibid:232). Soviet was given de jure recognition from Germany by the treaty of Rapallo in 1922 official diplomatic relations between Soviet and Germany began from this treaty, later on she obtained a diplomatic recognition from Britain in 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1924, followed by USA and France. To enhance Soviet-German relation and to renew their trade agreement of 1921, both countries signed the Berlin treaty of neutrality on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1926.

Throughout 1920s the Soviet policy was devoted mostly to the peaceful intervention and peaceful co-existence, in spite of capitalist's policy of hostility and economic sabotage resorted mainly to financial and economic blockade the immediate need of the Soviet audacious plan was to intensify Russia's need for peace because hostility towards the capitalist world did not however rule out a certain measure of co-operation with them and the need of the situation in Russia was "peace" to build a successful socialism.

The newly formed Socialist state was aware of the fact that the fundamental condition for the successful building up of Socialism was the economic independence of their own and the Soviet leaders knew that only when the economy of the country is secured, the country can guaranteed against the dangers of the capitalist thread, so the Soviet union was devoted fully to the building up of their economy.

The main emphasize was to build up industry of their own so for the process of industrialization which was to receive an impetus with the adoption of the five year plan had actually be founded on the decision of the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of December 1925 (Max, Beloff:10) the Soviet kicked off their famous five year plan in 1927 with Stalin's clear objective of the plan is "the conversion of our country from an agrarian to an industrial country able to produce the machinery it needs by its own efforts- that is in essence the basis of our general line" (CPSU:279) The 15<sup>th</sup> party congress of December 1927 has also suggested the collectivization of agriculture because food security is the backbone of all kind of securities and to have adequate supply of food to the industrial and factory workers to strengthen their defense industry Russia adopted collectivization along with industrialization and thus, the country begins its five year plan in collaboration

with the outside world, economic co-operation and contact with the capitalist countries for strengthening industry laid the basis for their own heavy industry and electrification. Heavy machines were imported from the capitalist countries while these imports had to be paid for by immediate exports of their natural resources. Whatever the military aspects of industrialization, the immediate effect of the plan was to strengthen Soviet's need for peace.

The imperialist powers were not blinded to the fact that their refusal to grant credits had not affected the economic growth of USSR moreover imperialist powers were infuriated by the theme of Communist International's emancipation of all mankind, rendering support to all the oppressed, to the labor movements in capitalist countries and extending help towards the struggle against the colonial movements of imperialism as a result of which there was a growth of national liberation movement in Asia and Africa particularly in China where the revolutionary civil war broke out. Series apprehensions aroused in the capitalist world which aggravated towards waging a war against USSR.

The capitalist powers set to form a United Front against Soviet Union. British diplomacy initiated the movement to form an anti Soviet bloc. British were merely camouflaging their anti-Soviet designs and their control over the East European and Baltic states was their tactics to use them as a launching pad against Soviet Russia, with the initiation of Great Britain a conference was held at Locarno in October 1925 which was attended by Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Belgium and Czechoslovakia. "The Locarno agreement were directed against the USSR" "the Rhine Pact, signed at Locarno was designed to guarantee the Western powers against the revanchist aspirations of Germany and direct these aspiration to the East "( Gryomko :236). In the face of these capitalist efforts to form a united front against the USSR, the Soviet government directed its efforts to sign treaties of non aggression and neutrality which would prevent the signatories from joining anti- Soviet bloc.

The Soviet government was aware to the thread stemming from the British action and the menace of war is felt everywhere towards the late nineteen twenties so in order to combat the capitalist policy of pushing neighboring countries into a war against the Soviet Union,



the Soviet policy inclined towards the line of alignment with dependent and colonial countries and making rapprochement with the countries defeated in the imperialist war. In the following year of soviet's quest for allies, she looked towards Eastern Europe and Baltic state in order to eschew for an invasion of the Soviet Union by capitalist country. The treaty of neutrality, non-aggression and non-participation in hostile activity was signed between Soviet Union and Turkey on December 17, 1925, this policy aimed at promoting peaceful friendly relation. Soviet Union also signed neutrality and non-aggression treaty with Afghanistan on August 31, 1926 this treaty strengthens their diplomatic relations between them. Relation with Iran was also progressed successfully after a prolong interruption by the Britain's anti Soviet intrigues and finally signed the neutrality treaty, trade and economic agreement on October 1, 1927. "Moscow succeeded in negotiating a treaty of friendship and neutrally with Lithuania in 1926 and trade pact with Latvia in 1927. Soviet offered Poland a treaty of non-aggression and mutual commitment not to enter into hostile relations with the other countries but she declined the offer and suggested" instead of bilateral treaty the Soviet should sign a multilateral treaty with Poland, Baltic countries, Finland and Rumania" but Soviet Union understand the policy behind this suggestion , the "intension was to set up a bloc of border states led by Poland in opposition to Soviet Union"( Gryomko :246) besides this Poland along with Britain pressurize Latvia and Estonia to refuse the Soviet offers to sign non aggression pacts and" not until after the Kellogg Briand pact<sup>1</sup> of 1928 outlawing war, however were the soviets also able to induce Poland Romania and Estonia to agree to treaties of non aggression. On Feb. 9 1929, the east pact or called Litvinov protocol was signed with these nations in Moscow". ( Alvin, Rubinstein:79)

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<sup>1</sup> . Kellogg Brian pact is a pact of renouncing war as a means of national policy , it condemned war as a means of settling international conflicts and bound its signatories to settle conflicts by peaceful means. Soviet U the only country working for the world peace was not invited for the pact but she found it necessary to use the pact in the interests to strengthen peace so she overlooked to the loopholes of the treaty and propose for negotiation and finally signed along with her neighbors' in 1929.

In the heat of worldwide economic ruin of 1929-1932, Soviet Union achieved the highest rate of industrialization which constitute the economic foundation of socialism, economic development grew rapidly and heavy industries expanded swiftly despite the formidable difficulties, Socialism was making headway along the entire front and this achievements continue to evoke fear and malice in the capitalist world, moreover the decline of capitalist industry brought mass unemployment which led to the sharp upsurge of class struggle with the revolutionary influence of Soviet Union.

The fear and hatred of the imperialist towards Soviet Union became so acute that they were determined to obstruct the fulfillment of five year plan by adopting the policy of discrimination they attempted to hinder economic development of USSR by launching a savage anti-Soviet propaganda campaign urging for a "crusade" accusing Soviet Union of religious "persecution", "forcing labour", "Soviet dumping" (gryomko :276-78). It was noted in the decision of the 16<sup>th</sup> congress of the CPSU, held in 1930 "the hatred of the international bourgeoisie for the world's only socialist country and its revolutionary influence was expressed in efforts to organize an economic blockade and stifle the Soviet export trade, in an anti-soviet campaign by clericals in furious baiting of the USSR in the bourgeois and social democratic press and the continuing preparation for war against the Soviet Union".(ibid:299). The hatred became so great that in 1930 the capitalist countries declared economic war to the Soviet Union and USA became the first country to discriminate against Soviet goods followed by France and other western countries. They alleged that Soviet five year plan was an exclusively military and defense project which threatened the western security they, therefore encouraged the Fascist aggression and directed their efforts towards pushing Germany against USSR pulling Japanese aggression in a war with USSR.

This capitalist aggression of hatred towards USSR and deteriorated relations gave Stalin a sense of frustration about the development of Soviet relations with the capitalist countries and encouraged him to hold on to the active conduct of foreign policy but emphasize on the strengthening of economic development and military power. The following year Soviet Union withdrawn from the external affairs and isolated their stand from the

capitalist environment and focused on the internal building up of her own regime that brought huge changes in the socialist economy but this period of isolation from the capitalist world ended with the coming of Hitler or the rise of fascist aggression in Germany.

### Rise of Hitler

Despite the imperialist power's policy of discrimination, Soviet foreign policy rested on the policy of peace and this policy enabled the Soviet Union to carry out its first five year plan which completed in 1933. Under this plan Soviet Union went forward with socialist industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture. Economic ties between Germany and the USSR were a major factor in the growth of Soviet industrial strength. Germany was a far more important trade partner for the Soviet Union than vice versa, because of the limited market for Soviet raw material exports: imports from Germany, on the other hand, were particularly significant during the first Five Year Plan, when they constituted half of all Russian imports.

The first chapter will analyze on the ideological considerations in the conceptualization and formation of Foreign Policy. The role of Soviet socialist ideology and German fascist ideology, their ideological differences played a very important influence in framing of foreign policy. The successive chapters are all about the responses of the ideological differences of the capitalist, imperialist and the socialist ideology.

This chapter will focus on the Soviet response to the ever changing contents and strategies of Germany from the time when Hitler came to power until the outbreak of the Second World War. The rise of Hitler and the thread of war at Far East propelled Russians into the international arena in search of greater security. The dramatic volte-face of Soviet foreign policy and their struggle for collective security in the menace of fascist aggression will be the main focus of this chapter. Later part of this chapter also discusses about the western powers connivance of Hitler's aggression manifested in their policy of appeasement landed Soviet Union into semi isolation. Thus the changing dynamics of

their foreign policy becomes the reasons for the estrangement and the factors for the rapprochement in their relations.

The third chapter extensively discuss about the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, their different view on the evolution of the pact, analyse their blame game as to which side negotiated the pact. The study will also cover the significance of the pact to both Germany and Soviet Union. I would also like to examine why Stalin signed the pact despite the fact that Germany had undergone strings of betrayal towards Europe and Soviet Union. It also highlighted what the world thinks of the pact and reveal how the western democratic powers plotted to precipitate German-Soviet war and the western powers' pretentious act to remain calm.

The last chapter examines how Nazi-Soviet pact dragged Soviet Union into the disastrous war, and how Stalin did in the midst of war achieves his foreign policy objectives in the Baltic States. It also analyses Stalin's successful expansion in the Blakans and Soviet's territorial acquisition due to non aggression pact was lost in a matter of few days which swept Soviet Union into a major war.

The changing pattern of the Soviet policy towards Germany will be the major concern of my study. The study will involve the historical method of analysis of the soviet foreign policy. Available original sources such as government Documents on foreign policy and original materials related to the eve of Second World War will be used but it will mainly depend on the secondary sources such as existing written accounts, official data, journals, books etc.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE INFLUENCE OF IDEOLOGY IN FOREIGN POLICY

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The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was an era of troubles and dramatic events. The century has witnessed the First World War which engulfed the whole world, the Great depression, which shook and dislocate the world economy, the Second World War which resulted in the cold war, the erected Berlin wall which divide Germany into Western and Eastern Germany were the upshots of the ideological differences. It was a period of ideological struggle and political conflict. In order to understand and measure ideology's contribution to this famous turbulent of war is to look briefly how the word and concept are being used.

#### 1.1 Concepts of ideology

There is no universal acceptance of ideology because ideology can and does mean different meaning to different people. Concepts of ideology is heavily charged with political connotations and widely used in everyday life with the most diverse significations' (Jorge Larrain 1986, p. 13) Ideology is a system of views, beliefs, thoughts, convictions and ideals expressing the interest of a definite class Ideology. However the body of thought itself from which the political philosophy or theory are drawn is not simply ideology, 'it only become ideology when interpreted and put to political use'. (Valdez,Jonathan, 1993, p. 9). In Encyclopedia Britannica ideology means "any kind of action oriented theory or any attempt to approach politics in the light of a system of ideas". (Encyclopedia Britannica p-194)

Valdez has identified four most conceptions of ideology firstly ideology as a means of communication, secondly ideology as a device to legitimate party rule, thirdly as the expression of the world view of Soviet elites and lastly ideology as the rationalization of policy. He concludes by defining ideology in the Soviet context as the interpretation given by political actors to the canons of Marxian-Leninism which served the political purposes of the above functions. (Valdez p. 13-14) Lenin extended the concept of

ideology in connection with the interest of the ruling class. He defines the term to mean political consciousness linked to the interests of the various classes.

One should not confused ideology with nationalism. Nationalism is certainly related to some ideologies which often tend to overlap with racism and imperialism. In this way it induces confusion and chaos in the worst ideological fashion. Therefore we should always keep in mind that ideologies possess a distinctive characteristic of universal applicability, unrestricted by place or ethnicity which is absent in nationalism. Moreover pragmatism should leave aside from ideology. Pragmatism and ideological cannot be regarded as two simple alternatives rather they should be placed at the two ends of a continuum.

## **1.2 The role of ideology and international relations**

The ideological considerations in the conceptualization and formation of foreign policy have taken a prominent seat in today's world affairs. Ideology does not directly intervene in international politics and cause social action; however, it does play a decisive role of significant determinant in decision making. Policy makers react to a particular situation and draw on ideological conclusion. The wars are fought, alliances are made and treaties are signed because of the ideological considerations. When we look back at the influence of ideology during the outbreak of the major world wars, it always reflexes on the debates about the inter-war foreign policies of the big international players.

Ideology has come to play a great role in International relations. It contemplated the dogmatic ideological tenets in formulation of foreign policy and has not outmoded completely the traditional (traditional method of realistic appraisal of concrete situation, base on pragmatism) patterns of international relations. International relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had been reshaped, molted and transformed from its classical form on account of the ideological confinement of the present century. However, one would find differences in caliber of acceptance from one nation to another. In order to have a clearer vision of this understanding it is necessary to give a brief overview of the role played by ideology in international relations.

In the historical perspective it was the 'French revolution that injected ideology into the practice of interstate relations' (Cassels Alan (2003), Boyce Robert and Maiolo, Joseph. eds., p. 228). The French revolution set as a model to use ideology as a medium through which foreign policy issues might be transmitted to and perceived by a mass audience. As a result of this, two distinguishable ideological classes emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These two classes were 'those who applauded the French revolution and those who deplored it, left versus right, liberals against conservatives' (ibid, p. 231).

The liberal accounted in the Western Europe where the concerns of a rising urban middle class were best served by parliamentary representation. Where as in the eastern agrarian Europe a more traditional and hierarchical social system is best suited on the ideology of conservatism. This ideological differences between western and Eastern Europe shaped the international affairs throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

During the First World War the western ideology and the eastern ideology crystallized around the two charismatic leaders, they are President Wilson of United States, head of western democracy and the pioneer of Bolshevism Lenin. Wilsonian ideology was based on the reconciliation and peaceful competition in the international arena, seceding the secret territorial deals and old fashion war give a way to collective security embodied in a league of nation. Leninism in the east took the course of Marxism; the success of proletarian revolution was explicitly addressed to the class- conscious workers. They called for the world wide proletariat revolution for the emancipation of all the workers and their Bolshevik decree on peace was echoed to the workers of all country. They warned and highlighted the evils of the imperialist war.

At the end of the first World War the international affairs revolved around the ideological clash between wilsonianism and Leninism, however it was for a short run, both failed to live up to their promises in the vagaries of the prevailing situation. The western ideologies of United States were replaced by the strong dogmatic, totalitarian ideologies cropped up from the heart of the Europe. Also the Leninist ideology of world revolution was resurfaced into 'Socialism in one country' under the leadership of Stalin.

These two totalitarian and dogmatic ideologies which dominated international scene between the World Wars were Nazism-Fascism and Communism. This chapter focus mainly on the differences between the Fascist and communist ideologies. The broad features of German Fascist ideology and Soviet Socialist ideology have been taken into consideration leaving out the minute details. An effort has been made to highlight the two major ideologies which accentuate the outbreak of the Second World War because the following chapters are based on these ideological differences. The foreign policy of the Nazi-Germany and Communist-Russia are just the interpretation of their ideological design.

### **1.3 Nazis ideology or Hitler's ideology**

The key elements in National Socialist ideology or Nazis ideology contained following characteristics, nationalism, militarism, expansionism, anti-Semitism, anti-communism, social Darwinism, anti-parliamentary democracy. In other word these elements can be broadly categorized under the heading of Race and Space.

Hitler's accession to power in 1933 announces the coming of the war in Europe, the war was certain to return. Post war Germany was haunted by memories of the Versailles treaty they hated the Versailles decision and considered it too harsh and unfair for defeated Germans. In order to revenge the Versailles decision and overcome the German humiliation the creation of strong Germany was essential. Germans were throwing their weight behind a leader who was determined to build a powerful Germany that would lead her into war. 'Nazi Germany needed war and conquest in order to go on re-arming at a high rate' (Caplan, J, ed., 1995; *The Domestic Dynamics of Nazi Conquests in Nazism, Fascism and the working class* by Mason, Timothy, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press p-234). In such crucial period Hitler's road to power was so inevitable. He became an answer to the cry of the masses; he intended to take Germany once more to war to get rid of the shame of 1918. His passion for waging war would not simply rid of the Versailles shame but strengthen their power by gaining new soil in Eastern Europe which would bring German hegemony in Europe.



Hitler's thoughts and actions were occupied and dominated by his obsession with re-establishing Germany as a 'dominant international power, annihilating the treaty of Versailles and above all, preparing for and conducting a major and potentially interminable war of expansion' (Christian, leitz p-5). For this purpose a strong army with heavy weapon was necessary, therefore, to gear up for war Germany started off with her re-armament project and heavy industrialization.

During this military preparation the economy in Germany had undergone a severe blow due to speedy rearmament which accentuates the social unrest of the German mass. German capitalism was under the control of the Nazis regime accommodating their economic policy. Capitalist were suppressed and subordinated and pressing difficulties to revive under Nazi's rule. Nevertheless it was the capital of the capitalist that was helping Nazis militarization process, Nazis too considered the interest of capitalist to feud against the working class movement. "The capitalist were compelled to follow the Nazi lead in putting 'guns' before 'butter' and to give priority to the Nazi's drive towards rearmament and war over its own economic advantage" (G.D.H Cole, 1960, p-53). Besides this economic ruin the land was not sufficient for Germans to sustain needs of the growing population. However this tension between the need for growth of heavy machines and the desire for economic stability was resolved to some extent by the commitment to living space.

This Nazi's policy of War as an answer to their economic problem was injected to the German people through ideological schooling and military training. These ideologically motivated training centers appeared to have created the ideal Nazi society. It had been an eye opener for Germans to the perception of reality. It was through this ideological influence Hitler succeeded in persuading millions of Germans to accept the racist ideology that was the leading drive towards his expansionist schemes.

Nazis ideology can be clubbed under the broad heading of race and space. In Weinberg Gerhard's words 'race and space' as the end of Hitler's ideological thinking. Hitler's ideology consisted primarily of two related systems of ideas, acquired and developed in chronological order. The doctrine of race took the first form followed by space'

(Weinberg, Gerhard, 1994; p. 2-3). The racist and expansionist ideology of Nazis were clearly delineated before Hitler came to power in his famous autobiography *Mein Kampf*.

Hitler induced the Germans' mindset with the traditional nationalist obsession of superior Aryan race. He considered German people were of the highest racial purity and those destined to be master race. Nazi expansionist project to the east were at the expense of the alleged backwardness and inferiority of the Slavs, Slovaks and people of Eastern Europe are less civilized, they need to be taught in order to merge them to the whole stream civilization of the Eastern Europe. The invasion of space was always insolubly tied to the subjugation and suppression of other "inferior" races.

The most significant was Hitler's use of anti-Semitism and anti-communism as an additional rationale for pursuit of eastern expansion. He considered Jews were racially alien to Europe and were supposed to be the source of all European problems, evils of the world. He blamed Jews for their defeat in the First World War, true enemy. They had no culture of their own but existing as parasite preying on the body of a healthy nation. Germany could stop the Jews from conquering the world and poisoning the other culture by eliminating them, else the superior German culture would decay. In this way Germany not only preserves their master race but also finds Lebensraum, living space.

The living space they are looking for would come from conquering Slavic countries and Russia. Besides this acquiring living space in Russian soil, Bolsheviks after the seizure of power in 1917, in Hitler's eyes were not just revolutionary Bolsheviks but Jewish. The Bolsheviks were under the control of the Jewish Marxist. Hitler did not hate Russia as a nation but the leaders he claimed were the Jewish Bolshevik elites, diluting the race of the pure Russians and controlling the Russian mass.

Nazi Germany marched to conquer the eastern expansion to the rhythm of the racial ideology whereas Fascist Italy did not exhibit to any such single minded belief system. However, there are various similarities in the realm of ideas between the two different nationalist dictatorships. This analogous of ideologies in acceptance of social Darwinism and in oppose of parliamentary democracy and anti-communism made Nazis merged

with Italian Fascist. They believed that merger of Nazism-Fascism would strengthen their European dominance. It will expand their international influence not only in Europe but to the whole world.

#### **1.4 Fascist Ideology**

The evolution of Fascism originated from Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. Fascism in the 1920s was a novel phenomenon on the European political scene. When Mussolini assumed power in early twenties he formed the National Fascist Party. Though Mussolini was initially a famous socialist agitator but he abandoned Marxian Socialism in 1914 in order to batten on some obscure political advantages. Upon his expulsion from the Socialist party in 1914 Mussolini was all but politically isolated and did not gain any immediate political advantage (Gregor James, 1969, p.14). However his success in the election of 1921 with the help of the propertied class made him built Italian Fascism more violent against the Marxian socialism round the cult of the nation, conceived as essentially an assertive power group, inspired by the gospel of violence in the cause of nation.

The doctrine of Fascism proposed Italy on greater living standards under a single party. Its intention was the restoration of Italy's place in the world power of significance. Fascism from its first inception was self characterized as anti-parliamentarian, anti-majoritarian, anti-humanitarian, anti-equalitarian but explicitly authoritarian, totalitarian, revolutionary dictatorship. Fascism was identified as a developmental dictatorship, revolutionary mass movement regimes having totalitarian aspiration because they aspire to commit the totality of human and natural resources to the national development of the country. Also Fascism violently rejected humanitarian ideals of equality. Fascist conceives life as duty of struggle and conquest and adapted to the theory of survival of the fittest. Differential treatment was claimed to be the result of real and relevant differences in determining their traits. They denied men were equal in any descriptive sense.

Mussolini became violent anti Bolshevik than ever in order to win more support from the capitalist aristocrat. Fascism received large help from capitalists in its rise to power and in its measure for accomplishing the destruction of the working class movement. Fascism was conceived to be the creature of monopoly or finance capitalism, its ideology a crude rationalization of capitalist interests (Gregor, James, p.12). G.D.H.Cole described Fascism as the “final throw of capitalism in decline”. A comintern publicist wrote in 1923 that Fascism was a movement not of the bourgeoisie but of the broad popular masses whose basic economic interest were hostile to the exploiting and impoverishing policy of the bourgeoisie. Fascism was the enemy of revolutionary working class but not because of historically irreconcilable class contradictions (op.cit, walter laquer, 1965; p. 200). Its growth was greatly influenced by the economic conditions and frustrations of the time but it was after all not the economic movement, but rather the manifestation of aggressive nationalism appealing to the violent passions of the under man.

1930s were the great ages of Fascism in Europe and west of Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>. It was the period Mussolini’s agenda became radical and advocated aggressive war to establish a modern Italian empire. This radical change signaled greater ideological affinity with the Nazi Germany in international diplomacy. The relationship between Hitler and Mussolini forms the crux of the debate over the foreign policy of Fascism.

The ideology of Fascist are equated with that of the Nazis in many ways though they originated from the differential situation they share more features in common. Italian Fascism centered on building of the third Rome and Hitler was inspired by Mussolini quest for strong state and in search of achieving highest power in Europe. Mussolini was also docile to the German counterpart and in the later part of his political career as Ernst

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<sup>1</sup> .GDH Cole 1960; *Socialism and Fascism 1931-1939*, Macmillan press,p.5 he talked about the number of regimes that cropped up in the 1930s under the protégé of capitalism such as Nazism, Italian fascism, the Horthy regime in Hungary, the various dictatorship set up in the Balkans, the regimes of the Marshals in Poland, Salazar’s dictatorial rule in Portugal and the Franco regime in Spain after the civil war were all strongly nationalist, all received capitalist support and were all bitter enemies of socialism, but the impact of capitalism on Fascism and Nazism according to him is different for Nazis, capitalism was used and molted by them for their political advantage while capitalist used fascism in fear of downward class mass revolution.

Nolte argued that Mussolini's Fascism had adopted the Hitler's political race doctrine<sup>2</sup> (op,cit.,Gregor James, p.11). Similarly, Hitler's thirst for the racist foundation of a future empire was guided by the principle of strong state. National Socialism was an anomalous fascist power in many ways. Hitler shared with Mussolini an unquestioning faith in a Social Darwinian creed of the universe, and they both totally in contempt of the parliamentary democracy.

Mussolini and Hitler's closest open tryst began with the Abyssinian crisis of 1935-36 because of the League of Nations' economic sanction against Italy. After the conquest of Abyssinia Mussolini refuses to return to Stresa Front with Britain and France, rather he signaled Hitler an invitation to conclude the issue of Anschluss. In return this Abyssinian episode helped Hitler to re-occupy the Rhineland. They drew even closer to other after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936. They supported General Francisco Franco, leader of the rebel.

Fascist regime is incomplete without referring to Japan. Japan along with Germany and Italy were partners in the Axis power and allies in the Second World War. They are grouped together and characterized under the rubric of Fascist regime. They were the belligerent countries initiated the Second World War. The aggressive Fascist Japan's ideology was comparable to her partner Germany. Fascist aggression of Second World War could not be completed without considering the Japanese ideology.

### **1.5 Japanese ideology**

Japanese ideology during those years was no less than Nazis Ideology of Race and Space. The emperor of Japan governs and controls the state; his ideology presides over the nation under the rubric of "Kokutai" (national polity). The emperor was accorded with a semi-divine character and service in the Japanese military was seen as service to the emperor. Samurai concept of loyalty was deeply ingrained in the soldiers' ideology. They

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<sup>2</sup> . Mussolini's anti-Semitic legislation was introduced in the year 1938; it is generally conceded and claiming to be for tactical political reason.

believed it was a great honor to die for the emperor. Its charismatic concept of loyalty that was characterized in National Socialism and Italian Fascism was also present in Japanese imperialism. It was regarded as the characteristic object of loyalty for the true Fascism.

International relations and the internal policies depend on the decision of the Kokutai. Parallel to the Nazis doctrine of race Kokutai too had racist influenced, "Kokutai carried within it the seed of race" (Boyce and Maiolo, 2003; p.245). They further argued that Japanese invasion of China in the early 1930s was the manifestation to dominate and subjugate the inferior races of Asia. They considered themselves as the superior race in the Asia pacific and desire to expand at the expense of the subordinate group.

Imperialist Japan's expansionist policy was adopted from the German Geo-politician Karl Haushofer. The institute for geopolitics was founded in Munich in 1920s where Karl Haushofer, the head of the institute preached that Germany's lebensraum lay in an eastwards direction. The broad ideological and geopolitical aspirations acted as permanent reference points or markers in the day today conduct of affairs. According to Haushofer "the world was destined to be divided into several regional blocs, each dominated by one nation" (ibid, p. 245). Following this line Japan began their journey of expansion. They were determined to create Pan-Asian region under her control and later name it as 'East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere'. With this intension Japan joint the Axis power and signed the anti-comintern pact, followed by the creation of Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis, an alliance of three Fascist powers determined to destroy and desperate to rule the world.

The Fascist aggressive ideologies of Germany, Italy and Japan were found themselves in a common place and their hostile attitude towards the non-aggressive nations warned that the war was happening any time whereas the opposite of this warring nations there exist the peace loving state. A brief sketch of their ideological differences assured that there was bound to be a confrontation between them due to their insolubly different interest which were opposed to each other. The opposite of this Fascist ideology is the communist ideology.



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## **1.6 Communist ideology**

The ideology of Communism is the genuine opposite of the above imperialist ideology; however it is based on the philosophy of Marxism. Communism as an ideology owes its origin to the writing of Karl Marx and F.Engels in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but it came to play a role in the international relations after the Bolshevik victory of Russia in 1917 based on this ideology. The communist ideology of Soviet Union derived from the theory of Marxist-Leninist. The Communist Party of Soviet Union define Marxist-Leninist theory as “the science of the development of society, the science of the working class movement, the science of the proletarian revolution, the science of the building of the communist society and as a science it does not and cannot stand still, but develops and perfects itself” (CPSU(B), 1939, P. 355). Mastering this theory does not mean blindly knowing and following nor mug up by heart but Marxist-Leninist theory means being able to develop it and advance it. It is a dynamic process which suits the reality.

The communist Marxist-Leninist ideology is characterized by their key elements of dictatorship of proletariat, international solidarity of the working class, loyalty to the principles of revolutionary Marxism, democratic centralism, and monolithic unity of the party. The communist ideology first developed based on the idea of equality of all mankind. Since for Marx, means of production determines the reality of human life, economic consideration held a primary place in measuring the status of society. In other word it gives primacy to the economic factor of social relations and regards them as determinants of all conducts; social, cultural and political.

The most important and necessary tool for building communism is the formation of socialist state; the development of the productive forces determined the establishment of the socialist forms of organization. Before we go into details of communism and socialism we should keep in mind their differences. Lay men often lumped together and used interchangeably the notion of communism and socialism. However in the Marxian perspective the theory is incomplete without distinguishing them because society evolve from one stage to another and every society has its own stage, and each stage has its own seeds of destruction.

For Marx every society in attaining its maturity collapse and transform into another stage. He predicted the collapsed of capitalism and emergence of socialist society out of the ashes of capitalism that would lead to the metamorphosis of perfect communist society. This complete transformation into communism could be considered only when the newly form socialism has reached full maturity. It is “socialist society in its developed form” (Lenin vol.36, p. 65; vol.45, p. 263). And thus socialism is defined as an anomic state of chaos and uncertainty resulted from the economic inconsistencies. It is differentiated from communism primarily by the degree of development of the economic base of the new socio-economic formation, hence “Communism can develop only when socialism has become firmly established” (ibid, vol. 40, p. 33). Moreover socialism should also evolve into communism and cannot remain at the same stage once a society achieved socialist maturity.

Socialist Soviet Union after October revolution was engaged in building of the Socialist state. The process of movement from socialist to communist society was under the direction of Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The underlying condition for building successful socialism was the economic security so the country had undergone a massive collection of material and setting of technical base to secure their economy. This construction of material and technical base for development of Soviet Union was accorded in the program of the CPSU as the main economic task. During the process of construction socialist state the working class guided and supervised the industrial development in the interest of all society. It is called the ‘dictatorship of proletariat’ which transformed into the political organization under the patronage of communist party.

The communist ideology did not encompass in Soviet Russia alone but the ideology envisaged the misery of proletariats transcending the territories of the nation state. They advocated for the emancipation of all workers beyond boundaries. Besides that the communist parties were already taking shape in different countries especially among the working-class and national liberation movements. The communist party called to the workers of the world to unite with an objective to establish an international communist



society. And thus the communist international or comintern was formed in march 1919 in Moscow, under the leadership of Lenin. It was “a propaganda organization to spread the gospel throughout the world” (E.H.Carr, 1946, p. 73). In the same month the first congress of the communist international or comintern was held and discussed the task of establishing proletarian dictatorship and strengthening the international solidarity of the working class. The forward movement of the society towards communism was shaped and directed under the vanguard of the comintern. The congress of the comintern or the communist international always outlined a program in conformity with the requirement of the new trend of the development.

The tactics adopted by the comintern always made it possible for its own practical experience of struggle and this practical experience should link to the level of theoretical understanding. For Lenin strong ideological base and firm theory in revolutionary movement is necessary without this the movement is sure to collapse. He wrote in his thesis “there can be no strong socialist party without a revolutionary theory which unites all socialists” (V. I. Lenin, “Our Programme”, collected works, Vol. 4, p. 211). The party resolutely and uncompromisingly opposes those who underestimate or scorn revolution theory. Marxism-Leninism was the CPSU’s ideological weapon well tested in revolutionary struggle and constructive labor.

The CPSU recognized the democratic centralism as the chief organizational principle of the party, following Lenin’s instruction that “there can be no victorious socialism that does not practice full democracy” (V. I. Lenin, 1977, “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination”, collected works Vol.22, p. 144). However the democracy he talked about was different from the bourgeois class democracy. It is the socialist democracy which embodies that “organic, inseparable unity of the freedoms rights and duties of citizens with a high level of organization and social discipline” and “there can be no democracy without discipline and public order” (Igor Ivan Yudin, 1985, p.309).

The western capitalist and imperialist criticized Soviet political system is undemocratic because of the monolithic unity of the party. However the fact evolved from the bitter experienced of the workers under the capitalist system. The working class consciously recognize and aware of their exploitation and suppression by the capitalist, bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties. The workers fought for their rights and joint the communist party. Hence it is clear that monolithic party system in the USSR evolved in the struggle for genuine democracy not as a result of limiting democracy.

### **1.7 Fascism verses Communism and their influence on policy**

The brief outline of the above ideologies reveals that there was bound to be a confrontation between them because of their basic aspects which were opposed to each other. The differences between the Soviet Union and Western imperialist countries were the direct product of contradicting ideologies of Communism and Fascism.

Communism is a socio-economic ideology that aims at a classless, egalitarian and stateless society. The ideology is based on the common ownership of property and it is the community that controls the resources or means of production. Whereas Fascism is a totalitarian ideology, extreme nationalism they belief in ethnic division, superiority of race, anti-egalitarian society and encourage individualistic struggle of the fittest, for them life is a duty of struggle.

Communist ideology opposes the capitalist ideology and protested against the capitalist system of oppression and exploitation of workers. Communism advocated the emancipation of workers of all country and supported the revolutionary principles. They regarded the free trade and open competition as the biggest enemy, against the interest of man. While Fascism is a monopoly of capitalism, it stands for the socialist policies but ensures that a wealthy class stays at the helm of power.

Communism seeks the abolition of class society raise their voice in pursuit of free and equal society where everyone can participate in the decision making process. Fascism on

the other hand was an authoritarian dictatorship they are anti-parliamentary, anti-democracy, rejected the humanitarian ideals of equal society.

Fascism and Communism emerged as major contenders for power in Europe after the First World War. Fascism was fascinated by their doctrine of strong military superiority of strong nation and power hegemony in Europe. Communism was captivated by the achievement of classless socialist society and emancipation of workers of all country. Imperialist countries were interested in overthrowing the existing territorial arrangement and eagerly in need of division of the world.

The western capitalist imperialist fear of socialist movement begins after the success of October revolution. This triumph of Socialism in Russia made the Capitalist countries highly apprehensive to the growing strength of Soviet Union. The great revolutionary impact of proletariats on the entire world created a new condition for the working class struggle. However it resulted to the emergence of working class movement, labor movement in various states of Europe. The west considered this socialist movement was subversive movement and condemn Soviet Union as exporting its policy of Socialism. However on Soviet Russia's part the Bolsheviks wanted to bring the social democracy of all people even for the down-trodden peasants. Bolshevism only enables the workers to find the right orientation, and to encourage the working class movement to stand up for their own rights. The workers by their own bitter experienced became conscious of the capitalist attitude and found themselves rescued only by the party under the banner of Bolshevism.

As a result of this, the proletarians under the leadership of Bolshevism adopted the task of "reorganizing all the party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers, in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of establishing an alliance with the proletarian of neighboring countries; of establishing firm ties with the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries" (CPSU (B), 1939, P. 354).

The western capitalist hated the international revolutionizing impact of the Bolsheviks on the capitalist states. They were intimidated by the Soviet communist influence so in order

to curb the emergence of socialist movement; the west started varying their policies against the USSR. Capitalist states adopted the policy to blockade the economy of Soviet Union, refused to grant credits and pursuance of a policy to isolate USSR.

The turmoil in the international political situation and the imminent collapse of capitalism in Europe made the Western capitalist realized the intrinsic significance of Fascism as a necessary phase of capitalist development. The western states including France and Britain encourage the establishing of a terrorist bourgeois nationalist dictatorship in Germany. The standard Marxist-Leninist interpretation of Fascism is found in works like the Short Philosophical Dictionary published in the Soviet Union which defined Fascism as

“The most reactionary and openly terroristic form of the dictatorship of finance capital, established by the imperialistic bourgeoisie to break the resistance of the working class and all the progressive elements of society” (op,cit., Gregor James,p.12).

The western countries thought that this terroristic national dictatorship would suppress the working class. Fascism became the most reactionary hostile group to the working class.

The open confrontation between the imperialist west and communist east took place when Hitler came to power as a pseudo-democratically legalized dictator. Other western capitalist countries supported the German Fascist party based on their ideological war against the communist ideology.

Hitler's ideological fixation and his sense of mission as savor of a world began by brutally suppressing workers party, destroying the communist organization in the homeland. Hitler's aspiring expansionist policies include the invasion of eastern countries at the expense of Communist Russia. Hitler's interest of acquiring colonies to the Baltic state and to the fertile land of Ukraine was to make easier for the invasion of Soviet Union.

In the midst of Hitler's sadistic, savagery policies to the Soviet Union, Stalin under the direction of the Comintern offered peace. It was a policy of peace and was aimed to prevent the anti-Soviet design of the capitalist states. Stalin's policy of peace in the menace of Fascist aggression implied two important reasons. Firstly policy of peace was to avoid confrontation or to avert war with the western capitalist. Peace was necessary for the successful building of socialism in USSR. Secondly this policy of peace was to safeguard USSR's security. To protect Soviet Union from the imperialist danger Russia signed non aggression treaty with the neighboring countries and with the western countries.

The policy of collective security was pursued by Soviet Union in collaboration with the capitalist countries to resist against the Fascist aggression. The change in the policy of Soviet Union from isolation to the coalition with the west in the menace of new imperialist war seemed to be pragmatism rather than socialist ideological. Soviet Union tried to strike a balance between pragmatism and ideological rhetoric to suit the new situation.

The change in socialist ideological stand was seen in the 1930s sequence of events. France and Britain declined the Soviet initiation of collective security against the Fascist aggression. Capitalist states were in support of the Fascist regime to wreck the Soviet communist industrial and military might. In fact the western capitalists' blind eye on the open violation of the Versailles treaty, green signal given to Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, the western silence on re-occupation of Rhineland, the appeasement of Germany by division of Czechoslovakia by the western power especially by France and Britain made Soviet Union change their socialist ideology to match the new realities.

The western writers always claimed that the Soviet policy was too ideological and often suit the personal whims of the party leaders. Soviet compliance to ideology once formulated had to be maintained was turned out to be of less true because it was the western policy that was compelling Soviet Union to act according to the situation to avert war. This could be seen from the episode of the brief Nazi-Soviet alliance of 1939-1941. During this period the communist parties in the west tried to sabotage the war against

Germany and later when Hitler, betray his pact with Soviet launched an attacked on the Soviet Union, he sought the support of the other capitalist country and found widespread European support outside Germany for an ideological war on Bolshevism.

Therefore, it was Soviet Union who bore the brunt of sticking to the dogmatic ideological policy at the cause of the western capitalist imperialist states. The capitalist states had conspired Hitler's Fascism to attack USSR. It was irony to know that only Soviet Union, among the European belligerent country to adjust and minimized the ideology with reality. While the west boasting to be pacifier, succumbed to their ideological steadfastness of anti-communism or anti-Bolshevism on the eve of Second World War.

Ideological consideration is necessary in the conceptualization and formation of the foreign policy, and though the Nazi ideology and communist ideology guided their policies; the role of ideology takes a backstage in the immediate instrumental gain of both the regimes during the non-aggression pact of 1939.

### **1.8 Similarities between Hitler and Stalin**

There are chain of similarities between Hitler and Stalin though their ideologies opposed to each other. They were twentieth century most feared and reviled dictators. Hitler and Stalin were alike being humble in origins to ultimate totalitarian autocrats' race for power and entirely unscrupulous about means.

The policy of repression and abuse of power or terror policies in the name of their ideology existed in the regimes of Hitler and Stalin. They persecuted mainly people who belonged to the opposition, inferior ethnic. They used secret police service such as SS, GESTAPO in Hitler's Germany and KGB in Stalin's Soviet Union. Both the dictators carried out a policy of discrimination where the use of force and intimidation was guaranteed.

The Policy of terror in both dictatorships started from the very beginning. After the death of President Hinderburg in 1934, Hitler, who was already Chancellor, took personal command of the armed forces and named himself Führer and concentrated the main power in his hand. He legalized this action through a law which stated that these acts

were justifiable in order to defend the country. In the same way in Soviet Union after the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin inherited the Soviet Legacy of power but exercise his power only by 1927. From the moment Stalin got the power any critical political theory and ideas against the regime became dangerous, even for the same Communists. Leaders of the opposition parties were expelled and were banned to hold any secret meeting or discussions. The open political debates about Marxism in Soviet Union were discontinued.

The created concentration camps by both the dictators to eliminate those people they thought were a danger to their regimes. In Germany the concentration camp was mainly for political opponents, later would join those who did not belonged to the Aryan race- across the whole Germany also other victims such as Slaves, homosexuals or hereditarily diseased. For Stalin concentration camp was for Gulaks, bourgeois and also people who were not wanted in the Soviet USSR were expelled from their houses or deported to Russian North areas. However, the country needs to maintain its development; so these prisoners were used as labor forces, working long hours under inhumane conditions with very little food, and violence and tortures upon them.

Education was also manipulated by both regimes. There was a purge of teachers from schools and universities and replaced by those who had same political view. The compulsory service of the population to serve the regimes aims.

But the great difference is that they sought power in pursuit of different ends, Hitler in pursuit of an aggressive nationalism bent on conquering the world in the interest of an allegedly superior race and Stalin's socialist utopia centered upon the solidarity of workers and in pursuit of a world-wide revolt of the exploited and repressed.

However the ideological struggle of these leaders was not only to protect their national interest but to win the hearts of the millions. Stalin was always criticized for his international revolutionary ideology whereas the fervor of Mussolini and Hitler sought to inspire not only their followers but the attempted worldwide revolution among the capitalist against Bolshevism was also no different.

The success or failure of achieving its ideological goal rested on the design and mission of their leadership. In Bracher's word if we want to analyze the ideological character of the cult of leadership, we have to recognize the impact it makes on the structure of the regime and at the same time what part the leaders plays in the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century. Robert Tucker in his book "The Dictator and Totalitarianism in World politics 1965" have stressed the point with the Russian totalitarianism. The integral role of a great man, often denied in communist theory, was, of course, always underlined in Fascism and National Socialism. But while in the case of Mussolini the totalitarian role of the Duce was never wholly realized, and fascism may therefore be define beyond and apart from Mussolini. In the case of Hitler there was never any question of an insurrection against the leader. From the beginning to the end it stood and felt with this man, with his ideological fixation, his decisions and his needs for the grandiose alternative of victory or catastrophe ( karl Dietrich Bracher, 1988, p. 215).

The ideological schism between the different schools of thoughts depends on the degree to which ideology was considered as a motivating force in a particular national policy. As in the case of Soviet Union the ideological imprint of Marxism-Leninism on the Soviet mentality is so strong that the Soviet vision of international relations has stood fast before the challenges posed by the contemporary world. And in German case Hitler's ideological fixation on the single minded superiority of race was doomed by racist decline.

After all we can conclude by saying that the Nazi movement and Fascist movement were in its essence political rather than economic, but had undergone diverse and oppose course to achieve their goal based on their distinct juxtapose ideology. Nazism arose out of the thwarted feelings of a defeated Germany, intended on self assertion and revenge. Communism evolved from the desperation to end class antagonism and annihilation of every forms of exploitation. Communism intended to emancipate the working class of every nation.

Though communism viewed the movement of history in Marxian perspective that all reality is determined and can be explained by material processes, the economy has taken



the backstage than in the field of propaganda or publicity in Soviet history. Besides that political ideology loses its grip in certain situation and pragmatism was replaced to ideology, as in the case of Russo-German non-aggression pact of 1939, the ideological importance was given a second chance in immediate material gain of the situation. This change was to match the diplomatic relation to safeguard the national security. The then foreign commissar of USSR Litvinov has assured us in his “statement to the Central Executive Committee of the Comintern on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1933 laid down the principle of Soviet foreign policy which illustrated that extreme pragmatism rather than socialist ideology was to guide the Soviet diplomacy” (Arvind, Gupta, 1993, p. 51). However, the Soviet ideology had been framed in response to the new conditions of mass development it always tries to coincide with the new situation as long as it safeguard the Soviet peace.

## CHAPTER 2

### SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY FROM 1933-1938

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#### 2.1 Introduction

Soviet- German relation throughout the history is marked by a period of co-operation and conflict. These two countries are interconnected in many different ways, after the first World War they found themselves in a common position; severe political weakness and turmoil, outcasts in the international system who had been excluded from the Versailles settlement. Though with fluctuating degrees of cordiality and confrontation the closest relations Soviet Russia had with the western capitalist world in the beginning of the twentieth century was with Germany. It was Germany who first recognized her after Bolshevik revolution, the official diplomatic relations between Soviet and Germany began with the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1918.

The success of October revolution was felt everywhere and its impact of Bolshevism induced democracy suffered a setback after the triumph of the proletariat revolution. The western capitalist countries became intimidated to the Soviet Union because of creating fundamentally new conditions for the working class struggle. This made Lenin cautious in collaboration and choosing western policies, even during the international Genoa Conference of early 1920s the then Soviet foreign commissar Georgii Chicherin opposed the British Prime Minister Lloyed George's offer for western credit and loans for Soviet economic development because this would bring Soviet Union under western control and Soviet leaders feared the establishment of a united western front against Soviet Russia.

Therefore, they chose to align themselves with Germany and signed the treaty of Rapallo on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1922. Since then German –Soviet relation developed auspiciously until Hitler came to power in 1933, there was extensive Soviet –German military cooperation, German companies were set up for the industrial development of Soviet Union in which

Soviet benefited substantially from the access to German military technology and Germans were enabled to evade restrictions on their rearmament imposed by the Versailles settlement. Germany was more in need of the raw materials and Soviet required machines so Germany's export of machine was immediately substantiated through the export of Soviet's natural resources, Soviet Union was thereby enabled to rebuilt their military industry and arm forces.

The cordial relationship between Soviet Union and Germany was maintained and continued to influence throughout the period until it came to a halt in 1933, the treaty of Rapallo was renewed in 1926 that lasted for five years as a result of Germany's reconciliation with France in the treaty of Locarno, and her entrance into the League of Nations triggered a sense of danger and tension in Moscow. To calm Moscow's alarm Germany signed a Berlin treaty of neutrality in 1926, in this way Germany balance the east-west relationship, at one point she follow the pro-western policy of fulfillment with the imperialist country and at the other point she entered into treaty with Soviet Union.

The following year good trade relations existed in spite of fluctuations in political relations, in other words Germany was active in united anti Soviet front but she did not align herself with the countries boycotting Soviet goods because she needed Soviet's order and wanted to discard her finished products to the Soviet market, even at times of "world-wide economic crisis Soviet trade relations with Germany developed much more successfully than any other countries", "In Soviet imports, Germany's share rose from 23.7 percent in 1930 to 46.5 percent in 1932" (Gromyko, Khvostov, Ponomaryov, 1969, p.284). In this way Soviet-German trade relation expanded during the years of economic crisis when the other capitalist states are waging economic war and practicing policy of discrimination the trade relation apparently seemed to be flourishing but by late 1920s and early 1930s Stalin was frustrated and infuriated by the development of Soviet relations with the capitalist world, relationship with Britain ruptured.

The trouble with China in the east and the wavering condition of Germany in the west combined with the economic war and policy of discrimination, policy of the capitalist made Stalin clear about the cynicism and skepticism of the imperialist power. Therefore,

he reverses his policy of conducting active foreign policy through peaceful intervention and practiced diplomatic isolation from the west, the radical change in Stalin's foreign policy complemented in uphill domestic policies because in the ensuing years he devoted himself to the economic strengthening of the Soviet Union, development of the Soviet military power and consolidation of his own regime internally. "The five years following 1927 might be called, in fact, a period of isolationism in Soviet foreign policy - a period of withdrawal from external affairs during which great internal changes were undertaken" (George, Kennen, 1962, p. 279). Stalin introduced the policy of heavy industrialization and force collectivization because a strong industry was a key factor for USSR to prepare for war. Major emphasize was given on heavy industries like coal, oil, iron and steel, electricity to lay the foundations for future industrial growth of heavy weapons, tanks and airplanes etc.

Along the line of industrialization, collectivization was introduced which brought about the modern farming method. Efficient farming methods imply surplus crops for export that will help to pay for new factories. The growth of collective farms and state farms made the solid collectivization possible for peasants to expropriate the Kulaks. Collectivization was "a policy of eliminating the Kulaks as a class on the basis of solid collectivization" (CPSU, P.303). Hence with this process of industrialization and collectivization the economy of Soviet Union grew vigorously, enormous production of defense and war materials that made USSR a more powerful country. By the end of 1930s, the Soviet Union had become the second industrial power in the world after the USA.

During this period of "great depression" or "world-wide economic crisis", the internal development in USSR was at highest peak. Though the political relations of Soviet Union to the capitalist world deteriorated, the economic relations flourished because of the mass unemployment in the west they were enthusiastic about any sort of trade between west-east to keep people at work and hence there was a great upsurge in Russia's foreign trade. But this economic and trade relation with the west degenerated specially trade relation

with Germany ceased until 1935 and the breach in diplomatic isolation of Soviet Union to form a collective securities with the Nazi's accession to power in 1933.

## **2.2 Rise of Hitler**

The political situation in Germany before Hitler came to power was precarious and rickety culminated from world-wide economic crisis. It affected Germany the most because she was economically exhausted by the war and by the payment of war reparation to the Britain and France. The heavy economic blows and severe political instability of the Weimar Republic under Bruning regimes gave rapid rise in the support of the two extremists, Communist on the one side and Nazis and Nationalist on the other side leaving Social democrats behind.

In July 1932 Bruning government was dismissed in favor of the right wing Nationalist headed by Von Papen but he was soon defeated in the Reichstag following December and was replaced by Von Schleicher who took charge for a very short term in the office due to his attempt to bring agrarian reforms he antagonized president Hindenburg but president objected his reform and order the dissolution of the Reichstag to be followed by new election. The extreme Nationalists wanted to dissolve the Reichstag but demanded no election to be held. They desired to set up a presidential dictatorship who would do away with the Weimar constitution so the following month quite unsure of Hitler, president wants Von Papen to come to power but realized there could be no sufficient basis of government without Nazi support and since Hitler stood out for the Chancellorship, he appointed Hitler as the Chancellor and compelled him to enter into coalition with the Nationalists and to accept Von Papen as vice chancellor<sup>3</sup> thus Hitler ascended to the power of chancellorship on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1933.

With the rise of terrorist Fascist dictatorship under the leadership of Hitler the other parties in Germany were scrutinized and attacked severely. The German Fascist were the

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<sup>3</sup> . in practice the coalition was never real the complete power fell at once into Nazis hands, soon Nationalist leader, Hugenberg was forced to resign and his Nationalist party forcibly absorbed into the Nazi party.

“most reactionary and most hostile to the working class and secondly it is the most pronounced party of revenge” (CPSU, P. 302) under this regime the Social Democratic Party was completely destroyed and the free Trade Union Movement shared its fate, the workers being forcibly enrolled in a new “Labour Front” under Nazi leadership and control. The Communist Party had already been banned and drive underground and the bourgeois parties were also ruthlessly liquidated.

The Nazis set out with their policy of “Gleichschaltung” to bring every influential organization in German society under their control and to remove every possible point of focus for opposition. The Social Democratic leaders those who were not caught and liquidated fled abroad, thousands of Socialists and trade unionists and even the bourgeois liberals were killed or beaten up and confined in concentration camps where they were treated with the utmost brutality. “The church, both protestant and catholic were vehemently attacked except where they made complete submission, all Germany passed speedily under a dictatorship much more brutal and complete than that of Fascist” (G.D.H Cole, p-35-46). The regime emerged as a result of the thwarted feelings of the defeated Germany in First World War. They are hostile towards the communist, social democrats, working class and most of all the Jewish. The successful international revolutionary impact of Bolshevism to the entire world enables the workers to find the platform to consciously fight for their rights. And the capitalist on the other hand were afraid of revolution from down and breeding communism in Europe. They indeed encourage the forming of reactionary open terroristic dictatorship of the Fascist regime. Under this tyrannize national dictatorship the relationship of the Nazi Germany and Communist Soviet Union reoriented towards a new course.

The fundamental change in Soviet foreign policy from 1933 to 1941 was in the relationship between Russia and Germany. The changing dynamics of the Soviet foreign policy towards Germany could be seen from the historical development of events.

### **2.3 1933 End of isolation and looking for collective security**

The year 1933, in Soviet history saw a spectacular volte-face in the direction of Soviet foreign policy. In pre war hysteria Soviet foreign policy adhered firmly in the policy of peace, the exploiting the frictions of the capitalist world of those countries provoking war. However from 1933 onwards Soviet Union took the opposite direction of the existing policy and entered into the collective security along with the capitalist powers against the aggressors. There were three major imperatives steps or reasons that made Soviet Union decide to change their foreign policy in 1933:-

Firstly, the Japanese problem, The Japanese invasion of north eastern China in 1932 when the whole world was rift through economic crisis Japan seized the opportunity to invade northern part of China, marched their troops into Manchuria. This incident increases the menace of war for Soviet Union because Manchuria was regarded as a military base in the event of war with the USSR. In order to cool the tension between them Soviet Union offered Japan the liquidation of its Trans –Siberian railway stake. Japan turned down Soviet offer and was preparing for a war with USSR. This threat of a Japan-Soviet war became a constant factor in the Far East.

However, Litvinov's policy of defense against Japan sought recognition from United States; George Kennan has clearly stated "In view of the Japanese threat a major objective of Stalin's policy throughout most of 1933 was the attainment of diplomatic recognition by the United State government. This was finally achieved with Litvinov's trip to Washington in November 1933" (George, Kennan, p. 297), the reciprocal trip from United State foreign minister to Moscow to discuss about the economic relation besides the friendly diplomatic relations shows the improvement in securing alliances with the west.

The second major step of Soviet policy was to avoid the ever struggling capitalist coalition against Soviet Union in Europe. The east-west hostility aggravated further by proposing a Four Power Pact between Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy launched by Mussolini in March 1933. And hence Poland and Soviet Union was excluded from the treaty there was a little scope for détente between them. Soviet Union was alert of the

western capitalist policies of anti-Soviet coalition, in order to prevent this she pursued a method of friendly relations with as many states as possible.

Thirdly the German menace which threatened the world peace would someday embark upon the eastward expansion. Stalin was aware of Hitler's expansionist policy to the fertile land of Ukraine and plans of using the Eastern Europe as a launching pad to attack Soviet Union. At this point Soviet Union was not ready to defend herself, she needs time for reconstruction of defense industry, though Soviet economy flourished the defense department still lack mass production of weapons and war materials to defend the whole country at times of war.

Thus to avoid or at least delay Germany's plan of attack, Soviet Union offered and gone through multilateral guarantee but the growing danger of German menace could not be avoided due to the marked readiness to make concessions by the capitalist powers, readiness to excuse German excesses as a retribution for the alleged injustice of Versailles. The protestation of capitalist powers in maintaining Nazi regime was essential as a bulwark against the Bolshevik. "The parade of anti-Bolshevik sentiments proved the most potent instrument in sterilizing anti-Nazi reactions in the democratic countries of Europe and America" (Max, Beloff, p. 94). The western democratic countries suffered a setback after the triumph of October revolution and capitalist countries still carries a tinge of anti-Bolshevism even when the danger is looming from their own heart of Europe.

Therefore Soviet Union in 1930s faced the threat from three angles, Japanese imperialist in Far East, Fascist regime in the heart of Europe and silent ideological attack of capitalist country as a whole against Bolshevik Russia. However the third problem did not openly confront towards Soviet Union but conspires and pull the string of Fascist Germany to attack Soviet Russia. The reason for non-resistance and virtual encouragement of United States, Great Britain, and France in German aggression was for the purpose of directing towards Soviet Union. While Germany took advantage of the situation and use it as a bargaining counter with the west. The detail accounts of the following events show us how the capitalist nations secretly contribute the Fascist regime.



Fascism in Germany emerged from the thwarted interest of the defeated Germany in war. Their intention was to take revenge of the Versailles treaty. Probably their revenge was directed towards European victories in the war because Russia and Germany share the same brunt in the First World War, imposed war reparation, excluded from the treaty of Versailles. Hitler hated Bolshevism because the leaders of the Bolsheviks were Jews; the past dynasty was predominantly Germans, German blood could be traced in Russian leaders, however with the triumph of Bolshevism the Jews were diluting the purity of Russians.

#### **2.4 Nazi-Soviet relation in the early period of Hitler's reign**

The Nazis unexpected accession to power of Hitler as the Chancellor and Von Papen as the vice Chancellor in 30<sup>th</sup> January 1933 came as an unpleasant surprise to the Russians and to the whole of Europe. Soviet Union feared the return of Von Papen, during his tenure as the Chancellor in the summer of 1932 he proposed to form an alliance with France against USSR. USSR was also intimidated by Hitler's anti-communist foreign policy that had been delineated in his famous book *Mein Kampf* before he assumed power. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* has outlined the anti-Soviet attitude of the Germans and declared about the Germany to obtain the living space in the east at the expense of the USSR and his declaration of aggressive policy and German domination of Europe. His *Mein Kampf* became a "blueprint" for Fascist aggression.

The new regime threatened the peace of Europe and the security of USSR, but in the beginning of the weeks there was a slight détente on the diplomatic side of Russo-German relations, because during this period both countries were preoccupied with their own immediate problem, it was the year, Soviet Union completed their first five year plan so Stalin was immersed in the industrialization and economic development of the country on the other side German rearmament had not really got underway and Hitler was preoccupied with many urgent work than his relations with Russia. Hitler's policy was quite vague and ambiguous towards Russia he was even confused whether to make rapprochement with Poland or USSR. Moreover Soviet Union was a peace loving states so in spite of the aggressive attitude of the Fascist, time and again they displayed

initiative to negotiate for the ensuring peace not only for her country but for the universal peace but later events did not give much encouragement.

Soviet foreign policy underwent a series of changes during Nazis rule in Germany. The road to hostility began with the outset of spring in 1933, Nazi party press started commenting and proclaiming the Soviet-German relation. They pronounced the healthy political relations between Germany and Soviet Union become possible only after the removal of the communist movement from German politics. To reciprocate the Nazis at this comment people's commissar of foreign affair Marxin Litvinov reiterated the elimination of communist movement from German politics could be considered same as an anti Soviet foreign policy.

Nevertheless Hitler follows the demonic Nazi authoritarian ideology of suppressing political parties other than Nazism. Social democrats and other political parties were attacked and suppressed severely under brutal Nazi dictatorship in Germany; communist also got their own share of discrimination by February the KPD (German Communist Party) was forbidden the right to open air demonstrations, party headquarters was ransacked by police, the Reichstag was fired and communist were banned, several Soviet institutions in the country, official and semi-official, trade and business premises, consulates were under attacked in Germany.

Soviet citizens were arrested and maltreated in the Reich, Soviet correspondents and trade agencies in Germany were manhandled and harassed. Germans too complaint about the Soviet's hostile comments, speeches and attitudes towards them, this entire crisis culminated to aggravate German-Soviet relations and specially this German hostility that was driving USSR in a position that was despised and mistrusted by other countries. So Russians reacted to the German hostility by threatening to end the military co-operation in April for Soviet knew their aggression was restrained by obvious military weakness.

Germany needs to strengthen their defense as much as Russia and it was their military co-operation that had bound the two countries together but Hitler knew how to play the game because Nazis were not ready and too weak to carry out their policy, rearmament

was the need of the time to strengthen their military might, in order to fulfill his rearmament drive Hitler conveyed Soviet Union the Berlin protocol would be ratified in the near future, though Hitler was not blinded by their common interest in Poland. Germany and Soviet Union tied together by the mutual interest of the same enemy, so he soon turned towards his foreign policy to make a treaty with Poland.

Soviet realized to ally with Germany's enemy Poland instead of waiting for the ratification of Berlin protocol but Poland was immersed in talk with Germany, initially there was little prospect of Russo-Polish relation, in the later month of March it gave hope for the Russo-Polish détente, at the time when Mussolini launched the so called Four-Power Pact, the notion behind this pact was the outstanding political and armament problems of Europe should be settled by direct conversations between Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy.

However, France, afraid to lose her east European allies did not ratify the pact, in July she refers to the possibility of treaty revision. In this Four Power Pact Russia and Poland were excluded from the pact which appeared more attractive potential partners, it drove the Poles to seek further reassurance from Russia besides that Soviet Union even offered a free hand at Lithuania but unreliable and erratic Poland took advantage of the situation to play a double game. Her resumption of relationship with Russia was used to impress Germany and in fact turned to Germany that she thought would release her from dependence on Russia paved a way for building of German-Polish axis.

On the other hand Russo-German relation deteriorated in the state of cloudiness in the summer of 1933, by June "despite talks of comradeship in arms Russians decided to close down the German military stations in the Soviet Union" (George, Kennan, p.164). It was logical for Russians to react to the growing German's hostility by ending such collaboration, for it was this military co-operation that had bound between Reichwehr and the Red Army.

In the autumn of 1933 Germany shocked the whole world by taking the bold decision of promulgating war is at near future, soon in her rearmament strategy, "in order to free her

hands for war preparations Germany walked out of the disarmament conference on October 14, 1933 and five days later announce her withdrawal from the League of Nations”, (Gromyko, Khvostov, Ponomaryov, 1969, p.302) the German menace was felt everywhere and this German power would continue to grow if unchecked. Therefore at last Soviet Union realized the danger of Germany and took a dramatic volte-face in the direction of Soviet Foreign Policy.

Soviet Union tried a multilateral guarantee to stop expansionist attitude of Germany but it did not succeed, finally Soviet Union thought the time is ripe for her to break her isolation in search of alliances with the capitalist western countries. Soviet Union thought that the aggression of Germany would hopefully curb in collective sanction by the world community. However the foreign policy of Soviet Union is under the guidance of the decision of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). “In December 1933 the central committee of the CPSU passed a decision to start a drive for collective security. The decision envisaged the possibility of the Soviet Union joining the League of Nations and the conclusion of a state for mutual defense against aggression” (ibid, p. 306). Soviet initiated the pursuit of collective security. It is to unite and confront against the aggressors with a united front of countries desiring peace. Security could only be ensured by collective efforts.

Therefore the pursuit of collective security, collective efforts of countries desiring peace irrespective of capitalist or socialist country against an aggressor was the guide lines of the Stalin’s foreign policy after Germany became the main threat to the world peace. According to Jonathan Haslam “the bottom line of Soviet Foreign Policy was to exploit the difference between the capitalist powers to forestall the development of any united front against the USSR; after Hitler’s accession to power the top line of Soviet Foreign Policy was soon to become the pursuit of an alliance with those powers also scared by the Nazi Germany’s wild ambition” (Jonathan, Haslam, 1984, p. 24) the drastic shift in the policy of the alliance with the western powers brought about the changes in the division of the world. The traditional model of dichotomy between the capitalist world and

communist world was replaced in favor of actively aggressive and actively co-operative states.

## **2.5 1934 – 35 Franco-Soviet pact, Soviet entry to the League of Nations, change in the policy of Comintern**

The growing menace of Japan in the Far East was becoming very prominent. The increasing difficulties for Stalin to ignore the danger of Nazi regime in the West had a traumatic effect on the Russians. In reaction to Stalin's ratification of relation with United States, in January 26, 1934, Hitler concluded a ten year non-aggression pact with Poland. This seems to have a heavy blow to Stalin. Soviet realized the danger was not only conspicuous but was approaching towards their frontier. To avert this danger Soviet Union made certain diplomatic moves.

There are three major policies that had changed in 1934: the pact with French, the entry of Soviet Union into the League of Nations and the change in the policy of the Comintern. The dramatic volte face of Soviet Foreign Policy in the thread of Nazi aggression was to pursue the collective security in collaboration with the West.

### **2.5 (i) Origins of the Franco-Soviet pact**

France and Soviet Union found themselves in a similar situation facing common enemy. For France Hitler's aggressive policy and continued demand for a revision of Versailles treaty reminded a threat of war in the heart of Europe. She made every effort to strengthen her relations with the countries which are against the aggression. At the same time Soviet Union was diligently looking for collective security to shield their country from the Fascist brutality. Soon France envisages making alliance with Russia would keep German aggression at base.

As a result Soviet-Franco relation grew favorably. Initially there was division of policy in French parliament to face with the alternatives of conciliation or confrontation with Germany. Later the French government realized that an effective rebuff to German aggression could be achieved through the collective effort with Soviet Union.

The then Soviet ambassador in Paris negotiated with the French foreign minister Paul Boncour for mutual assistance pact. Boncour insisted the Russians should first join the League of Nations or else the pact would not harmonize with the covenant. In addition to their bilateral mutual assistance pact Soviet further negotiate for the importance of collective efforts of all interested powers and proposed a collective pact, encompassing not only USSR, France and Poland but also countries such as Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. Likewise Russians proposed for the agreement to defend the whole of eastern pact including Baltic States; however due to the objection of her allies France sought to limit her agreement and offer to help in the Far East. Soviet also assured USSR would join the League of Nation on condition of securing a permanent seat in the council.

The talk between the two countries could not proceed and was stuck in the process due to anti Soviet, pro German supporter. The negotiations were resumed only in April 1934 after Louis Barthou took charge as France foreign minister. Barthou was enthusiastic about the relation with Russia and aware of the German fascist aggression, the danger underlying it. He was determined to pursue a collective security with Soviet Union as a barrier against the aggressors. Barthou called this pact Eastern Locarno. Soviet-France draft of the pact was completed by the end of June.

To ensure greater security France requested Britain to support the Eastern Pact, Britain made her agreement conditional on German participation in the Franco-Soviet treaty of mutual assistance. Her aim was to encourage German re-armament and not to obstruct German aggression. This aggressive force could be used as a tool to combat the breeding of communism in Europe and Soviet Union. Therefore when she was invited to the treaty she made Germany's entry as the condition. "It was planned that the signing of this treaty would lead to a renewal of negotiations for a convention giving Germany armaments equality" (DBFP 1919-39, Series 2, vol. 6 (1933-34), London, 1957, p-813,821,823). Soviet did not object to Germany's joining of the pact and thus informed the government of France, Britain and Germany in July. But Germany "insisted on the satisfaction of her demands for complete equality of armaments as a pre-condition for signing this

agreement on collective security”, (ibid, P. 832) which cannot bring the straightforward conclusion. Germany did not want to sign the pact and Great Britain would not support it unless Germany did. Britain pampered Germany as she was not ready to go in war with Germany.

### **2.5 (ii) Soviet Union joins the League of Nations**

It was time for Soviet Union to join the League of Nations to come to terms with the League’s covenant. France took initiative to invite Soviet Union to the League of Nations followed by Czechoslovakia. Poland was not only objected the signing of the Eastern Pact but adopted obstructionist tactics to prevent Soviet’s entry into the League.

Despite of all this hurdles and League’s cowardliness, Soviet Union stick to the decision of December 1933, taken by the central committee of CPSU. “League in spite of its weakness might nevertheless serve as a place where aggressors can be exposed and as a certain instrument of peace, however feeble, that might hinder the outbreak of war” (CPSU, P. 335). The League organization could be used to some extent as a tool to slow down the drift towards war. The drive for collective security could also be achieved through collective efforts of this organization. Thus on 18 September, 1934, three days after she received invitation from thirty countries, Soviet Union took its permanent seat in the council.

Fascist aggression of Germany and Italy were more alert when the collective efforts initiated by Soviet Union started gaining ground in Europe. The aggression aggravated to the course of open terrorist dictatorship mainly circled the closest neighbor France, when they learnt the pact derives from France, “the Soviet government agreed to Barthou’s proposal, not because they were unable to defend the frontiers of the Soviet Union with their own force, but because the Soviet Union cannot by itself, safeguard general peace” (DGFP, 1962, Series C, vol. IV, p. 1145”). The position of France was still wavering because of her allies impeding principal of the Eastern pact.

And the invisible policy of Britain implied upon France as a constant source of pressure to come to terms with Germans. In the midst of this confusion the untimely death of

Louis Barthou on 9th October, 1934, was a great lost for an indispensable ally. Barthou's death further delayed the signing of the agreement.

The task of France Foreign Policy was passed into the hands of Pierre Laval after Barthou's death. Laval unlike Barthou was an energetic champion of Von-Papen's proposal of Franco-German pact. Soviet knows Laval's favoritism with Germany. For him it is impossible for peace to prevail without Franco-German agreement. He prolonged the signing of the treaty to elicit Germany's reaction to her desired relation, however despite multiple diplomatic attempt Germany favored Rome's proposal because that will enable her to obtain sanctions for rearmament rather than Eastern Pact. Germany failed to convince the French. Soon Laval turned to the Soviet Union on 5<sup>th</sup> December; a Franco-Soviet protocol was concluded.

It was Germany that made the treaty delayed by adopting the policy that would prevent signing of the pact. And France was always looking for the opportunities to establish a relationship with Germany. In March Germany declared heavy military re-armament in open violation of the Versailles treaty. Italy was in support of Germany's re-armament and Britain instead of condemning the action she was bargaining for her own agreement. This was a major threat to French, the western powers seemed to be intimidated and Soviet appears to be the only one standing to rescue at this moment.

These threats coupled with the German-Soviet improvement in economic relation in April fasten the France move to sign an agreement with Soviet Union. Finally Franco-Soviet pact was signed on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1935. This mutual assistance pact was explicitly subordinated to the decision of the League council. Even though the treaty had been signed the French government was deliberately delayed in the ratification of the treaty. Only by early 1936, the treaty was ratified by the French Chamber of Deputies.

In early 1936, only a few days after ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact, Hitler boldly reoccupied Rhineland as a reaction to this Franco-Soviet pact. German troops marched into the DMZ (demilitarized zone) on 7<sup>th</sup> March on the west bank of the Rhine. The DMZ had been set up by the Versailles Treaty on both sides of the Rhine, as a guarantee for



German reparations payments and additional security for France. DMZ was very important for France. She could rescue her allies especially Poland and Czechoslovakia from German attacked, by marching through DMZ and occupying Ruhr.

The French and British reaction to Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland DMZ was to highlight their weakness and explore the possibility of a peaceful resolution of the problem. Hitler knew France would not fight without British support. Though French had power to resist and remove German troops from the DMZ at that time, the British dissuaded them. British made it very clear that they would not support the French in a war to throw German troops out of the western part of the DMZ. The British government wanted to negotiate for their own settlement with Germany.

For Stalin, the German reoccupation of the Rhineland was a heavy blow. Hitler's move represented a gesture of supreme contempt for the Franco-Soviet pact (Kennan, p. 304). It highlighted the wickedness in western policy. Having struggle two years to get this mutual assistance agreement with the hesitant French, only to have Hitler march contemptuously into the Rhineland at the very moment of its ratification, and seize the territory with impunity from under the French nose (ibid, p. 304). Stalin was infuriated by the French passivity. Stalin's mistrust towards France and Britain had increased by their reaction to Hitler's move. He knows that major objectives of Hitler's demand particularly the territorial demand lay to the east, in the direction of the Soviet Union.

Stalin heightened his lack of trust towards France and Britain and realized Soviet Union cannot rely fully on their relationship. France was waiting for the right opportunity to connect with Germany and Britain secretly conspiring France to follow her policy and collaborating Anglo-German naval agreement. This event clearly reflected their irresponsibility. And if French and Britain failed to react to this Hitler's aggression in their own face, it is least expected of their involvement against aggression when it comes to Soviet Union. This made Stalin realized that Russia need to renew secret protocols for improving German-Soviet relations.

### **2.5 (iii) Change in the policy of Comintern**

During that period when Stalin was pursuing his attempts to improve relations with Hitler, there was a drastic change in the Comintern strategy. France was in political turmoil in the early 1934. The Socialist militia against the installation of the Dolfus clerical fascist dictatorship led to the fundamental change in Comintern decision. The famous name associated with this change in Comintern was Dimitrov. He was present at the crisis in Austria and in France and this incident convinced him that the current Comintern hostility towards Social Democracy was mistaken.

In the alarming danger of Fascist aggression it stands out right for the Social Democrat to co-operate with the Comintern. The French Socialist party also discussed at Toulouse for an appeal to the Comintern for joint action on a revolutionary basis, however there was division of ideas in the party and only a few in favor of United Front with the communist. At the same time in Soviet Union, the Soviet Politburo was impressed by the Dimitrov's suggestion of a new strategy based on co-operation with Social Democracy against Fascism. Stalin was skeptical about Dimitrov's idea but made him in charge of the Comintern.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1934 communist party took an initiative and appeal for a "United Front of anti-Fascist struggle to save Thalman" the leader of KPD (Communist Party of Germany) imprisoned by the Nazis. The appeal also extended to a "United Front will stem the growth of Fascism in France" (Joanthan, Haslam, p. 680). French Socialist under the leadership of Leon Blum negotiated with communist leaders. "After the assurances from the communists that they would support and fight for 'democratic freedoms' the two parties signed an agreement on the 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1934" (ibid, p. 680) and later confirmed it in 1935 for the establishment of Popular Front Government, including both Socialists and communists, to combat Fascism. The committees were also appointed to draw up plans and tactics to struggle against Fascist.

The reversal of previous Comintern line equating Nazis and Social Democratic and the volte face of the Comintern in the direction of united front combining Social Democrats

and Communist became a turning point in the policy of comintern. Soviet Foreign Policy was shaped, guided and directed by the Comintern, the change in the comintern took a radical change in their foreign policy.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of Comintern the communist regarded Social Democrat of Europe as communists' rival for working class support. The comintern ordered the Communist Party of Germany to aid for the anti-Soviet National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi Party) in its contest for power. This would bring social tension in Germany that may lead to a revolution. In the 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of 1935, it reversed the role, Comintern directed for the collaboration of Socialist and Communist called United Front. It has some advantage in Europe it stop the breeding of domestic Fascism within France. The need for such a change in policy, approved by the Comintern in 1935 seemed to be confirmed by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

## **2.6 1935-Abyssinian Crisis**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Italy was defeated and humiliated at Adowa. Mussolini always wishes to conquer Abyssinia to avenge the defeat. The main reason for Mussolini to invade Abyssinia was primarily for prestige, imperial aggrandizement. In 1935, Mussolini attacked Abyssinia, and brought under Italian colonist.

This was a blow to Great Britain because the shortest sea route from Europe to India or Asia was through Abyssinia. Britain was indeed afraid to provoke against the fascist aggression and looking for appeasement. Moreover to please the commoner at home Britain along with France half-heartedly imposed League sanctions on Italy, in which oil was excluded and Suez Canal remained open. "This was a public policy; in private a negotiated settlement was attempted". "Britain wanted a League policy to please the electorate, but also wanted to avoid a breach with Italy" (Graham, Darby, 1999, p. 36). British and French wanted to let it go to Mussolini because they were not ready to face the Fascist aggression. Britain clearly realized that she could not simultaneously fight three powers at once, Japan at the Far East, Italy at the Mediterranean and Germany at the centre of Europe.

Soviet relation with Italy was not very friendly because of the ideological differences of the leaders. Italy's action hardly affected Soviet Union, until Mussolini invaded Abyssinia. This incident affected Soviet Union indirectly, with this terrorize act of Mussolini, the Italy-German relations underwent a rapid improvement, to such an extent that "Hitler was able to use the Abyssinian crisis as a cover to carry the remilitarization of the Rhineland a year in advance of his intentions" (ibid, p. 37). Russia did not want any confrontation between the British and the Italians because Germany would join Italy and destroy all efforts to form a united front against Germany.

## **2.7 1936-Outbreak of Spanish civil war**

Mussolini –Hitler alliance became closer in the 1935, the Abyssinian crisis enabled Hitler to reoccupy Rhineland and ultimately led to the Rome-Berlin Axis. Their relationship further improved after the outbreak of the Spanish civil war in July 1936.

Spanish Civil War in July 1936. While Hitler and Mussolini supported General Francisco Franco leader of the rebel or nationalist government and Stalin supported the republican government or loyalist forces. Some historian saw the Spanish Civil War as a struggle between good and evil, or fascism and democracy and some said Spanish war was a conflict between the two "isms" that is communism and fascism.

The newly elected liberal republican government of Spain was attacked by a military group in July. The following month French, proposed the non-intervention of the other major powers to prevent them from growing into major international crisis. French and British policy of non-intervention in the name of League was a help to nationalist Franco, since they did not send arms to the republicans whereas Italy and Germany despite the non intervention warning from the League involved and supplied arms and ammunition in supporting Franco.

The popular front government under the socialist leadership of Leon Blum wanted to help the republicans, but did not so for fear that right wing opposition might lead to civil war at home. Moreover Britain was strongly opposed to French intervention. Soviet Union

knew that a “fascist victory in Spain could very well lead to a fascist take over in France as well and to the complete collapse of the entire anti-fascist cause in Continental Europe” (George, Kennan, p. 310). This made Soviet uneasy because Hitler would start his eastward expansionist policy when given a free hand or there is no opposition in the west.

Thus by August Soviet changed the policy and decided to “intervene in Spain clandestinely and informally, to be sure, but in a major way” (ibid, p. 310). Immediately Soviet war material had been sent, and was in operation. The republican benefitted a lot from the Soviet intervention but only for a short while. By February 1937, the Soviet military effort began to taper off, and Stalin decided against giving further significant aid to the republicans apparently because he did not want to risk a conflict with Hitler over Spain when French and British behavior was indeed not such as to encourage any successful collaboration in resistance to Hitler.

Stalin feared an insurgent military victory in Spain, but he also feared of any extensive intimacy with the liberal which could expose his own apparatus of power to western influence and give sustenance to the opposition currents against him at home. But most of all, the timidity and dithering decision of the French and British in preventing Hitler’s aggressive ambitions made Soviet with no choice but to go on its own.

## **2.8 1937-Peak of Stalin’s Purges**

The foreign policy of Soviet Union was always molded by their domestic internal problem, in other words the internal problems often reflected or affected on their foreign affairs. The acclaimed dictator Joseph Stalin was famous for his great purges trials. He consolidates his power through the dismissal of the oppositions in the party. In his regime if anyone opposed in any way, criticized or debated him and his party’s decision and had ever had an aspiration to leadership in the party, anyone on whom popular confidence could be conceived, or anyone who could possibly profit from the inevitable political embarrassment, for him to get rid of them was the physical elimination of this people. Thus he put them on trials to clean up his regime. He planned to take up these trials in

1934 but it was not successful. Though the official public trials begin from 1936, the elimination of his oppositions was far taken off since 1932.

In the summer of 1932 Joseph Stalin was aware that opposition in his party was gaining popularity. Some party members were publicly criticizing Stalin and calling for the re-admission of Leon Trotsky to the party. When the issue was discussed at the Politburo, Stalin demanded that the critics should be arrested and executed. Sergey Kirov, who up to this time had been a staunch Stalinist, argued against this policy. When the vote was taken, the majority of the Politburo supported Kirov against Stalin.

In the spring of 1934 Sergey Kirov put forward a policy of reconciliation and once again, Stalin found himself in a minority in the Politburo. He tried to coax Kirov to remain loyal to his party but Stalin was concerned by Kirov's willingness to argue with him in public. He feared that this would undermine his authority in the party. Sergey Kirov was assassinated by a young party member, Leonid Nikolayev, on 1st December, 1934. Stalin claimed that Nikolayev was part of a larger conspiracy led by Leon Trotsky against the Soviet government.

The official trials begin from 1936, Stalin was left with two major alternatives in the mid of 1930s. In Europe when Hitler was gaining ground, right after the Franco-Soviet treaty. Hitler's contemptuous re-occupation of Rhineland undermining the French security, teaming up with the aggressive Mussolini and forming alliance with Italy and Hitler's readiness to pursue his expansionist policy towards Eastern Europe became so conspicuous that made Stalin confuse whether to make a deal or fight with Hitler. "Stalin gave orders, secretly for the preparation of the first of the three great purge trials which punctuated and marked the main phase of the hideous purge process" (George Kennan, p. 306).

He knew that he could not gain peace permanently from the aggressive man like Hitler, attack on Russia was inevitable, however if he make a deal with Hitler then it is possible for him to gain time for maneuver and for further military preparations. Nonetheless in either case, whether he tried to resist or tried to make a deal, he saw that he would be

exposed to severe criticism among his comrades and oppositions in Russia. "If he attacked-if Russia found herself involved, that is, in a major war-Stalin would be doubly reproached for his initial indifference to Hitler's takeover; and his leadership of the Russian Communist Movement would be challenged by people who could claim that they, in contrast to him, had seen the danger promptly and had been against Hitler from the start. If on the other hand he succeeded in making a deal, he would be criticized for abandoning the anti-fascist cause, for allying himself with the executioners of European communism" (ibid., p. 305). The only way out thus he saw it was the execution of anyone else who opposes, so the public trials began.

Not long after Gorky's death in June by August 1936, the public trial of Kamenev and Zinoviev, Ivan Smirnov and thirteen other party members who had been critical of Stalin. All were found guilty and executed. In September, 1936, Stalin appointed Nikolai Yezhov head of the Communist Secret Police. Yezhov quickly arranged the arrest of all the leading political figures in the Soviet Union who were critical of Stalin.

It was the subject of great bitterness and perturbation throughout the history of the party, "in a vast conflagration of mock justice, torture, and brutality, at least two thirds of the governing class of one day devoured and destroyed it, the jailors and judges of one day were the prisoners and victims of the next" (ibid., p. 306). It continued for two years whereas right after the beginning of the purges the international civil war broke out so the country was involved in the war however suddenly Soviet pulled out of the war and purges began even the Soviet officials and armies served in the Spanish war were also purged. The officials were either executed or imprisoned which had a terrible effect and weakened the military strength of Soviet Union throughout the entire history.

## **2.9 1938-The Austrian- Czechoslovakia crisis**

By late 1937, it was quite clear that Hitler was interested in expansion in Central Europe, and became more confident as a result of close proximity with Mussolini. Hitler's Germany wanted the division of the world, forcibly adopted the revision of the map of Europe. "The Fascist Germany made no secret of the fact that they were seeking to

subjugate the neighboring states, or at least, to seize such of their territories as were peopled by Germans, accordingly, they planned first to seize Austria then to strike at Czechoslovakia, then may be at Poland” (CPSU, p. 332).

The worldwide economic crisis of early 1930s made much Austrian realized union with Germany as the best solution to their economic problems. Historically too German-speaking Austrians had been the ruling nationality in the Austrian, later the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, the idea of an Austro-German union had some support among a few nationalist Austrian politicians in the late 19th century.

France had opposed an Austro-German union because of the peace treaties. France feared the German outflanking of her ally, Czechoslovakia, while Mussolini opposed an Austro-German union because he did not want the establishment of predominant German influence in the western Balkans, which he regarded as an Italian sphere of influence. Even in July 1934, when Austrian Nazis murdered Dollfuss, Chancellor of Austria, Mussolini moved Italian troops to prevent a Nazi takeover of Austria.

Later the thing turn out differently, when Mussolini could not bargain Britain and France, Austria's independent in exchange of Abyssinia, he gave up the policy of defending Austria independence and alien himself with Hitler. The following year they signed the Rome-Berlin Axis, later joined by Japan in 1939.

In the case of Czechoslovakia also the famous Great Depression played a major role to aggravate the situation. The economic crisis led to widespread support for the Sudeten German Party, a Nazi party formed in 1935. It was subsidized from Berlin. The Germans living in Czechoslovakia were generally called Sudeten and constitute about 33%of the Czechoslovak population. They resented for being minority. Hitler's aim was to provide protection of the Germans outside Germany and seize such territory. For him the blood relation of the pure Germans are important not the native language speakers of other country.



British refuse to acknowledge strategic consequences of German expansion in Central Europe. Such acquisitions were bound to make Germany even more powerful and in fact, they would make her the dominant power in Central and Eastern Europe and open the door to German domination of the Balkans. Finally, who could guarantee that after acquiring these territories Hitler would not turn against Western Europe. However, the British were not interested in Central and Eastern Europe because they did not see them as a sphere of Britain's vital influence. Instead, they believed that peaceful concessions to Germany at the expense of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, would make a general European settlement possible and thus avoid or at least delay war.

In February 1938, Hitler forced the Austrian chancellor into accepting a Nazi government in Austria. He sent his troops into Austria on March 12, 1938. He proclaimed its Union with Germany. He instructed the leader of the Sudeten German Party, to make ever greater demands, starting with autonomy and ending with the absorption of the Sudetenland in Germany. And further Hitler also wants to demand that Prague give up its alliances with France and the USSR. If Prague refuses Germany would use force and blame Czechoslovakia for rejecting a peaceful settlement. Chamberlain and his government wanted to avert war by appeasing Hitler and justify this by self-determination. He flew to see Hitler twice to plead him. British and French conceded German demands and told the Czechs to accept them.

Britain and France made Mussolini to invite Hitler for Munich conference. The great powers will meet to negotiate an agreement. Hitler accepted Mussolini's proposal and attended Munich conference on September 29, 1938. The French and British leaders met with Hitler and Mussolini and handed the Sudetenland to Germany. President Benes has no other option than given up because he knew France was in no position to help, France was pursuing only how to please Hitler. USSR being her ally would not come to help if unaided by France under certain conditions of the treaty.

Soviet Union wanted to render help but the clause in the Soviet- Czechoslovakia made Russian assistance conditional, unless France helped. Soviet Union's involvement in the

Czechoslovakia according to Geoffrey Roberts stemmed from two sources firstly “ the USSR’s commitment to collective resistance against Nazi aggression and expansionism” and secondly “Soviet-Czechoslovakia mutual assistance treaty of 1935 under which the Soviet union pledged military aid to Czechoslovakia in the event of an attack on that country by a third party” ( Geoffrey, Roberts, 1995, p. 49) though Soviet wanted to help her the draconian France and Britain were not ready instead they wanted to make appeasement with Germany’s demand at the expense of the poorly defense weak countries.

Soviet Union was aware of the British and French policy to divert the war towards the east they negotiated to the aggressors to direct the expansion to the Eastern Europe. Soviet Union fought hard to accept the western democratic countries that in the face of united front of all great powers the aggressors would back down. The democratic states are stronger than the fascist states and even proposed the formation of alliance between Britain, France and Soviet Union. However British refuse to collaborate with Moscow. The democratic state “fear the working class movement in Europe and the movement of national emancipation in Asia and regard fascism as an ‘excellent antidote’ to these dangerous movements” (CPSU, p. 334) in this way they pampered fascist aggression to direct it to the Soviet Union. In the midst of dangerous, brutal, war of unmitigated conquest waged by the fascist aggressors against the democratic state, the so called democratic state manipulated and negotiated the fascist powers by offering their colonies besides appeasement to divert the aggression.

Their timidity, vacillating polities of appeasement, policies of pleading with the overweening fascist rulers, left the Soviet government no choice but to go its own way. Soviet had come to conclusion that military alliance with Britain and France was not possible and realized it was time for Moscow to stand independently on her own to protect and safeguard the country’s peace. Which led to the change in policy that resulted in a pact if non-aggression with Nazi Germany.

## CHAPTER 3

### MOLOTOV - RIBBENTROP PACT

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

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

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

We are not afraid of threats from aggressors

And we are ready to deal two blows for one against war-makers who attempt to infringe on the integrity of the Soviet border.

Stalin. March, 1939.

#### **3.1 Run up to the Pact:**

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which is also known as German-Soviet Treaty of Non-aggression and the Hitler-Stalin Pact was an agreement between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany for the rapprochement in economic and political issues between the two countries. The pact was signed on August 23, 1939 by Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

Originally, Stalin believed that forming an anti-fascist alliance with the European countries especially Britain and France would put a stop to Hitler's will for war. Stalin believed that Hitler would not be foolish enough to wage war on a united Europe. The USSR abandoned its opposition to the League of Nations and became an enthusiastic supporter of the principle of collective security. On 18 September 1934 Soviet

representatives took their seats on the League Council at Geneva. Further gestures of goodwill and co-operation were shown by the Soviet with the announcement that Communist parties everywhere would abandon the revolutionary struggle and collaborate with progressive political forces in a popular front against fascism. The Comintern, the international Communist organization set up by Lenin in 1919, also toned down its radical talks and adopted the decision of the 17<sup>th</sup> congress of Comintern 1935, directing its policy of collaborating with popular front to combat fascism. In May 1935, the Soviet Union negotiated to sign non-aggression pacts with France and Czechoslovakia and finally signed the pact in early 1936. However, neither the French nor the Russian governments made any serious efforts to strengthen the defense pact.

The mid 1930s was the period Mussolini and Hitler displaying their powers. Mussolini seized Abyssinia for the purpose of emperor aggrandizement and Hitler's army contemptuously marching the Demilitarize Zone to undermine French army brought the two dictators closer which ultimately landed them to the hub of fascist aggression.

Hitler was set on an easterly course in the late 1930s and it became a matter of urgency for speedy rearmament at home badly needed a raw material and eastern expansion would harmonize the economic crisis in Germany. He promised the fertile soil of Ukraine as their future living space. His expansionist policy could be achieved by liquidating Czechoslovakia and keeping under her control for it can use as a base for the eastern invasion.

Hitler realized that until Czechoslovakia was firmly under German's control, Germany could not dominate central and south Eastern Europe. So in March 1938 Austria was occupied by German forces and incorporated into the Reich. In May 1938, Hitler ordered his armed forces to prepare for a brief war to eliminate the Czech state in the autumn. He did not expect a general confrontation, but it proved impossible to avoid, because Czechoslovakia had treaty agreements with both France and the Soviet Union. If Czech territories were attacked by another state, French and Soviet forces were pledged to her defense.

Both Britain and France wanted to bargain and negotiate with Germany; they were ready to come to a solution even at the expense of poorer defense country and willing to discard their colony, if that was what Hitler wanted. "Chamberlain's aim in foreign policy was to endeavour to reach an adjustment with the totalitarian states" (Docs on Materials Relating to the Eve of WWII, Vol. II, P. 152) in the mean time the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, flew to see Hitler to persuade him to agree to negotiation. When on his second visit, on September 22, Hitler raised the stakes by demanding the immediate German occupation of the Sudeten area, the crisis reached the climax. Britain and France put pressure on the Czechs during the summer months to make concessions to the German position, because neither was willing to risk war if the Sudeten question could be solved by negotiation.

The position taken by the Soviet Union was determined to stand by collective security to fight against fascist aggression. In the case of Czechoslovakia, Litvinov publicly stated his country's commitment to collective action to deter aggression against Czechoslovakia, if France aided the Czechs because of the attach clause of the treaty. Shortly afterwards the Czech President, Edvard Beneš, was privately assured that Moscow would honour its treaty obligation to protect his country as long as France participated as well.

The western powers especially Britain and France neither wanted war, nor could accept the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Ever since the crisis, Western opinion had simply seen in gesture, designed to salve the Soviet conscience never materialize in deeds. Soviet Union, despite putting much effort in pursuit of collective security was once again reminded of the western attitude towards her with the Czechs crisis. Moscow wanted to help Czechoslovakia, but that this was impossible because Poland and Romania refused permission for Soviet troops to cross their territory. The Britain and France were ready to offer anything thing that Germany demands in order to divert the war to the other direction. The western capitalist power was much stronger than the fascist power and it could easily curb the fascist aggression with the policy of united front.

However the British and French were pursuing different policy against the Soviet Union. It became too obvious even on the same day that Soviet forces were put on alert an ultimatum was sent to Warsaw warning the Poles that any move against the Czechs on their part would be regarded as unprovoked aggression. The Czech crisis comprehended Stalin to accept the British policy of isolating Russia and to keep her out of the international arena. At the very least, they were trying to sway Germany into a war with the Soviets rather than Western Europe. This was because of the British Prime Minister's distrust for the Soviet Union. This feeling was only strengthened after the Munich Agreement of 1938.

The Soviet Union despite its status as one of the major power in negotiating to form a united front against aggressor was not invited to the Munich conference. In spite of exclusion from the Munich conference the western powers were rewarding the aggressors and bargaining them to divert German ambitions eastward or Japanese ambitions westward. The very opposite of what they had expected by joining the League. Thus the search for greater security trapped in the failure of collective action over the Czech crisis. The Munich settlement completely paralyzed the Soviet regime. USSR was now dangerously isolated and vulnerable to the threat from Germany. However Soviet Union never gave up hope to fight against the aggressors. They realized if western powers were behaving like predators on their collective approach for security, they would rather fight alone even if the pernicious west failed to support them to prevent war. Nevertheless, Soviet never completely renounced the policy of a grand alliance against Hitler nor did they make any moves for rapprochement with the Germans.

The search for collective security that was numbed by the failure of collective action of the west was once again renewed in the spring of 1939. On 1<sup>st</sup> March Neville Chamberlain paid the first official visit by any British Prime Minister to the Soviet embassy in London. By the beginning of April Britain initiated to resume the diplomatic relationship with Soviet Union and asked Soviet to see if a wider coalition of anti Hitler states could be created to encircle Germany, Britain had also guaranteed Poland and Romania against German aggression.

As Soviet Union always stands for the collective security she straight away accepted and on 17<sup>th</sup> April the Soviet Union offered Britain and France an alliance that would guarantee the integrity of every state from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and bring all three powers into war if any of the states was attacked by Germany. The British were not prepared to guarantee the Baltic States. This issue dominates the diplomatic relationship of the Soviet Union and the west in late 1930s. At the same time Hitler was dealing with Poland and wanted Russia to remain neutral in the Poland crisis, thus Hitler turned towards Soviet to begin the negotiation. "Nazi Germany began its quest for a pact with the USSR in the spring of 1939 and from the outset pursued two clear goals: the prevention of an Anglo-Soviet-French alliance and Soviet neutrality in the event of a Polish- German war" (Geoffrey, Roberts, 1995, p. 65). On the other hand in the case of Soviet Union "the pact emerged from a process of short term crisis management in which the Soviet leadership responded to the initiatives and actions of others, it was more a product of accident than design, a result of policy drift rather than goal-oriented policy direction, the consequence not of strategic calculation but of a series of tactical shifts and adjustment" (ibid. 65) the time of the pact coincided when the two party were mostly in need of negotiation.

### **3.2 Different view on the theory of evolution of Soviet-Nazi pact**

There are various views on as to when the Soviet-Nazi negotiations began and it was much debated whether it was Hitler or Stalin that initiated the talk.

The mystery of Soviet foreign policy towards Germany especially during the months before signing of the non-aggression pact in August 1939 remained unfathomable. As Winston Churchill often referred Russia in 1939 was a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. The Soviet policy too was difficult to understand whether it was sincerely seeking an anti fascist alliance or renewing the Rapallo treaty. However, the Soviet-Nazi diplomatic decision of 1939 turned out to be the result of the political fiasco of venturing out the opportunity to make alliance with the Britain and France to combat fascism. There are several views on the emergence of the relationships as to how the diplomatic negotiation begins which finally aggravated into Soviet-Nazi non aggression pact.

### **3.2 (i) Stalin's speeches on 18<sup>th</sup> party congress**

The first theory of the origins of the Soviet-Nazi pact argued by some historians is that Stalin's speech on 18<sup>th</sup> party congress in March 1939 condemned on western appeasement policy. And this appeasement policy made Soviet Union took volte-face on their foreign policy. This change in the policy they claimed signal to Hitler that Soviet was ready for detente.

Stalin reminded his listeners and foreign opinions that the western democratic countries Britain, France combined with Soviet Union were unquestionably stronger than the fascist states, but the strong states cannot control and check the weaker fascist expansionism, this was because "England and France, have rejected the policy of collective security, the policy of collective resistance to the aggressors and have taken up a position of non-intervention, a position of neutrality.....the policy of non-intervention means conniving at aggression, giving free rein to war, and consequently, transforming the war into a world war. The policy of non-intervention reveals an eagerness, a desire, not to hinder the aggressors in their nefarious work: not to hinder Japan, say, from embroiling herself in a war with China, or, better still, with the Soviet Union; not to hinder Germany, say, from enmeshing herself in European affairs, from embroiling herself in a war with the Soviet Union" (op.cit., Geoffrey Roberts, p. 67). The dangerous game started by the supporter of this non-intervention would create a huge war and Soviet Union should stay away from the danger, would not be drawn into the conflicts by warmongers. Stalin's message conveyed that USSR should stay aloof from the inter-capitalist wars and plots that threatened to drag USSR into a war.

### **3.2 (ii) Merekalov-Weizsacker meeting in Berlin on 17<sup>th</sup> April**

The second theory of the origins of the Soviet-Nazi pact was the meeting of Soviet ambassador, Alexei Merekalov and Ernst Weizsacker, state secretary in the German foreign ministry in Berlin on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1939. In this meeting they discussed the fulfillment of Soviet orders with the Skoda arms factory in German occupied



Czechoslovakia. In their discussion they went beyond economic matters and seized the opportunity to raise the political issues.

The political issues were discussed with great interest; they talked about the current situation in Europe, the state of German Franco relations, German demand in Poland. In between the discussion Weizsacker mentioned whether Soviet Union was threatened by Germany, in this Merekalov replied Soviet didn't feel threatened but USSR is interested in removing the danger of war. Merekalov was accompanied by Astakhov, the Soviet charge d' affaires in which Astakhov quoted Weizsacker's saying by stating that though there are contradiction in ideological characters between Soviet Union and Germany, we sincerely want to develop economic relations with Soviet Union. From the reports of Merekalov-Astakhov, Roberts draw a conclusion that "Soviet-German meeting of 17 April 1939 was not the occasion of a Moscow probe about the possibility of a rapprochement with the Nazi regime. If anything, the signals for the détente were coming from the German not the Soviet side" (ibid, p. 70) it was because of the absence of the reference of this report in the political remarks attributed to the Soviet ambassador by Weizsacker. People often ignored the crux of the discussion and its reports, which lay the root cause of the Soviet-Nazi diplomatic relation in 1939.

The Merekalov-Weizsacker meeting illustrates the pitfalls of interpreting Soviet policy through the prism of German diplomatic documents essentially second hand accounts tainted by German preoccupations, perceptions and policy objectives (p. 71).

### **3.2 (iii) Replacement of Litvinov by Molotov as Soviet Foreign Minister**

The third theory of Litvinov's replacement by Molotov as commissar for foreign affairs on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1939 was considered by western historian as a sign that Moscow was preparing to change its foreign policy line. They regarded Molotov as a 'noted Soviet nationalist, whose sympathies had long been with pro-German rather than pro-Western foreign policy' which signal the era of the end of collective security. 'During May there were regular contacts between the two sides as they explored what each had to offer' (Overy and Wheatcroft, 1989, p. 210).

However the above assumption was misinterpreted, though the Soviet foreign contacts were regular at that time the Soviet policy did not turn volte face, but by the continued pursuit of a triple alliance with Great Britain and France alongside economic contact with Germany. In one of his speech Molotov announced that “the triple alliance negotiations with Britain and France did not preclude commercial relations with Germany and that credit negotiations with Germany might soon be resumed” (Roberts, 1995, p. 76). Soviet Union pursued the dual policies during that period because she sensed the western powers foul play with Soviet Union by instigating secretly fascist aggression towards her. She did not want to be dragged in the capitalist war and if alliance with Germany would avert war, it would be a much welcome addition to their diplomatic relation. Thus she remain open to the relation that will save her from war, it was not a volte face in policy but opening more tentacles for the diplomatic relationships.

Besides the western powers conspiracy policy to divert German aggression against Soviet Union, Molotov was new in the office and was faced with the problem of how to persuade the West that the Soviet Union meant more into economic relation than political. Here he ran up against an accumulation of profound mistrust and hostility whose depths constantly frustrated and disconcerted Soviet negotiators. The first indication of how difficult it was going to be to get the Western states to accept the Soviet offer came with the long delay in the British reply. Not until May 25, did the British agree, not to an alliance, but to the opening of preliminary discussions.

The deterioration in the possibility of triple alliance formation cannot be solely attributed to Molotov’s succession and control of foreign policy because the prevailing situation in Europe determined the western democratic powers to negotiate and strike a court with Germany and to isolate Russia, which left Russia unsavory towards their western counterparts. Later the talks dragged out over the summer between Britain, France and Soviet Union was continued by both sides with little enthusiasm.

On the other side, Stalin now realized that the Western imperialist states he had feared were indeed considerably weaker than the Soviet Union nevertheless; the alliance would still be a formidable bloc and might well have deterred Hitler from war on Poland.

Moreover the evident reluctance of the Western states to rise to Stalin's offer and the constant slights and checks directed at Soviet efforts had tried the patience of the most diffident ally. Thus, the failure to secure the alliance with the democratic western power ended in search for safer security with the imperialist powers.

### **3.2 (iv) Astakhov-Draganov meeting in Berlin on 14<sup>th</sup> June**

Finally the theory of Astakhov's meeting with Bulgarian ambassador in Berlin on 14<sup>th</sup> June where they discussed about the soviet-German economic and political issues at length. Astakhov talked about his meeting with German officials of the previous month. He informed Draganov how Schnurre gave green signal to Soviet contract with Skoda. Four days later Astakhov in charge of the Soviet embassy in Berlin met Baron von Stumm, deputy head of the German Foreign Ministry's press department, where Stumm took the opportunity to raise the question of improving the Soviet-German relations. Further Astakhov met Schnurre on 17<sup>th</sup> May to discuss changes in the status of the Soviet trade mission in Prague.

The German ambassador in Moscow approached Molotov on 20<sup>th</sup> May, with a proposal for the negotiations of a new credit treaty and suggested that Schnurre should come to Moscow for that purpose. However Molotov rejected the proposal, by stating that this was not the first time about Schnurre's trip to Moscow. Germany and Soviet Union had many a time negotiated on economic issues without fruitful result. This failed negotiation made Soviet Union decide the German govt. was playing some sort of game and for such a game Germany should have looked for partner in another country and not the Govt. of the USSR. The USSR was not ready for a game.

In spite of such Berlin had resumed its approaches when Weizsacker invited Astakhov to this office for further discussions about improving soviet-German relations on 30<sup>th</sup> May: The day after the Weizsacker-Astakhov meeting, Molotov made a keynote speech on the international situation to the Supreme Soviet. At the heart of the speech was an account of soviet negotiations with Britain and France for a Trilateral Security pact, but Molotov also announced that credit negotiations with German might soon be resumed (J.Degras,

ed., 1953, pp. 332-340). In fact, more than six weeks were to pass before Moscow formally agreed to negotiate a new trade and credit agreement. In the interim economic discussion between the two states were confined to "talks about talks" (DGFP, Series D, vol. VI, docs 388 and 412) On the political front the soviet side was even more dilatory, responding not at all to further German suggestions about improving political relations.

Soviet interest in a deal with Germany was highlighted in the meeting of Astakhov-Draganov. They had a thorough political discussion on 14<sup>th</sup> June, and the next day Draganov spoke to head of the political division of the German foreign office Ernst Woermann, updated the Russia's position. Soviet Union was flickering between a pact with Britain and France, spinning out the triple alliance negotiations, or an agreement with Germany. Draganov further stated that at the moment rapprochement with Germany was the closest to the desires of the Soviet Union. Draganov's report appeared to be accurate for he had informed Bulgaria about Russia's preparedness to enter into an agreement with Germany. Thus many historians have regarded this conversation as evidence for the view that Moscow was interested in a deal with Germany.

Astakhov has played a very important role in mending the Soviet-German relations, his diplomacy and expertise political issues certainly impressed Berlin. He was enthusiastic about the development of Soviet-German relations, at times he goes beyond the Moscow's instruction of diplomacy, however his contribution shortly set in motion a major diplomatic initiative to improve German-Soviet relations. "Astakhov's plea to Moscow for more latitude in his dealings with the Germans in Berlin fell on deaf ears until the end of July, in the mean time, Astakhov continued in his role as a passive conduit of German approaches about the possibility of some kind of rapprochement" (ibid, p. 72-79). Until 29<sup>th</sup> July he was not authorized to encourage the negotiation with Berlin, later his inclination to the development of German relations with Soviet yield a positive response and this in turn adopted by Soviet Union as a disguised enthusiasm for a deal with Germany. He was a man who has gone down to the history as a great mediator of the Soviet-Nazi negotiation of 1939.

Schulenburg was on leave in Berlin on 17<sup>th</sup> June, met Astakhov and assured him that Berlin was still waiting for Moscow's reply in their improvement in economic and political relations. However in his return on 28<sup>th</sup> June, Schulenburg met Molotov to convey both Hitler's and Ribbentrop's desire for improved relations with the USSR. "Schulenburg pointed to the recent non-aggression treaties with Latvia and Estonia as proof of Germany's intentions towards the USSR". "In reply Molotov argued that these non-aggression treaties were concluded on Germany's own account and not out of friendship towards the USSR. He also drew attention to Germany's recent abrogation of its non-aggression pact with Poland, and to the Anti-Comintern Pact and to the Pact of Steel with Italy" (ibid, p. 79). Molotov's reply to this imply was to know what Germany's offer to this negotiation was and what would be their proposal. However Germany was not ready for the proposal and uneasiness in their direct approaches had taken them aback for a month long delay.

By 26<sup>th</sup> July Germany's trade negotiator, Karl Schnurre, told Astakhov that Germany was prepared to discuss a political settlement in Eastern Europe. Germany had renounced any aspirations in the Ukraine and Baltic States may follow the same line. Astakhov felt little skeptical about the offer because Hitler sketched his expansionist policy towards the interest of this region. However he reported the situation at home on 28<sup>th</sup> July and on 29<sup>th</sup> July Molotov messaged Astakhov the political relations between the USSR and Germany may improve, with the improvement in economic relations. The improvements in political relation depend entirely on Germans. Moscow would welcome any improvement in political entente between Soviet Union and Germany. With Molotov's response to Astakhov, Moscow had welcomed the political détente with Germany.

Until 29<sup>th</sup> July 1939, Moscow remained both skeptical and impassive in the face of numerous attempts by the Germans to initiate discussions about improving political relation between the two countries and thereby, drives a wedge between the USSR and the western powers who they knew were engaged in negotiations about the anti-Hitler coalition. Russia however, has never excluded the possibility of improvement in relations with Germany, provided Berlin should come to a certain agreement with Moscow's

demand. On 2<sup>nd</sup> August Ribbentrop, with remarkable candour, offered a settlement of the whole area from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In the Baltic States, Poland and Romania were territories of the former Tsarist Empire. The Soviet Union had been forced to abandon them, but had never lost the ambition to take back its lost territories. Soviet hesitation about Germany's flagrant advances stemmed partly from deep distrust of German intentions.

In order to improve the political relations Germany proposed Moscow three important issues the next day, the conclusion of an economic agreement, better press relation and cultural and scientific co-operation. During this period when the possibility of reaching the agreement was closest, Moscow's trust was once again tested by the arrival of an Anglo-French military delegation to negotiate a military counterpart of the political tri-security pact on 10<sup>th</sup> August. Unfortunately these military delegates traveled by slow merchant ship and by the time they reached Russians were already engaged in talk with Germans. Beyond that the delegates were of low status while the British has no written powers to negotiate and French has no authority to sign as well as no strategic plan.

On 5<sup>th</sup> August, Germany suggested for secret protocol attached to any credit agreement, in which a number of territorial issues to be settled, by 15<sup>th</sup> August Schulenburg met Molotov and proposed for Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow for negotiation.

On August 17, when it was already clear that hope for an alliance with Britain and France was dead, Molotov finally handed Schulenburg a formal written statement. On 21<sup>st</sup> August Schulenburg presented Molotov with an urgent personal message from Hitler to Stalin urging to speed up the signing of the pact in view of international situation in German-Polish crisis. Stalin agreed for Ribbentrop's arrival thus, finally by 23<sup>rd</sup> August Soviet-German non-aggression pact or Hitler-Stalin pact along with the secret additional protocol was signed.

### **3.3 Agreements of Non-Aggression Pact**

The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Government of the German Reich desirous to consolidate the nucleus of peace between the USSR and Germany, and its proceedings were the reaffirmations of the Soviet-German neutrality agreements of April, 1926, attached with special protocol arrived at the following agreement:

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

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

Article III: The Governments of the two contracting Parties shall maintain continual contact with one another for consultation in order to exchange information on problems affecting their common interests.

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

Article V: In the event of disputes or conflicts arising between the contracting parties on matters of one or another kind, the two parties will solve these disputes or conflicts exclusively in a peaceful way through friendly exchange of opinions or, if necessary, by setting up commissions for the settlement of the conflict.

Article VI: The present pact is concluded for a period of ten years, with the proviso that, unless one of the contracting parties denounces it one year before the expiration of this term, the validity of this pact shall be extended automatically for another five years.

Article VII: The present pact shall be ratified within the shortest possible time. The ratifications shall be exchanged in Berlin. The Agreement shall enter into force as soon as it is signed

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the Government of the German Reich v. Ribbentrop

Plenipotentiary of the Government of the U.S.S.R. V. Molotov

### **3.4 Secret Additional Protocol**

The unpublished 'secret protocol' attached to any credit agreement proposed by Germany on 5<sup>th</sup> August, formed an integral part of the pact. The main purpose of this supplementary protocol for Germans was their interest in the settlement of territorial political issues in Eastern Europe.

Soviet-German sphere of influence in Eastern Europe was delineated in this additional protocol. As a result of this, on the occasion of the signing of the non-aggression Pact between the German Reich and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the undersigned plenipotentiaries of each of the two parties discussed in strict confidential conversations the question of the boundary of their respective spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. This additional protocol has to be kept secret, this special secret protocol concludes to the following agreements;

Article I. 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 U.S.S.R. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.

Article II. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San.

The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish States 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.

Article III. 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.

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

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the Government of the German Reich v. Ribbentrop

Plenipotentiary of the Government of the U.S.S.R. V. Molotov

Thus, Soviet Union concluded the pact with Nazi German on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1939 mainly due to Germany continuous persuasion for better relationship between the two powers. The pact was also successful due to the breakdown of the Anglo-Soviet-French triple Alliance negotiations in August 1939.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was a much needed response to the deterioration in the European security situation in the latter half of the 1930s as Nazi-Germany, aligned with Fascist Italy in the Axis Powers, aimed to reverse the disadvantageous Treaty of Versailles after First World War and for the protection of Russia from the projected menace of democratic western powers directed towards her. Mutual distrust due to ideological difference between Germany and Soviet Union was balanced by security requirements and the need to avoid major conflict especially if that was to occur on two fronts.

However the most enduringly controversial aspects of the pact were the Soviet denial of the existence of the secret protocol<sup>4</sup>. Soviet published lately after Perestroika because it undermined the socialist foundations of Soviet foreign policy.

### **3.5 Reasons for the pact**

This Soviet-Nazi non-aggression pact satiated the immediate necessity of both Germany and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In times of war at threshold, Soviet Union and Germany had to concern themselves with the possibility of war on two fronts. Soviet was engaged with the Japanese in the Far East while the German wanted to invade Poland without fear of the Soviet Union intervention. Thus, both the soviet and the German signed the non-aggression pact to avoid confrontation against each other which would be disastrous for both the powers

The pact was also directed to the Germany's rival democratic powers England and France, Great Britain was venturing out to gain hegemony in Europe and to maintain and avoid redrawing of her colonies. Britain negotiated with revanchist Germany to divert the war to the east and ready to appease Germany's demand. While Germany's expansionist policy was to invade Eastern Europe before she turn to the Western Europe to secure raw materials. Thus for Germany it became necessary for Russia's non-intervention in Poland. This could be achieved by breaking up of the Anglo-French-Soviet triple alliance negotiation. And for Soviet Union, Britain and western powers intension of the war projecting towards her had become conspicuous, therefore to safeguard her security from the propelling menace of western democratic powers and to maintain peace in Soviet Union, the non aggression pact with Germany became possible solution.

The Baltic States were, in fact, the very place where the USSR and Germany had a common goal. Both Germany and Soviet wanted to prevent England as a naval state to gain influence there. After World War I England was the only one of the great states

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<sup>4</sup>. Molotov denied the existence of secret protocol until his death in 1986. It was only in the late 1980s, the era of Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika reforms, that the Soviet government admitted the truth about its existence. The Soviet originals were published for the first time in 1993.

interested in separating the Baltic States from Russia. In 1919 she supported by real means the struggle of the Baltic States with the Bolsheviks and acquired in these countries, especially in Latvia and Estonia, considerable authority and influence. Geopolitically, Germany and Russia were primarily continental land states, and hence in the struggle between naval and continental states between the wars, they had often been on the same side facing common naval enemies which greatly encouraged Germany and USSR to cooperate in the long run.

Historically Germany and USSR were united by a joint dissatisfaction with the peace system after the Treaty of Versailles, the post-war carving up of the political map. They made an effort that the Baltic states, as well as other states located between Germany and the USSR, to avoid forming any unions however, compel them to remain separated, isolated from one another with no coordinated foreign policies, or in a word, that no military-political bloc appear in Eastern and Central Europe which in the future could hinder the expansion of Germany to the East, and of the USSR to the West.

The Rapallo Treaty and other agreements of Germany and the USSR created favorable conditions for cooperation. Of course, the interests of the two states were not absolutely identical. There were also some contradictions that arose very often due to ideological and political conflicts between the Soviets and the West. Nevertheless, in the midst of democratic menace to woo every country under their feet the powers of attraction overcame any conflicts.

### **3.6 Why did Soviet Union sign the pact?**

In the summer of 1939 the position of the Soviet Union was rickety and precarious. In the Far East it was engaged in hostilities with Japan (Calvocoressi, Wint & Pritchard, 1999). In Europe it faced an ideologically hostile Germany, with war between Germany and Poland over Danzig imminent. Great Britain and France were also ideologically hostile towards Bolshevik Russia.

In fact, the fear of a capitalist coalition against the Soviet Union had influenced Soviet foreign policy after the First World War, and had been a reason for the conclusion of the Rapallo treaty with Germany in 1922 (Roberts, 1995). Stalin could not rule out an assault on Russia by the combined forces of Great Britain, France and Germany, no matter how impossible such an idea would have seemed in these countries themselves. In a sense, he was almost correct for it is essential to understand the actions of Britain and France to see the reasons for Stalin's gravitation to Nazi Germany as a preferred partner. There was, however, another factor in European diplomacy: Japan. The Soviet Union, like Germany, had to concern themselves with the possibility of war on two fronts and, in 1939, this was a very real concern given the war with Japan being raged throughout the period that the Non-Aggression Pact was being negotiated. If Polish-Soviet relations played an important role in the formation of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, then Soviet relations with Japan played a more decisive role.

In May, Japanese forces occupied Mongolian territory on the Soviet border and began planning further aggressive action. After crossing the border in July, the Japanese were engaged by the Soviets until September. Whilst the fighting in the East did not evolve into a major war, and the Japanese were ultimately repulsed it remained pertinent to Stalin's thinking. By siding with the Nazis, Stalin was able to stiffen his eastern flank by avoiding war, for the time being, in the west. One of Stalin's most important goals of avoiding a two-front war against Germany and Japan was clearly fulfilled.

The threat of western rapprochement with the 'Axis' would have isolated the Soviet Union, a particularly worrying fact given that the Soviets, like the British, had to balance the risk of war in Europe with the risk of war in the Far East. In these circumstances, and bearing in mind that Poland sat between Germany and the Soviet Union as an obstacle, the main adherent of a firm anti-German stance, Maxim Litvinov, found himself faced with firm opposition for his policy of collective security to contain German aggression. To make a commitment to neither side, simply perpetuated an uneasy isolation. The pact guaranteed that the Soviet Union could keep out of the war.

Soviet observations of the western powers' appeasement from the middle of the 1930s did nothing to allay the fear of being attacked by the German's force. The Soviet Government believed that the Western countries were plotting a plan to drive the German into war against U.S.S.R. This belief was reinforced when Neville Chamberlain met with Adolf Hitler at Munich in September, 1938, and gave into his demands for the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Stalin thus, confirmed his believe that the main objective of British foreign policy was to encourage Germany to head east rather than west.

Britain, France and the Soviet Union had been in negotiations over the summer of 1939, but they had made little progress, partly because most British politicians feared communism and distrusted Stalin. Britain also believed that the Soviet army was divided and weak because of internal political rivalry and plotting. Stalin, therefore, believed that the Soviet Union would have to protect itself against the Nazis, as Britain and France would do nothing to help them.

### **3.7 Why did Nazis sign the pact?**

Hitler knew that it would be essential to secure the eastern border so as to be in a position to face Britain and France whom he recognized as the principal potential enemies. Although Hitler was confident that Britain and France would not intervene, there were great risks. A revival of the old alliance from the Great War threatened Germany with a conflict on two fronts. Hitler wanted to attack Poland without worrying about Soviet intervention.

Hitler was keen to delay an anti-Soviet campaign for the time being. Without Soviet support to help the British and French effort, Hitler was sure that they would not keep their promise to defend Poland. Hitler was also interested in a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union to invade Poland with minimal forces, and maintain a low occupancy. This would then allow Hitler to use more troops against France and Britain, without having to fight on two fronts simultaneously.

Germany wanted a free hand from Soviet Union in her eastern expansion. These eastern countries would provide Germany raw materials required for her continuous armament to

battle against the western powers. Germany's policy of solving domestic economic crisis by dislocating to the fertile soil of eastern countries which they thought would keep them away from starving at the war end.

### **3.8 The consequences and world view of the pact**

The world was stunned; especially Britain and France were staggered, as the hatred between the Soviets and the Nazis was well-known. The pact caused consternation in the west, both among governments which had most feared such an outcome, and even more so to supporters of communism, many of whom found Soviet dealings with their Nazi ideological enemy incomprehensible. The Comintern, many of whose members had been thrown into complete confusion by the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact, was ordered to end its attacks on fascism and turn its attention instead to the Western war-mongers, Britain and France. Molotov publicly declared in a speech in October 1939 that to continue the war was 'not only senseless, but criminal'.

The secret protocols of the non-aggression pact split Eastern Europe into Soviet sphere and German sphere. Moscow gained Estonia, Latvia and Bessarabia. Lithuania was under Germany. Poland was divided between them, German forces invade Poland on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 and Soviet forces enter Poland on 17<sup>th</sup> September. Revision of Soviet-German secret protocol on 28<sup>th</sup> September re-divided the areas, Germany got more of Poland and Soviet received Lithuania. The Soviet-German non-aggression pact made Germans felt secure in concentrating their forces in the west. Due to this pact Soviet Union has become a crucial source of raw material for German war economy.

Britain agreed a formal military alliance with Poland on 25th August, 1939, even though it would be difficult to support Poland effectively without Soviet help.

Barely a week after the pact had been signed, the partition of Poland commenced with invasion from Germany. Hitler ordered invasion of Poland to be ready for September 1st, as the Poles had refused to negotiate any further over Danzig. Two days later Great Britain and France, whose governments had promised to defend Poland, declared war on Germany. However, they never sent troops to Poland. The Soviet Union invaded from the

east on September 17. Molotov announced that the Soviet invasion had come about because of the 'internal bankruptcy of the Polish state' and the dangers this posed to Russia's blood brothers, the Ukrainians and Belarusians living under Polish rule, who had been abandoned to their fate.

When in the middle of the war in Europe Moscow was found building defense bulwark against Germany in the Balkan States. Soviet Union on 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1939, signed Pacts of defense and mutual assistance with the Baltic States. The pacts gave the Soviet Union the right to establish land, navy and air bases in the territories of the Baltic States. The "Treaty of the Transfer of Vilnius and Soviet-Lithuania Mutual Assistance" was signed on October 10, 1939. According to this treaty, the Soviet Union, in addition to its former obligations, undertook not to interfere in internal affairs of Lithuania, promising that the "realization of this Pact shall not in any way affect the sovereign rights of the Contracting Parties, in particular the state of organization, economic and social systems, military measures and, in general, the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs. The same day a supplementary German-Soviet protocol had transferred most of Lithuania from the envisaged German to the Soviet sphere of interest.

Finland resisted similar claims, and was invaded by the Soviet Union on November 30. After more than three months of heavy fighting and losses in the ensuing Winter War, the Soviet Union gave up its intended occupation of Finland, in exchange for approximately 10% of Finland's territory, most of which was still held by the Finnish army.

On June 15–17, 1940, after the Wehrmacht's swift occupation of Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and the defeat of France, the Soviet troops entered Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. On June 27, 1940, the Soviet troops entered Bukovina and Moldavia. Thus the formation of the Soviet Union in the Eastern from the Baltic to the Black Sea was completed. By early 1941, the German and Soviet empires shared a common border running through what is now Lithuania and Poland. Thereafter German-Soviet relations began to cool and the clash between Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union seemed increasingly unavoidable.

Hitler's Third Reich ended the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 by invading the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa on June 22, 1941, together with Romania, and thus closing the western front and opening an Eastern Front that would ultimately lead to the defeat of Germany. After the launch of the German invasion, the territories gained by the Soviet Union due to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact were lost in a matter of weeks, and the Baltic countries ended up as German protectorates. The German attack was followed by a Soviet pre-emptive attack on Finland on June 25, starting the Continuation War between Finland and the Soviet Union.

It was cleared that Poland and Baltic countries played an important barrier between Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, and these countries blamed that only destroying the barrier by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact let the war to begin. The next chapter will deal extensively with the outbreak of the Second World War, Soviet and Germany's expansion and confrontation in the eastern countries.



## OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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### 4.1 Introduction

World War II, or the Second World War, was a large scale military conflict that took place from 1939 to 1945. It engulfed much of the globe and was the largest and deadliest war in history. The war was initially fought between Germany and the Allies. The Allies at first consisted only of the United Kingdom (with the British Empire), France (with the French Empire) and Poland. Germany was later joined by Italy, jointly known as the Axis Powers, and Japan. Some of the nations that Germany conquered as well sent military forces, particularly to the Eastern front, while others joined the Allies. The Soviet Union and the German had signed a non-aggression treaty, but on June 22, 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union, dragging Soviet Union into war. In the same year, on December 7, 1941 the USA also entered the war on the Allies' side after first Japan and then Germany respectively attacked and declared war on the US. China, which had been engaged in war with Japan since the mid-1930s, also entered the Allies camp. Germany surrendered to the Allies in May of 1945. The war ended on September 2, 1945.

Unlike the First World War, the Second World War which lasted for six years was costlier, painful and more murderous, where the prime cost of death and destruction was much higher than the First World War, or also known as 'the war to end all wars'. Then the whole Europe was decimated politically and strategically by Germany and Soviet Union during the Second World War. Thanks to its victory, the Soviet Union, once the bogeyman of the Third Reich emerged as the master of Eastern Europe and as the only power capable of challenging the United States.

There has been some questions which remain unresolved, when it slims down to the questions of the origins of the Second World War that have provoked as much disputation as the issue of Soviet policy toward Nazi Germany. Where in the absence of complete opening of the politburo papers on foreign affairs, the personal and the state papers of Stalin and Molotov, which no one has yet been in a position to say the final word on the subject. Indeed almost every scholars writing in this field did their best to make it apparent that a definite answers has now been given. In a book "Stalin's Drive to the West, 1938-1945: The Origins of the Cold War" by R. C. Raack

argued that "Stalin, quite as much as Hitler and Mussolini and the Japanese, wanted the war" whereas Geoffrey Roberts in *The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War* takes the view that the Russians consistently pursued a line designed to deter war in Europe and argues that there were no substantial differences of policy in Moscow. (R. C. Raack, 1995, p. 12) A.J.P. Taylor famous historian in this field debated the Second World War broke out not because of Hitler's design, but because of Chamberlain's blunders. French foreign policy during the 1930's was obsessed with security and defense. France had no intention of stopping Hitler by force, because of her militarily weakness and political unstable, for example "considerable ministerial instability, 11 government between 1932-1935" (Darby Graham, p. 63) and therefore willingly allowed Chamberlain to march France along the road to Munich. The debate of the origin of the Second World War continues until now as to whom to be blamed. Let alone the legacy of policies decide but the factual action that had been transformed into violence broke out from Nazi-Soviet pact and partition of Poland.

#### **4.2 Nazi-Soviet pact and partition of Poland**

Germany expansionist policy was to invade Eastern Europe before she turns to the Western Europe to secure raw materials. Thus for Germany it became necessary for Russia's non-intervention in Poland. This could be achieved by breaking up of the Anglo-French-Soviet triple alliance negotiation. And for Soviet Union, Britain and western powers intension of the war projecting towards her had become conspicuous, therefore to safeguard her security from the propelling menace of western democratic powers and to maintain peace in Soviet Union, the non aggression pact with Germany became possible solution.

Soviet Union grabbed the opportunity to negotiate with Germany when the later approach for improvement in trade relation which later turned into diplomatic relation. The Nazi-Soviet pact and a deal with Hitler seemed to be providing the best shelter from the storm of war, as Soviet wanted to have peace and not war. The western war mongers were dragging Soviet Union and pulling USSR into the western European war, the western powers not only negotiating to divert the German aggression to the east but also plotting to precipitate a Soviet-German war. Germany proposed Moscow three importance issues to improve their political relations, the conclusion of an economic agreement, better press relation and cultural and scientific co-operation. Later by

August both the countries come to an agreement with speedy procedures from Germany signed the pact of Molotov-Ribbentrop non aggression pact on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1939.

Two days after the conclusion of the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, the British government concluded a formal alliance with Poland. This was signed in the form of a Treaty of Mutual Assistance on the late afternoon of August 25th. However, the British government still hoped for a peaceful settlement and hinted to Hitler that they considered his demands for Danzig and a strip of territory through the Polish Corridor, as acceptable. They gave Hitler this indication even though the Poles had rejected these demands earlier as a threat to their independence. Therefore, the British only asked if the Polish government was willing in principle to negotiate. The Poles said yes, provided the terms were compatible with Polish independence.

Barely a week after the pact had been signed, the partition of Poland commenced with invasion from the Germany. Hitler ordered invasion of Poland to be ready for September 1st, as the Poles had refused to negotiate any further over Danzig.

Faced with the Anglo-Polish alliance and also Mussolini's un-readiness to join in a European war, Hitler suspended his order for the attack on Poland to begin on August 26. He now pretended he was willing to negotiate. However, late on August 29, Ribbentrop told British Ambassador Nevile Henderson that he expected a Polish plenipotentiary to arrive in the German capital the next day. This meant the Poles would be told to accept German terms like the Czechoslovak in 1939.

Lipski, the Polish ambassador came to the German Foreign Office on August 31<sup>st</sup> to receive the text of the German demands. However, when Ribbentrop learned the ambassador did not have full powers, i.e. that he had not come to accept German demands he ended the meeting. So Hitler's demands as embodied in the "16 Points" were never formally presented to the Polish government, although they were communicated to foreign diplomatic representatives in Berlin and broadcast by the German radio on the evening of August 31, with the comment that they had been rejected by the Poles. The points were formulated in such a way as to seem reasonable to Western opinion and thus put the blame on Poland if war broke out.

At dawn on September 1, 1939, the German army, navy and air-force attacked Poland from the north (East Prussia), west (Germany proper), and southwest (Slovakia). On September 1st, the French and British ambassadors in Berlin delivered notes stating their governments would be forced to go to war if the German government did not agree to withdraw its troops from Poland. Then the two western governments waited two days, hoping Hitler would accept Mussolini's proposal of another conference (a proposal again encouraged by the British), though this time including the victim of aggression, Poland.

However they waited for two days, when none came, Britain declared a war with Germany. France followed at 5 p.m. However, having declared war, they did not fight but the Poles were left to fight the Germans alone because the French policy was to have the Poles fight as long as possible, and gain time for France. As for the British, they had told the Poles in May that if the Germans bombed Poland, they would bomb German military objectives. However, they later decided against it, allegedly fearing this would German air raid on Britain.

The Poles had not only the Germans to contend with. On September 17, as the Polish armies were trying to regroup in the southeast, the Red Army marched into eastern Poland. The Soviets then published a declaration saying they were coming into Poland to protect their defenseless Ukrainian and Belorussian brothers presumably against the Germans, and also to give the Poles a better and happier life. This was, of course, a propaganda ploy, since they were coming in according to the secret protocol of August 23, 1939. But, as mentioned above, no one knew the contents of that protocol at the time, except for High German and Soviet officials and the U.S. government, which, however, did not publicize them.

The Polish war came to an end after four and five weeks, the German suffered heavy losses in Poland which prevented Hitler from launching an attack on France in early October, as had planned. Polish losses were of course much greater than German.

Soviet Union began their mission in the direction of Baltic States based on their secret protocol between Germany and USSR. Right after the invasion of Poland Soviet Union turned to the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and concluded mutual assistance treaties and Soviet military bases were forced to establish. In the summer of 1940 sovietisation of red army regime began and by August 1940 all three countries were incorporated into USSR. At the end of

November 1939 Finland was attacked by the Soviet Union and following the winter war till spring 1940 was forced to cede large tracts of territory to the USSR. In July 1940 the Rumanian territories of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina were annexed by Soviet Union.

### **4.3 Soviet-Finnish War**

The Soviet-Finnish border extended over 800 miles along the Soviet Union western frontier. It was the weakest point of the entire Soviet Union western frontier. Soviet important city, Leningrad, was just twenty miles from this vulnerable frontier. Moreover, there was a heavy fortification and military built up by Finnish on the western frontier. Stalin knew that the western capitalist nations had an eye on the resource rich Soviet Union. The step brotherly treatment of the United Kingdom and France against Soviet Union and the Hitler's confrontational actions confirmed Stalin's concern for Soviet Union security. Soviet Union security could not be left to the chance as the war monger, Hitler was seeking every possible way to take control and expand its territory. Attacking Soviet Union in the western frontier via Finland cannot be ruled out.

The weak Finland border became a vital security issue for Soviet Union. Stalin knew that Hitler would make an all out attempt to either win Finland's support or occupy Finland by force. Then, it would prepare to attack the Soviet Union in the vulnerable western frontier. To address these vital security issues, the Soviet wanted complete demilitarization of the Mannerheim Line, the Finnish fortification line across the Karelian Isthmus, a 30-years lease on Hanko Peninsular as a naval base, and some parts of sea and a port at Lappohja and parts of Petsamo, on the Arctic Ocean. (Stig Jägerskiöld, Mannerheim, 108). Soviet Union on their part, offered an extensive districts along the eastern border of Finland.

The government sent a delegation to Moscow on the October 12th, 1939 for a conference despite the fact that the Finnish army had already started mobilization on October 10th. It was followed by a month long high-level diplomatic maneuver without any positive outcomes. The Finnish government rejected the Soviet Union Security concerns outright. Thus, the talk stalled and eventually broke off all negotiations on November 13th followed by two weeks of silence. On November 26th, the Finnish artillery fired on Russian troops in violation to the Soviet-Finnish non-aggression pact of 1932. Even though Soviet Union already had real problems looming on the horizon with Germany in the west and Japan in the east, this very act of aggression provoked

the Soviets to a great extent. The Soviets broke off any diplomatic relations on November 28th and entered into war with the Finnish on November 30th, 1939 which came to be known as the Winter War in Finland. "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Republic of Finland, as independent states, had been neighbors, but spent no time trying to communicate with each other. Each completely distrusted the other. In fact, there was no solid ground on which to build negotiations in 1939 (ibid, p. 108). This was beautifully explained further by historian, D.G. Kirby: "the tragedy of the Winter War should more properly be seen in the light of the previous two decades of mutual distrust and failure to resolve a vital security problem."(D.G. Kirby, p. 122).

Finland being a small and unindustrialized country had a small and poorly equipped armed force. Moreover, they had a limited communications system which was no match for highly sophisticated Soviet equipments. Even though the Finnish Government obtained the Support and sympathy from Western Capitalist states like Great Britain and France, it was subdued within three months by the extremely mechanized, well-equipped force of the highly industrialized Soviet Union.

Finnish troops were exhausted and retreating by the end of February 1940. The Finnish Government unconditionally surrendered and in the Captured town of Terijoki, the Soviets installed a temporary Finnish Government to show her sincerity and intention of securing peace and security. On March 13, 1940 representatives from the two countries signed a peace treaty in Moscow. It was mutually agreed that the Suursaari and islands to the east in the Gulf of Finland, a peninsula on the Arctic, the Salla area in northern Finland, and parts of Karelia will be under the influence of the Soviets for security reason. In addition, Finland leased the Hanko Peninsula, southwest of Helsinki, as a naval base to the USSR for a period of thirty years.

#### **4.4 Sovietisation on Baltic States**

Stalin's occupation of Baltic States started from late 1939, there was no blueprint policy for invasion of the Baltic States. Stalin was interested in occupying Baltic countries and making his spheres of influence since the time innumerable and the secret protocol with Germany came as a reward, "the main site of Russian expansionism was the Baltic- an area long been identified by Moscow as the conduit for any German invasion of the USSR" (Roberts, p. 105) Russia became

little apprehensive when in the summer of 1939 German signed a non-aggression treaty with Latvia and Estonia, for they can become their spheres of influence and those countries can be used as a launching pad to attack Soviet.

Soviet-Estonian relation began when Estonian foreign minister Selter arrived in Moscow on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1939 for trade agreement with Russia. Selter was slapped with mutual assistance pact and military, naval air bases on Estonian territory, in return Soviet would safeguard its security. Thus the Soviet-Estonian pact of mutual assistance was signed on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1939.

The same pact of mutual assistance and military bases were extended to Latvia, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October when Latvia's foreign minister Munters was in Moscow and treaty was signed on 5<sup>th</sup> October. Estonia and Latvia was reluctant to accept the treaty but ultimatum from Moscow threatening their security, it cannot risk.

Lithuania's was in fact willing to sign the treaty in exchange of her lost land to Poland. Vilna the ancient capital of Lithuania was seized by Poland in 1920. She never dreamt of securing that land from Poland, however according to the Soviet-German secret protocol that area was under the spheres of influence of USSR. Soviet was ready to transfer Vilna in exchange of the mutual assistance pact and the placing of Soviet's troops in the land of Lithuania. Lithuania rejected the Soviet troops on her ground after several negotiations the treaty concluded on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

In the summer of June 1940 Stalin entrenched his troops in Baltic States to avoid German expansionism and "Moscow's suspicion that there was a conspiracy to transform the 'Baltic entente' of the three countries into an anti-Soviet military alliance" (ibid, p. 120) so Soviet demanded the installation of pro-Soviet government and sending more troops into the Baltic States. After a few days of Moscow's ultimatum the revolutionary dream of old Bolsheviks aim was achieved in Baltic States, there was chaos and political upheaval in overthrowing the tainted infamous totalitarian regimes and installing the pro Soviet government. Stalin was praised for his successful Sovietisation in Baltic States.

#### **4.5 Military preparation on the eve of attack**

The German had a big plan for a quick victory over the Soviet was mainly based in part on the assumption that Soviet's large portion of population would welcome the liberation from

Stalinism. Where this assumption appeared justified in the first euphoria of the German onslaught. Most Latvians and Lithuanians, as well as significant large numbers of Ukrainians and other subject nationalities, were at least serving for their interest, cooperative if not enthusiastic about the change of regimes despite their nationality many older residents of European Russia remembered the hard but bearable and correct German occupation of 1917-1919 and they were much inclined to wait on events rather than abandon their homes and to become refugees for the rest of their life's.

From the very beginning, however, the German occupation policy appeared to be deliberately intended to alienate the populace. Prior to the invasion, OKW issued two orders based on the flimsy excuse that Moscow had not signed the Geneva and Hague accords on the law of war. The "Commissar Order" declared, Soviet political officers were not prisoners of war and should be shot out of hand. A second order specified that, in the event that a German soldier committed offenses against civilians or prisoners, disciplinary action was optional, at the discretion of the unit commander. Several senior German commanders refused to publish these orders and protested them to their superiors. In their memoirs, most of these German officers later insisted that the Wehrmacht never implemented such policies and those atrocities were largely the work of SS, genocidal Einsatzkommando units, and other Nazi Party occupation forces that followed behind the army.

Difference in opinion among the German armies and among different ranks could be visible, hence arguably there was a protest to some degrees from the lower orders, however this cannot be a prescribed and validate as a point in support of the ignorance of the soldiers as far as their attitude and actions are concern in and between the great war. One would agree that the multitude of men recruit of the country by and large are nurtured to speak, think, and act all but like very Nazi. Therefore it is as though they are the very blood that runs in the veins of the Nazi. It is also evident that there was a gap in communication between the higher ranking officers and the subordinates of different rank and files, yet every Nazi is a perfect Nazi trained and mechanized to live the way they wanted. Thus in literal terms no Nazi could be graded as innocent for their action so also the soldiers who were the very essence of the Nazi. History is blotted with the atrocities of the German army towards their adversity, no less were the Russian



subjected to the scourge of the Germans. Clearly the Wehrmacht classified the soviet citizens as sub-humans and dangerous threat to the Aryans; they were also tagged as treacherous.

Hitler planned to have almost 4 million soldiers in the ranks and over 200 divisions ready for Soviet invasion. However, there had been no coordinated tank production plan, and the number of tanks in each of these twenty divisions was only two-thirds of the numbers in the earlier ten divisions. The average number of tanks in the panzer divisions available for BARBAROSSA was 160, and production of newer and heavier tanks was not enough to compensate for the dilution of numbers.

Most of the tanks available were the Panzer Mark IIIs and Mark IVs, as well as the light Czech 38 tank. Their guns lack hitting power. Similarly, German anti-tank guns would also prove to be too light. In addition, the panzer divisions needed about 3,000 trucks to transport infantry, ammunition, and supplies, and trucks were in limited supply; particularly since motorized infantry divisions needed many trucks as well. Captured French trucks were used to stretch the limited stocks, though the French vehicles were not very rugged. There was a shortage of tires as well. Much of the logistical support for the infantry divisions for BARBAROSSA was to be provided by 625,000 horses; the German Army was still far from a fully mechanized force.

The Luftwaffe was also strained to support the operation. While the Luftwaffe had obtained brilliant successes in the early campaigns of the war, it had been badly cut up during the Battle of Britain and aircraft production had not been rapid enough to make up the shortfall. There were no more aircraft available than there had been to support the invasion of France and the Low Countries.

The quality of German soldiers, however, was not to be doubted. They had won victory after victory, were very confident, highly trained, and well led. The Wehrmacht was, man for man, one of the best fighting forces in the world. However, the rapid expansion of the military meant that the traditions of the old officer corps had been diluted. Many of the new young officers were dedicated Nazis and shared Hitler's crackpot bigotries. They would quickly descend to senseless brutalities in the campaign against the Slavic hordes to the east.

Stalin had disbanded the Red Army's large-scale mechanized corps in 1939, dispersing its armor among infantry divisions. The German victories in Poland and the West had proven this decision unwise, and the mechanized units were hastily thrown back together. They were mostly equipped with the fast but lightly-armored BT-7 tank, which could be destroyed by any German anti-tank weapon. A much improved successor, the T-34, was going into production, but it wouldn't be available in numbers for some time. By the spring of 1941, the Red Army's reorganization was still very incomplete. Only 30% of Soviet tanks were fully operational. Motor transport was in short supply, as was artillery ammunition of all types, as well as radios. The air force, the VVS, was also overburdened with obsolete equipment, and suffered from poor maintenance and equipment shortages. Pilot training was sketchy at best, since the flight schools were overloaded, under-equipped, and did not have enough experienced instructors.

Soviet military planning, which almost entirely reflected the wishes of Stalin, did not acknowledge the possibility of a German invasion in the immediate future. However, a war with the Germans was seen as likely over the long run and some preparations were made. Stalin built up stockpiles of food, strategic metals, and oil. He also built up industrial centers east of the Urals, where they would be out of reach of Hitler in case of an invasion, and plans were drawn up for the relocation of industries from the west to the east if that became necessary. Stalin's five year plan relocated the heavy industry from Ukraine and some part of western areas vulnerable to enemy attack to the eastern country side of rural Russia.

Stalin refused to listen to suggestions that the strategic stockpiles be moved east of the Urals as well. This was part of a larger controversy over the positioning of Red Army forces. One school of thought favored placing them near the USSR's borders, while another school wanted them placed farther in the interior, where they would have more time to react to an attack.

In 1936, the Soviet Union had begun work on an extensive series of fortifications, known as the "Stalin Line", to protect the USSR along a line from the Baltic to the northern side of the Pripet Marshes. In 1941, the Stalin Line had become a formidable obstacle to an invader, though it was by no means continuous, but after the USSR's seizure of new territories to the west the Stalin Line stood well east of the Soviet Union's new borders. Stalin insisted that the Red Army leave their existing fortifications, move up to the new border, and dig in there. He felt that the advantages of extra geographic space outweighed the loss of the fortified line.

Many of Stalin's generals disagreed. They knew that building up new defenses would take time, and even if the defenses were complete, they were so far forward that the Germans would be able to fall on them swiftly and with a high degree of surprise. Connections to rear supply areas were uncomfortably long; there were inadequate mobile forces in the rear to counter a German breakthrough; and the Red Army was not well trained in mobile tactics anyway, making the advantage of extra space questionable. A more rational scheme would have been to deploy light "tripwire" forces at the border to provide an alarm of an attack and delay it, with the bulk of the forces to the rear. Stalin did not agree, and arguing with him could be dangerous. The Red Army did what they could to dig in at their new forward positions

#### **4.6 Road to BARBAROSA**

Hitler's indelible expansionist policy of Russia materialized in the summer of 1941, he had given a code to this operation called BARBAROSSA, it had originally scheduled to begin on 15 May, and by the beginning of May nearly 80 divisions were in place. Their movements had been concealed by an elaborate campaign of misinformation and deception. Forward airfields had been built in secret and vast stockpiles of fuel, ammunition, and supplies had been quietly set up near the jumping-off points. Despite all the effort, the plan was running behind schedule. The winter of 1940-1941 had been unusually long, leaving roads in the frontier regions muddy and difficult to use. Stocks of trucks remained inadequate. A delay seemed increasingly likely.

Then the delay became inescapable. On 28 October 1940, Italy had invaded Greece, but the Greeks put up a stiff fight and threw the Italians back to Albania, an Italian colony. The British sent an expeditionary force to help the Greeks. Hitler could not tolerate the presence of the British in the Balkans, since they could move on the Rumanian oil fields that provided the Reich's fuel supply. Greece had to be conquered and the British driven out.

Hitler did not think that the capture of Greece would be difficult or time-consuming, particularly since Yugoslavia was in league with the Reich, having signed a friendship treaty on 25 March 1941. Given Yugoslav cooperation, German troops would be able to reach Greek borders without obstruction. However, on 27 March the anti-German faction in Yugoslavia, encouraged by British agents, overthrew the pro-German government, with the new regime signing a friendship treaty with the USSR on 6 April. Stalin wanted to show the Reich that the Soviet

Union would protect its interests in the Balkans; the Fuehrer saw the Kremlin's actions in Yugoslavia as just one more good reason to destroy the Bolsheviks.

On 6 April, with the ink on the friendship treaty between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union barely dry, powerful German formations invaded both Yugoslavia and Greece. The USSR hastily repudiated its friendship treaty. In any case, Yugoslavia was overrun in 12 days. Stalin, fearful of Hitler, did nothing to stop the invasion. Belgrade, the capital, was heavily bombed by the Luftwaffe, with 17,000 civilians killed.

The conquest of Greece took another two weeks. In April, Winston Churchill tried to pass on intelligence about the threat to Stalin through Sir Stafford Cripps. Neither Stalin nor Molotov was interested in talking to Cripps, and he simply ended up submitting his report through normal bureaucratic channels. Of course Stalin had every good reason to be suspicious of the British, who had a very strong and obvious interest in turning him against Hitler.

Stalin did not think that Adolf Hitler was too scrupulous to attack the USSR. Stalin had absolutely no scruples and had not the slightest belief that Hitler had any either, but Stalin believed that Hitler had no immediate motive for attacking the USSR. Stalin failed to realize that there was a major difference between him and Hitler. Stalin had no ideals and really no vision beyond the accumulation of power, while Hitler was, in his own ugly way, an idealist. Hitler might make a pact of convenience with Stalin, but Hitler saw the Jewish Bolshevik conspiracy as all that was wrong with the world, and he wouldn't sleep well until he had stamped it out. The Fuehrer didn't need a pretext to attack the USSR.

It appears that Stalin did recognize the possibility of an attack. Some measures to increase preparedness were taken as the first day of summer approached, but he was so determined to pursue a policy of appeasement and stalling for time that he simply let down his guard. "on 10<sup>th</sup> June the head of the British foreign office, sir Alexander Cadogan, called in Soviet ambassador to Britain Ivan Maisky and gave him a detailed report including names, numbers, and locations of German military preparations that signaled intention to attack the USSR" (Tucker, Spencer; 2004, p. 82) Stalin was stone hearted even warning many a time, the German ambassador in Moscow warned that German would attack but nothing had changed, "Moscow received more than hundred reports of impending German invasion, but shrugged off as an attempts by the

west to drive a wedge between the Soviet Union and German" (ibid, p. 82) He had completely suppressed dissent or even discussion, and had no reality checks to tell him that it was time to stop double talking and prepare for a fight.

Late on 21 June, Stalin finally began to turn around, putting some forces on alert, though he remained cautious and very tentative. Red Army forces were not to return fire if provoked. It was far too late, and the orders did little more than confuse front-line commanders. Early in the morning of Sunday, 22 June 1941, Soviet troops in the frontier regions were awakened by heavy incoming artillery fire. The barrages were precisely pre-targeted and methodically destroyed Red Army military assets near the border. Specially trained Wehrmacht assault groups swept over Soviet border guards, wiping them out methodically and securing bridges and other strategic points along the border.

Stalin remained muddled for hours, and the order to return fire was not issued until 07:15 AM. In the meantime, the Germans swept forward rapidly, overwhelming Soviet border units that had received no orders for dealing with the situation. Without orders, they could do nothing, for Stalin had eliminated nearly all officers who dared to take initiative on their own. Stalin was so unstrung that Molotov had to announce, later that day, the news of the invasion to the Soviet people: "Without any declaration of war, German troops have attacked our country, attacked our borders in many places, and bounded our cities with their aircraft".

The destruction of the Soviet Union by military force, the permanent elimination of the perceived Communist threat to Germany, and the seizure of prime land within Soviet borders for long-term German settlement had been a core policy of the Nazi movement since the 1920s. Adolf Hitler had always regarded the German-Soviet nonaggression pact signed on August 23, 1939, as a temporary tactical maneuver. In July 1940, just weeks after the German conquest of France and the Low Countries, Hitler decided to attack the Soviet Union within the following year. On December 18, 1940, he signed Directive 21 (code-named Operation "Barbarossa"), the first operational order for the invasion of the Soviet Union.

From the beginning of operational planning, German military and police authorities intended to wage a war of annihilation against the Communist state as well as the Jews of the Soviet Union, whom they characterized as forming the "racial basis" for the Soviet state. During the winter and

spring months of 1941, officials of the Army High Command (*Oberkommando des Heeres-OKH*) and the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt-RSHA*) negotiated arrangements for the deployment of special units (*Einsatzgruppen*) of the Security Police and the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst-SD*) behind the front lines to physically annihilate Jews, Communists and other persons deemed to be dangerous to establishment of long-term German rule on Soviet territory.

With 134 Divisions at full fighting strength and 73 more divisions for deployment behind the front, German forces invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, less than two years after the German-Soviet Pact was signed. Three army groups, including more than three million German soldiers, 'supported by 705,000 troops in 37 divisions from Germany's allies Finland, Romania and Hungary' (op.,cit, Tucker, Spencer, p. 84) and later augmented by units from Italy, Croatia and Slovakia attacked the Soviet Union across a broad front, from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south.

For months, the Soviet leadership had refused to heed warnings from the Western Powers of the German troop buildup along its western border. Germany and its Axis partners thus achieved almost complete tactical surprise. Much of the existing Soviet air force was destroyed on the ground, "on the first day alone, 1200 Soviet aircraft were destroyed most of them on the ground within three weeks the Soviet had lost 3500 tanks, 6000 aircraft and two million men, including a significant percentage of the officer corps" (Beevor, pp. 21-28 or Tucker,p. 85) were lost, the Soviet armies were initially overwhelmed. German units encircled millions of Soviet soldiers, who, cut off from supplies and reinforcements, had few options other than to surrender.

As the German army advanced deep into Soviet territory, SS and police units followed the troops. The first to arrive were the *Einsatzgruppen* of the Security Police and the SD, which the RSHA tasked with identifying and eliminating persons who might organize and implement resistance to the German occupation forces, identifying and concentrating groups of people who were "hostile" to German rule in the East, establishing intelligence networks, and securing key documentation and facilities.

Often known as mobile killing units, the *Einsatzgruppen* initiated mass-murder operations, primarily against Jewish males, officials of the Communist Party and State and Soviet Roma,

and, often with assistance from German Army personnel, established ghettos and other holding facilities to concentrate large numbers of Soviet Jews.

Beginning in late July, with the arrival of Himmler's representatives, the Higher SS and Police Leaders and significant reinforcement, the SS and police, supported by locally recruited auxiliaries, began to physically annihilate entire Jewish communities in the Soviet Union. Success both on the military front and in the murder of the Soviet Jews contributed to Hitler's decision to deport German Jews to the occupied Soviet Union beginning on October 15, 1941, initiating what would become "Final Solution" policy: the physical annihilation of the European Jews.

Despite catastrophic losses in the first six weeks of the war, the Soviet Union failed to collapse as anticipated by the Nazi leadership and the German military commanders. In mid-August 1941, Soviet resistance stiffened, knocking the Germans off of their unrealistic timetable. Nevertheless, by late September 1941, German forces reached the gates of Leningrad in the north. They took Smolensk in the center and some parts of Ukraine. They spilled into the Crimean Peninsula in the south.

German units reached the outskirts of Moscow in early December. Yet after months of campaigning, the German army was exhausted. Having expected a rapid Soviet collapse, German planners had failed to equip their troops for winter warfare. Expecting their military personnel to live off the land of a conquered Soviet Union at the expense of the indigenous population, which in German calculations, would starve to death in the millions, German planners had failed to provide sufficient food and medicines. Worse still, German troops, advancing rapidly, outran their supply lines, rendering thinly defended flanks vulnerable to Soviet counterattack along the 1,000 mile stretch from Berlin to Moscow.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1941, the Soviet Union launched a major counterattack against the center of the front, driving the Germans back from Moscow in chaos. "Also Stalin issued orders to be read to all troops of the army that anyone who surrendered was a traitor to the Motherland, their families were to be deprived of all state allowances and assistance and if recovered, such individuals were to be shot" (Alexander Maslov, p. 185) Only weeks later were the Germans able to stabilize the front east of Smolensk.

In the summer of 1942, Germany resumed the offensive with a massive attack to the south and southeast toward the city of Stalingrad (Volgograd) on the Volga River and toward the oil fields of the Caucasus. As the Germans reached the outskirts of Stalingrad and approached Groznyj (Groznyy) in the Caucasus, approximately 120 miles from the shores of the Caspian Sea in September 1942, the German domination of Europe reached its furthest geographical extension.



## CONCLUSION

Socialism as a state ideology prevailed in Soviet Union since the triumph of Bolsheviks in 1917. The foreign policy of Soviet Union was based on this socialist ideology. Ideas and beliefs were embodied in the ruling communist party and acted as the sole guiding centre for the entire Soviet policy. The Communist Party of Soviet Union decides and directs the Soviet foreign policy. Soviet foreign policy after the October revolution was declared as a policy of peace and the main task was to avert war and safeguard Soviet security. Strive for peace was pursued through economic relations and economic contacts with every country, because once the economic relationship is secured then it can move on for the diplomatic relation. However the Soviet diplomacy in the name of facilitating peace attained a great deal of flexibility in the thirties, their socialist ideology was changed and sacrificed to pragmatism in order to suit the new reality.

This change in policy based on socialist ideology could be noticed in Soviet history from late 1920s, but the dramatic volte face took shape in the period of Hitler's reign in Nazi-Germany. The Soviet policy of socialist internationalism changed into socialism in one country was a response to the international situation of securing peace and promoting economic relations. However the complete change happened in the epochal period of Nazism.

Nazi movement arose out of resistance to the Bolshevik-inspired insurgencies that occurred in Germany in the aftermath of the First World War. The triumph of Socialism made the democratic western states highly apprehensive and democracy everywhere suffered a setback. The success of October revolution resonated in every working class society and its reverberation directly stimulated a powerful upsurge of the revolutionary working class and national liberation movement in the world. The first communist parties in capitalist countries arose in the course of the revolutionary battles of 1918 in Finland, Austria, Argentina, Netherland, Hungary, Poland, Germany and some other countries. The emergence of Munich Soviet and Spartacist uprising in Berlin 1919 were the manifestations of this affect.

Due to the growing popularity of communist revolution, Communist takeover seemed inevitable in Germany as a result of this increasing numbers of capitalists and bourgeois' began looking to the nationalist movements as a bulwark against Bolshevism. And hence Hitler stood out as the savior of Western civilization and of capitalism against Bolshevism. On the other hand Mussolini's fascists took power in Italy in 1922, presented itself as a realistic option for opposing Communism. Therefore, various right-wing politicians and political parties in Europe welcomed the rise of fascism and the Nazism out of an intense aversion towards Communism.

Britain also hated communism equally as Germany and Italy however it is quite debatable that the growth of Nazism and Fascism was absent in Britain. This absence according to Robert, Thomas was due to lack of right circumstances. Had Britain suffered defeat in the Second World War the same nationalist and collectivist tendencies would have taken hold. This does not means Britain support communism but desirous of destroying Bolshevism was present right from the start, however Britain never confronted face to face with Soviet Union. Nevertheless Britain's unspoken connivance towards fascist aggression to curb communism was indelible.

The imperialist bourgeoisie, frightened by the growth of the revolution, exerted frenzied efforts to crush the proletarian movement both in its own countries and in Soviet Russia. There arose a need to create an international communist organization, an organization which could unite the forces of the revolutionary proletariat of the world, an organization for the liberation of all mankind irrespective of race or nationality. This organization was used by Soviet Union as the catalyst organization to fight fascism. The communist international dictated the tasks and requirements of the revolutionary workers all over the world.

The communist party in other countries works under the instruction of the communist international. The change in the policy of communist international took a radical change in the task of communist party everywhere as in the case of the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of Communist international the communist regarded Social Democrat of Europe as communists' rival for diverting the working class support. The communist international ordered the Communist

Party of Germany to aid for the anti-Soviet National Socialist German Workers Party in its contest for power. Whereas 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of communist international, 1935, called for the collaboration of communist with Social democrat to combat fascism. 'The Comintern has intermittently crept into the story as an additional arm of Soviet foreign policy' (Haslam, 1984, ix) in this way the communist international was used as a catalyst organization to fight against fascist aggression.

The Soviet foreign policy in 1920s was completely dissolved in peaceful intervention and peaceful co-existence. Peace was very necessary for the victory of socialism. So the major task of the foreign policy was to secure recognition and procure friendly relations with every country. The foreign policy was seen as an amalgamation of ideology and expediency. As the ideology of the Soviet foreign policy gained momentum, the international scene began to change fundamentally in 1933, with the rise of fascism. Communism and fascism emerged as the two serious contenders for power in the thirties. The reverberation of socialist victory made the communism popular among the workers of the entire world making new condition for working class struggle and on the other side nationalist movement to curb communism headed by Hitler arose.

Soviet Union desired for the continuation of Rapallo relationship with Germany in the beginning of Hitler's period. This Rapallo relationship had existed because of a perceived need for a powerful ally in a world of hostile capitalist states. After the first world war Germany and Soviet union found themselves in the common ground, the two pariah of international system, began their clandestine military and economic relations until it came to a halt in 1933. Hitler's fascist ideology came as an antidote to the communist ideology, when Soviet Union realized that Hitler's foreign policy was a definite thread to the Soviet Union, Moscow quickly abandoned hope of continuing alliance with Germany and sought rapprochement with the hostile capitalist world.

Soviet pursuit for the collective security with the capitalist world in the menace of the fascist aggression, the policy of the Soviet Union was to make multilateral security arrangements against the aggressors. Soviet Union involved in multiple project in collaboration with the west, entered the League of Nations, change the comintern policy, and accomplished a bilateral treaty with France.

However for every choice Soviet Union has its own risk, Soviet rapprochement with United State resulted into Hitler's conclusion of non-aggression pact with Poland for ten year. This seems to have a blow to Stalin. In the ratification of Franco-Soviet pact of 1936, Hitler's obligation to this pact was shown by reoccupation of Rhineland by his army.

In the 1930s rearmament race Stalin was able to build up industry for an early start with his five year plan that had began in late twenties catapulted Soviet Union as one of the largest defense producer. Accelerated rearmament of Germany in the mid 1930s was also an essential step for maintaining Germany's military advantage and preparing her for every eventuality. His speedy rearmament process created economic setback and social unrest in Germany which Hitler promised to solve this problem by ensuring the eastern fertile land for the Germans. Hitler's expansionist policy set in motion by seizing Austria in March. The following month in September he demanded Sudeten should be incorporated in Germany which created serious crisis for all Europe.

However, western powers afraid to provoke Germany appeased her in Munich conference 1938. Stalin's foreign policy attempted to uphold the principles of collective security against Hitler, and had drawn closer to the European powers during the mid thirties, but anti Soviet feeling was so strong in the west in the words of Haslam "anti-communism, with few exceptions, was rarely a conscious matter in western counsels of state; yet it drifted through the clubs and dinner parties as did the air they breathed" (Haslam, 1984, p. 231) they remained blinded in the fear of communism and failed to or reluctant to recognize the German menace in the heart of Europe which will take Europe into war.

In the midst of French and British bourgeoisie's fear of communism Hitler hoped to establish himself as Europe's savior against the common enemy and his doctrine of military superiority of strong nations endeavoured to achieve. Fascist imperialist demanded the re-division of the world into regional blocs and each dominated by one, so with his aim of German hegemony in Europe, Hitler launched his aggressive policy. Walter Laqueur has quoted Hitler's famous remark that Hitler needed the anti-communist policy mainly for western consumption to help him over the critical period when German

rearmament was not yet complete and there was still some danger of a preventive war by the French'. (Laqueur, 1965:170). Hitler's Germany required raw material to complete his rearmament process and for this he needed to invade the fertile land of Eastern Europe before he launches his attack on the western front.

In the late thirties Soviet proposed Britain and France the formation of triple alliance united front to combat fascist aggression, however the western democratic powers were bargaining for their peace and dragging Soviet Union all along to their negotiation, after the policy of appeasement Britain offer their spheres of colonist to Germany to divert the war towards USSR. French was reluctant to extend the boundaries of their pact with Moscow; she was relying solely upon British for her security. She signed the bilateral pact with Moscow to keep Hitler on check. Margot argued those "government act within a conspiracy framework, following a grand design of imperialism predestined to oppose socialism and to work for its destruction" (Margot light, 1983:85)

Thus, the condition of Soviet Union on the eve of Second World War was like a bone thrown between two dogs, Soviet Union was not trusted by the democratic western powers so they neither sign the triple alliance nor refuse their offer but dragged them and tried to project the fascist aggression towards her, while Germany on the other hand needed Soviet Union "as a bargaining counter with the western powers" (Kennan, 1960:279) its anti-comintern pact was primarily not against USSR, it was not to denounce the Soviet union but to gain support in the west for Nazi policy' (Laqueur, 1965:176) therefore, the western powers timidity and vacillating policies ever ready to appease Hitler left the Soviet government no choice but to go its own way.

In 1939 Soviet Union abandoned the collective security project, returned semi isolated and relying back to the Rapallo relation. Soviet Union realized the western democratic powers negotiation with Germany to divert the war to the east, without completely ignoring the triple alliance. The western powers hoped to draw the USSR away from Germany and over to their side. Britain did not let go of USSR to negotiate with Germany, for Chamberlain, the goal of British policy was a European settlement agreeable to Berlin. Until about 1936, British statesmen believed that such a settlement

would avert a European war; later, while still hoping to preserve peace, they wanted to gain time for gradual British rearmament.

On Moscow's part negotiating with both the Anglo-France and Germany gave the Soviet Union extra leverage to exert pressure on both parties, since it could threaten to conclude a treaty with the other party. However, the Soviet Union could not afford to fail in both sets of negotiations and hence, Nazi-Soviet pact and a deal with Hitler were seen as a best way to avert war because Poland was the common interest of both Germany and Soviet Union and had there been a pact with triple alliance, it would ultimately have pulled Soviet into war with Germany as Germany attack Poland. Nazi-Soviet pact also means thwarting away the plot of the western powers to precipitate a Soviet-German war.

It is arguable that an alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers might have averted a war, The western powers were at that time much stronger and bigger than the fascist regime, together with Soviet Union they could have curbed the German aggression from the nascent and since Hitler wanted to avoid a war on two fronts, Germany feared such an alliance. Thus, the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was essentially the second-best option for the Soviet Union, and it is understandable why its success is ambiguous. However, it was the only realistic option for the Soviet Union in 1939, since an agreement with the Western Powers was not possible. Duff argues that "the Western Pact would have exposed him (Stalin) to imminent danger" (Duff, 1958: 504) the war became inevitable for Soviet Union had he ignored the Nazi pact.

One can also suggest that, has the western socialist, been on the side of the Soviet Union against its fascist aggression and had Hitler been forced from the outset to fight a war on two fronts instead of one, then the Europe would in all probably never have had to undergo the disaster of 1940, and the Nazi defeat would have been from the outset assured. As matters stood politically in the west in 1938-39, the left was too weak to unite in working for it; there were divided socialist counsels in Western Europe as well as in the Soviet Union and the policy of appeasement brought Western Europe to the very brink of irreparable disaster.

In this short Soviet-Nazi alliance of 1939 though the Nazis ideology and communist ideology guided their policies; the role of ideology took a backstage in the immediate instrumental gain of both the regimes. As Karl Dietrich a famous historians has put it “Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939 gravely contrary to the whole of Hitler’s deeply fixed ideology, with he equally momentous consequences o opening Central Europe to Stalin” (Karl Dietrich, 1976:220) In the final denouncement of the 1939-41, however ideology was far less important than a series of misperceptions and miscalculations regarding Soviet-German relations. Arvind Gupta argued that pragmatism was the hallmark of Soviet foreign policy, but the leaders have tried to explain pragmatist policies in terms of ideology. (Gupta, 1993:59)

This was a policy pressed on a government in desperate need of peace, faced with a government set on the road to war. Stalin himself was a pragmatist prepared to accept anything that promised to work. Litvinov laid down the principle of Soviet foreign policy which illustrated that extreme pragmatism rather than socialist ideology was to guide the Soviet diplomacy.

## Chronological Table of German and Soviet Foreign Policy

| Year | Month     | Foreign Policy  |
|------|-----------|---|
| 1933 | January   | Hitler appointed Chancellor   |
|      | February  | Germany attends Disarmament   |
|      | September | Soviet Union League of Nations  |
|      | October   | Germany leaves Disarmament Conference and League of Nations   |
| 1934 | January   | Non-Aggression Pact with Poland   |
|      | July      | Dollfuss murdered   |
|      | September | Soviet entered League of Nations  |
| 1935 | March     | Re-introduction of conscription   |
|      | May       | 1) Franco-Soviet Pact signed, which was ratified by the French Chamber of Deputies only in 1936. 2) 7 <sup>th</sup> Comintern Congress changed its policy |
|      | June      | Anglo-German Naval Convention   |
| 1936 | March     | Re-occupation of Rhineland  |
|      | June      | Austro-German agreement   |
|      | July      | Spanish Civil War begins  |
|      | November  | Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan, Italy join after one year   |
| 1937 | June      | Stalin's public trials  |
|      | July      | Japan goes to war with  |



|      |           |  |
|------|-----------|--|
|      |           | China and clashed with Soviet Union  |
|      | November  | Rome-Berlin Axis;Hossbach meeting  |
| 1938 | February  | Hitler-Schuschnigg meeting   |
|      | March     | Invasion of Austria  |
|      | September | Munich Conference,Czech crisis   |
| 1939 | March     | 1) Destruction of Czechoslovakia. 2) British guarantee to Poland                   |
|      | April     | Hitler denounces non-aggression pact with Poland and Anglo-German convention       |
|      | May       | 1) Pact of Steel. 2) Molotor replaced Litvino V as commissioner of foreign affair. |
|      | August    | Russo-German non-aggression pact   |
|      | September | 1) Attack on Poland begins. 2) Revision of secret protocol                         |
|      | November  | Soviet attack Finland  |
|      | December  | Expelled from League of Nations  |
| 1940 | June      | Stalin occupied the Baltic state   |
| 1941 | April     | Soviet-Japanese non-aggression state   |
|      | June      | German invasion of Soviet Union  |

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(\* indicates primary source)

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