For World Peace and Freedom

A Survey of the Twenty-Five Years of Soviet International Policy

by Alexander A. Troyanovsky

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National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, Inc.
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INTRODUCTION

The National Council of American-Soviet Friendship considers it a great privilege as well as of great importance to bring to the American public this incisive and inclusive review of Soviet foreign relations by Alexander Troyanovsky, first Ambassador of the USSR to the United States, a position which he most ably filled from 1933 to 1939.

Ex-Ambassador Troyanovsky's article, which was first published in November, 1942, is especially pertinent at this time because of the many questions that are being raised in America concerning Soviet aims in the international sphere. Unhappily, these questions are often posed and discussed in a manner that threatens the unity of the United Nations in the war against Hitler, and their cooperation after the war in building an enduring peace. Mr. Troyanovsky goes far in clearing the atmosphere by showing how sincerely and strenuously the Soviet Republic has striven for peace ever since it came into existence in 1917.

He makes plain that the Soviet Government has stood consistently for the self-determination of peoples, for disarmament and for the wiping out of aggression by means of the peace-loving nations acting together through an effective system of collective security. For twenty-five years the Soviet Union has taken the initiative in seeking to establish these principles and in making international agreements to that end with the various countries of the world. The inescapable implication of this record is that Soviet policy will remain the same when the present terrible conflict is over; and in fact its leaders have so stated repeatedly over the past two years.

CORLISS LAMONT,
Chairman, National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, Inc.

April, 1943
Twenty-five years ago the October Revolution took place in Russia. From the very beginning the young Soviet State had to face tremendous dangers from abroad. Its brutal and rapacious enemy was predatory German imperialism, bent on total destruction of Soviet power in Russia, and intending to achieve the restoration of tsarist monarchy. It planned to plunder Russia and use our resources in raw materials for its own ends.

After the October Revolution there was no cessation of military operations on the Eastern Front. The German imperialists carried on in Russia an armed intervention which they continued almost to the end of the first world war.

The German imperialist bandits invaded the Ukraine and, inflicting great suffering on the Ukrainian people, plundered right and left, committed every conceivable outrage and in May 1918 set up the tsarist general Skoropadski as hetman of the Ukraine. They succeeded in occupying the Crimea and the Caucasus, the Baltic countries and Finland. The stage was set for the advance on Petrograd and Moscow.

The Ukrainian people carried on a national war against the German desecrators; in this national war the people of the whole Soviet Union extended help to the Ukrainians. Joseph Stalin wrote about this war: “The national war begun in the Ukraine has every right to count on the full support of the whole of Soviet Russia.”

In March, 1918, President Wilson, expressing his sympathy
for the Soviet people, remarked that Germany had thrown her armed forces into the heart of the country in order to impede the struggle for freedom, destroy all that had so far been won, and carry out the plans of Germany in the teeth of the opposition of the Russian people.

The Soviet Union, repulsing all interventionists and aggressors, during the following twenty-five years uninterruptedly and persistently maintained a policy of peace, which took different forms and expressions at different times.

**Establishing Friendly Relations**

The Soviet Union set about establishing friendly relations with all countries on the basis of mutual recognition, and first and foremost with countries possessing a common frontier with her.

The first sign of restored concord was the treaty signed by the Soviet Government with Estonia on February 5, 1920. Lenin estimated the significance of this treaty in the following way:

"By making peace with Estonia the Russian workers have opened up a window looking out into Western Europe."

After Estonia diplomatic relations were established with Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and the Mongolian People's Republic.

Thus the Soviet Union ensured peace on her borders and so lessened the likelihood of being attacked from abroad.

Relations with England, the leading world power after the first world war, were of first importance in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union strove to reach an agreement with the British Government, and carried on negotiations for the conclusion of an Anglo-Soviet pact on economic and political questions. Finally these negotiations led to the signing on March 16, 1921, of an agreement of a political and commercial character, according to which England and Soviet Russia undertook to refrain from hostile propaganda or any hostile action towards each other. It was especially stressed that the Soviet Union should refrain from hostile actions towards England in India and Afghanistan, and the British Government undertook similar obligations with regard to those States which had once formed part
of Russia. The agreement also settled a whole series of questions concerning trade between the two countries, in particular the reciprocal right to the exchange of trade representatives was recognized.

This agreement meant mutual but not complete recognition of the two governments; it provided for no exchange of diplomatic representatives, and so could not be looked upon as recognition de jure but recognition de facto, semi-recognition.

Thereafter similar semi-political, semi-economic agreements were reached with a number of countries, in particular with Germany, on May 6, 1921, and with Italy on December 25 of the same year.

At that time Germany was striving for a rapprochement with England and was ready to arrange her relations with the Soviet Union in accordance with England's desires, the more so that Germany was afraid of losing the economic profits from trade with the Soviet Union, which England secured as a result of her agreement with us.

Diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Germany were reestablished on April 16, 1922, on the basis of the well-known Rapallo Pact, at the time of the Genoa Conference. Prime Minister Lloyd George had been aware of the pending conclusion of this treaty and wished to have it signed, as he was working for the reestablishment of full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and would have liked to use the Soviet-German agreement as a precedent for a corresponding Anglo-Soviet agreement.

The official recognition of the Soviet Union by Great Britain took place eighteen months after Lloyd George's resignation, on February 2, 1924, when the Labor Party was in power. Italy followed suit and recognized the Soviet Union on February 7, 1924, France—on September 28, 1924, and Japan—on January 20, 1925. Thus it is evident that the rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Great Britain had a beneficial influence on the international position of our country.

In 1924 parliamentary elections took place in France. During the campaign of May, 1924, the reestablishment of diplomatic
relations with the USSR was an important electoral issue. The workers put forward as their slogan the resumption of official relations with the USSR. The so-called "cartel des gauches" (left block) made this their demand, and they were victorious at the polls. The Herriot government, formed as a result of these elections, established diplomatic relations with the USSR. Such a situation had arisen in France that a prominent radical-socialist, Painlevé, stated on June 10, 1924: "At the present time a cabinet refusing to recognize the USSR would not be able to maintain itself in power."

The Soviet Union on its side did everything to secure the establishment of normal relations with the most powerful country economically in the world, i.e., the U. S. A. The telegram sent to President Coolidge on December 16, 1923, by the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs may serve as an instance of the efforts made by the Soviet Union to bring about an improvement in its relations with U. S. A.

However, the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between these two countries proved to be possible only after a lapse of ten years, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, on November 16, 1933. In this way the present military collaboration between the Soviet Union and the U. S. A. in their war against the common enemy, Hitlerite Germany and her vassals in Europe, was made possible.

With some countries the establishment of official relations was effected only after great delay. For instance, with Czechoslovakia and Rumania relations were resumed on June 9, 1934, and with Yugoslavia only on June 25, 1940.

Soviet Policies in the East

The Soviet Union in its foreign policy attached special importance to its relations with the peoples of the East, whose friendship it invariably strove to win.

First and foremost, the Soviet Government declared nonexistent all treaties which were concluded by the tsarist government with the countries of the East and based on unequal rights. Above all this applied to Iran, with which country on December
23, 1917, the Soviet Government proposed to open negotiations on the evacuation of Russian troops. On January 27, 1918, the Soviet Government abrogated the pact of 1907 which divided Iran into spheres of influence.

As a result of negotiations between the Soviet and Iranian governments on various outstanding questions, a Soviet-Iranian pact was signed on February 26, 1921; this pact constituted a full swing away from the policy of the tsarist and provisional governments toward Iran. By this pact the Soviet Government renounced all concessions, money claims, etc., based on preferences received by the tsarist government on the territory of Iran.

Article 6 of this pact established the right of the Soviet Union to send Russian troops into Iranian territory in the event of the appearance there of forces constituting a direct threat to the security of the Soviet Government.

Thus the Soviet Union retained the right to take the necessary steps in defence of her safety if the Iranian Government proved incapable of defending its national rights or abused these rights to the detriment of the fundamental interests of the Soviet State.

In accordance with the principles of its national policy, the Soviet Government established friendly relations with Turkey, and on March 16, 1921, concluded a pact with her, cancelling all special rights enjoyed by the tsarist government, as well as all debts of Turkey to the tsarist government; at the same time the districts of Kars and Ardahan were ceded to Turkey.

On May 27, 1919, the Soviet Government in a special declaration recognized the sovereign rights of Afghanistan and established by a preliminary pact on September 30, 1920, and a final pact on February 28, 1921, official diplomatic relations, which had not existed between tsarist Russia and Afghanistan since 1907.

The Soviet Government, in a note sent to the Chinese Government on July 26, 1919, annulled all the treaties based on unequal rights as well as all special privileges enjoyed by tsarist Russia in China. After protracted negotiations, several times broken off, the Soviet Government on May 31, 1924, signed a pact restor-
ing diplomatic relations with China. This was the first pact based on the equal rights of the contracting parties ever signed by the Chinese Government with any other government.

The Soviet Government established a close friendship with the people’s revolutionary government of Mongolia, with which on November 5, 1921, it signed a pact concerning mutual recognition principles of trade and some other questions.

The relations between the Soviet Union and Japan merit separate and special treatment. It is known that the Hitlerites regard the Japanese nation with disdain and arrogance. Hitler in his book *Mein Kampf* declared that the Japanese nation belongs to an inferior race incapable of independent creative work and able only to imitate other nations possessing such aptitude.

The national policy of the Soviet Union precludes the treatment of the Japanese people as inferiors. The Soviet Government has always recognized the Japanese claim to full equality and regards the Japanese people as equally apt in producing valuable contributions to world culture.

*Self-determination for All Peoples*

The Soviet Union, established on the basis of perfect fraternity and friendship of the peoples composing it, has demonstrated before the whole world that modern peoples may and should live peacefully, respecting each other’s rights.

The national policy of the Soviet Union enjoys popularity amongst all modern nations, in particular those suffering under the yoke of Hitlerite tyranny.

It is certainly possible to abuse the principle of the freedom of peoples. The possibility of such “abuse” of independence was foreseen in the 1921 pact with Iran mentioned above.

Under the guise of formal independence, certain governments may fetter their peoples with chains of foreign servitude or turn them into a weapon for the prosecution of a predatory war. It is in just such a position that the vassals of Hitlerite Germany have placed their countries, beginning with Italy and ending with Finland.
The whole foreign policy of the Soviet Union is based on the recognition of the rights of peoples to freedom and self-determination.

Not in words but in deeds has the Soviet Union demonstrated its adherence to the principles of the right of peoples to self-determination.

In the so-called peace decree of November 8, 1917, passed by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination was laid down.

The manifesto to the Ukrainian people published on December 17, 1917, declared that “The Council of People’s Commissars once again confirms the right to self-determination of all nations which lived under the oppression of tsarism and the great-Russian bourgeoisie, including the right of these nations to secede from Russia.”

The question of the right of nations to self-determination was raised by the Soviet Government during the period of the seizure of Bessarabia by Rumania in December 1917-January 1918.

The right of nations to self-determination was observed in practice by the Soviet Government with regard to Finland.

On November 27, 1917, at the Congress of the Finnish Social-Democratic Party, it was declared that the Council of People’s Commissars recognizes “the full right of the Finnish people, as of all the peoples of Russia, to an independent national existence.” On December 31, 1917, the Council of People’s Commissars passed a decree guaranteeing the State independence of the Finnish Republic. Thus the Soviet Government freely granted Finland the independence flatly refused by the tsarist government and which the Russian Provisional Government also did not intend to concede.

With regard to Poland, the Soviet Government also adhered firmly to its proclamation of the right of nations to self-determination.

There has not been a single occasion in the whole history of the foreign policy of the USSR when the Soviet Government evinced a single doubt regarding the right of Poland to independent existence.
During the unfortunate Polish-Soviet war, begun in 1919 on the initiative of Poland, the Soviet Government repeatedly affirmed its recognition of Polish independence.

As early as December 21, 1919, the Soviet Government proposed to Poland the opening of peace negotiations on the basis of the recognition of Polish independence. The same recognition was later expressed in the address of the Council of People's Commissars to the Polish Government and the Polish people, and so on. It should be noted that when the Red Army was gaining victories over Poland, the Soviet Government on August 10, 1920, published its terms of peace; first among them stood the full recognition of the independence of Poland. It goes without saying that the preliminary peace treaty of the Soviet Government with Poland on October 12, 1920, and the final treaty signed at Riga on March 18, 1921, fully recognized the independence of Poland.

During 1920, pacts were concluded with the Baltic States. There is scarcely need to mention that in all these pacts the independence of these States was recognized, which led to their being similarly recognized by the governments of other countries.

The Struggle for Peace

In the struggle for peace, the Soviet Government has seized many opportunities to avert the danger of war, first and foremost naturally, to avert that danger from the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government strove to reach agreements containing guarantees by individual countries to refrain from attacking the Soviet Union or to preserve neutrality in the event of an attack being made on her by some third power or group of powers.

A pact of non-aggression and neutrality with Turkey was signed on December 17, 1925. On April 24, 1926 a pact of neutrality with Germany was signed, on August 31, 1926, a pact of neutrality and non-aggression with Afghanistan. On September 28, 1926, a similar pact was concluded with Lithuania. The year 1932 was especially fruitful in pacts of non-aggression; for instance, on February 25, 1932, such a pact was concluded with
Latvia, on May 4 with Estonia, on July 25 with Poland, on November 29 with France. With Japan a pact of neutrality was signed on April 13, 1941.

For the purpose of developing peaceful relations among the peoples of the world, the Soviet Union put forward a proposal for partial or full disarmament. The Soviet Union introduced its proposal for the limitation of armaments at the Genoa Conference in 1922, and again at the Moscow Conference on Armaments Limitation in December 1922, as well as at the Disarmament Conferences held in the period from 1927 to 1933.

The Soviet Union joined the Kellogg-Briand pact for the outlawry of war signed in Paris on August 27, 1928. The official inclusion of the Soviet Union in this pact took place on September 6, 1928. In view of the fact that the ratification of this pact by the powers involved took considerable time, the Soviet Union appealed to neighboring States to put it into force without waiting for full ratification. On February 9, 1929, a protocol to this effect was signed in Moscow by representatives of the USSR, Poland, Rumania, Estonia and Latvia. They were later joined by Turkey, Iran and Lithuania.

The Soviet Union took part in a series of international conferences which in one way or another touched on the interests of the Soviet Union.

The most important of these conferences were the Genoa Conference in 1922, the Hague Conference of the same year, the world economic conference of 1927 in Geneva, and the world economic conference in 1933 in London.

At the Genoa Conference in 1922 and at Geneva in 1927, the Soviet Union put forward a proposal for the recognition of the possibility of the peaceful co-existence of two economic systems, the socialist and the capitalist; this proposal was accepted as a guiding principle of the economic conference of 1927.

The Soviet Union took the opportunity afforded by the economic conference of 1933 to sign with certain other States protocols defining the conception of aggressors and aggression. The protocol was signed by Estonia, Latvia, Rumania, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. In addition, the
Soviet Union put forward at this conference a project of a resolution against all "economic aggression."

Of particularly great significance was the participation of the Soviet Union in the League of Nations, which it joined at the invitation of thirty States September 19, 1934.

**Collective Security Efforts**

Ever-increasing fascist aggression, which had already created a number of potential zones of war, and first and foremost in Central Europe, when Hitlerite bandits seized power in Germany on January 30, 1933, impelled the Soviet Union to raise the problem of the organization of mutual aid among the peaceful and freedom-loving peoples against all possible attack on the part of the fascist barbarians.

To this phase belongs the energetic campaign of the Soviet Union in 1934 on behalf of the so-called Eastern Pact. This pact was to guarantee the inviolability of State borders in Eastern Europe. According to its provisions, France was to take part in such guarantees in exchange for guarantees by the Soviet Union of the security of France in Western Europe, already guaranteed under the Locarno pact by Great Britain in 1925. The conclusion of this Eastern Pact was frustrated by Hitlerite Germany, and by the double-dealing game of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laval.

In addition the Soviet Union, on May 2, 1935, concluded a pact of mutual assistance with France, and on May 16, 1935, with Czechoslovakia. The first of these was sabotaged by the French pro-fascists, principally Laval, and lost all practical significance, and the second, the mutual aid stipulated therein being conditional on the fulfillment of its obligations by France, could not be put into effect, as the Government of France betrayed Czechoslovakia at Munich on September 29, 1938.

At the time of German-Italian intervention in Spain, from the middle of 1936 to the beginning of 1939, the Soviet Union fought against the so-called "non-intervention" of the democratic countries, making a vigorous protest against the armed intervention of fascist Germany and Italy.
Endeavoring to organize collective and mutual aid to safeguard the security of the peace-loving countries, the Soviet Union several times suggested the convening of a peace conference in order to elaborate the necessary measures for resisting aggression.

It proposed that the disarmament conference should be turned into a permanent peace conference.

After the seizure of Austria by the Hitlerites, the Soviet Union on March 17, 1938, also put forward the idea of the calling of a peace conference.

At the time when the “men of Munich” were organizing the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union supported the proposal of President Roosevelt to bring collective influence to bear on the fascist apostles of violence, and repeated its suggestion for the calling of a peace conference.

In connection with the enquiry made by the British Government on March 18, 1939, concerning the possible position of the Soviet Union in the event of an attack by the Hitlerites on Rumania, the Soviet Government again insisted on the calling of a peace conference.

In answer to the telegram of President Roosevelt to M. I. Kalinin on April 15, 1939, on the desirability of organizing collective negotiations on economic and political questions connected with fascist aggression, the Soviet Union once more urged the calling of a peace conference.

All these proposals to call a peace conference met with no response.

For Unity of the Democracies

The Soviet Union strove unceasingly for the establishment of relations of collaboration with the democratic countries, and above all with England and the U. S. A. Many instances of these endeavors on the part of the Soviet Union may be cited.

In August, 1924, an agreement was reached between the Soviet Union and Great Britain which took the form of two pacts—one of a general-political character, the other on economic questions. But both were annulled by the Baldwin government, which suc-
ceeded the MacDonald government, the signatory of the above pacts.

Another example concerning the relations of the Soviet Union with Great Britain:

During the visit to Moscow in March, 1935, of the present British Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anthony Eden, an official communiqué on this visit declared that in the relations between Great Britain and the USSR there were no contradictions or difficulties which could not be overcome in the interests of peace and the creation of a system of collective security.

The recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States in November, 1933, made possible friendly relations towards preservation of international peace and common resistance to aggression; although the American neutrality law of 1935 and similar legislation of the following years presented an obstacle to American participation in such resistance.

On October 16, 1936, Joseph Stalin addressed an appeal to all the progressive elements of all countries to unite against fascist aggression. The famous telegram despatched by him to José Diaz in Spain ran as follows:

"The working people of the Soviet Union are only doing their duty in rendering every possible aid to the revolutionary masses of Spain. They are fully aware that the liberation of Spain from the oppression of the fascist reactionaries is not a private affair of the Spaniards, but the common cause of the whole of advanced and progressive humanity."

In summer of 1939, at the time of the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations on an agreement concerning guarantees of the independence of Poland, the Soviet Union proposed to England and France that they should sign a pact of alliance including a convention of full mutual military assistance. To this the British and French governments did not agree.

*The Alliance Against Hitler*

The union of "the whole of advanced and progressive humanity" became possible in the course of the second world war.

After the base attack on the Soviet Union by the Hitlerite
bandits, Stalin, in a speech broadcast on July 3, 1941, put forward a program for the uniting of the peoples of Europe and America in the struggle against the Hitlerite cut-throats.

After Stalin's speech, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill worked out together the so-called Atlantic Charter, constituting a program for the uniting of the peoples fighting with the Hitlerite bandits.

The vile Hitlerite attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, fostered amongst the nations of the world a movement against all isolationism. It roused the American people more than the outbreak of the European war in September 1939 and even more than the defeat of France in 1940.

The possibility of the victory of the Hitlerites over Britain, and, as a result of such a victory, the use of the British navy for an invasion of the United States, had deeply disturbed the Americans in 1940. By virtue of this the American Government demanded from the British Government guarantees that under no circumstances would the British navy be handed over to the Hitlerites.

The Hitlerite paper Frankfurter Zeitung on September 12, 1941, spoke quite openly about the plans of the Hitlerites to bring England to her knees after the victorious war against the Soviet Union. The paper said:

"If Britain desires to win the war, she must do it by offensive operations, but Britain is losing the means for the conducting of an offensive war against Germany. It will be seen that Britain will lose the war when Germany is through with her task in the East and can carry on the war against Britain with all her might."

The Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition

The Red Army has not yet beaten the Hitlerites. The Soviet fatherland is still in danger. Consequently, the Damocles' sword of enslavement still hangs above Britain and above the United States. In view of this, there should be no place for "neutrality and indifference" in the mood of the American and English peoples. The military situation requires, to quote Admiral
Nelson, that every man should do his duty. Time has come for bold and responsible decisions.

Speaking of the assistance rendered the Soviet Union by the United States, President Roosevelt declared that it is given not out of philanthropic sympathy, but as a part of the defense of America.

In actual fact, the war of the Soviet Union against the Hitlerite hordes is also Britain's war, America's war, the war of the whole civilized world. Fundamentally, it is a war of all countries that hold freedom dear and that have systematically demonstrated their love of peace.

At present the Soviet people are alone carrying on the war against Hitlerite Germany.* The whole burden of the war rests on their shoulders. This being the case, all the peoples who have fallen victim to Hitlerite aggression look with hope to our country, as to the stronghold of their freedom and independence.

In Stalin's answers to Henry Cassidy, American correspondent of the Associated Press agency, on October 3, 1942, we read: "As compared with the aid which the Soviet Union is giving to the Allies by drawing upon itself the main forces of the German fascist armies, the aid of the Allies to the Soviet Union has so far been little effective. In order to amplify and improve this aid only one thing is required: that the Allies fulfill their obligations fully and on time."

We must hope that these obligations will in actual fact be fulfilled both fully and on time; otherwise in the history of the struggle of the freedom-loving peoples against fascist aggression there will be recorded yet another missed opportunity, this time at a most critical and decisive moment.

* It should be noted that this article was written before the launching of the Anglo-American campaign in Africa.—Ed.