



**Mao Tse-tung**

**THE IDENTITY OF INTERESTS  
BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND  
ALL MANKIND**

From the  
*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*,  
Foreign Languages Press  
Peking 1967

First Edition 1965  
Second Printing 1967

**Vol. II, pp. 275-83.**

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*Prepared © for the Internet by David J. Romagnolo, [djr@marx2mao.org](mailto:djr@marx2mao.org) (October 1999)*

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## THE IDENTITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND ALL MANKIND

*September 28, 1939*

With the approach of the twenty-second anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Sino-Soviet Cultural Association has asked me for an article. On the basis of my own observations, I should like to elucidate a few problems concerning the Soviet Union and China. For they are being discussed by the people in China today and apparently no definite conclusions have yet been reached. It may be of some help if I take this opportunity to set forth my views for the consideration of those who are concerned about the war in Europe and about Sino-Soviet relations.

Some people say that the Soviet Union does not want the world to remain at peace because the outbreak of a world war is to its advantage, and that the present war was precipitated by the Soviet Union's conclusion of a non-aggression treaty with Germany instead of a treaty of mutual assistance with Britain and France. I consider this view incorrect. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union over a very long period of time has consistently been one of peace, a policy based on the close links between its own interests and those of the overwhelming majority of mankind. For its own socialist construction the Soviet Union has always needed peace, has always needed to strengthen its peaceful relations with other countries and prevent an anti-Soviet war; for the sake of peace on a world scale, it has also needed to check the aggression of the fascist countries, curb the war-mongering of the so-called democratic countries and delay the outbreak of an imperialist world war for as long as possible. The Soviet Union has long devoted great energy to the cause of world peace. For instance, it has joined the League of Nations,<sup>[1]</sup> signed treaties of mutual assistance with France and Czechoslovakia<sup>[2]</sup> and tried hard to conclude

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security pacts with Britain and all other countries that might be willing to have peace. After Germany and Italy jointly invaded Spain and when Britain, the United States and France adopted a policy of nominal "non-intervention" but of actual connivance at their aggression, the Soviet Union opposed the "non-intervention" policy and gave the Spanish republican forces active help in their resistance to Germany and Italy. After Japan invaded China and when the same three powers adopted the same kind of "non-intervention" policy, the Soviet Union not only concluded a non-aggression treaty with China but gave China active help in her resistance. When Britain and France connived at Hitler's aggression and sacrificed Austria and Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union spared no effort in exposing the sinister aims behind the Munich policy and made proposals to Britain and France for checking further aggression. When Poland became the burning question in the spring and summer of this year and it was touch-and-go whether world war would break out, the Soviet Union negotiated with Britain and France for over four months, despite Chamberlain's and Daladier's complete lack of sincerity, in an endeavour to conclude a treaty of mutual assistance to prevent the outbreak of war. But all these efforts were blocked by the imperialist policy of the British and French governments, a policy of conniving at, instigating and spreading war, so that eventually the cause of

world peace was thwarted and the imperialist world war broke out. The governments of Britain, the United States and France had no genuine desire to prevent this war; on the contrary, they helped to bring it about. Their refusal to come to terms with the Soviet Union and conclude a really effective treaty of mutual assistance based on equality and reciprocity proved that they wanted not peace but war. Everybody knows that in the contemporary world rejection of the Soviet Union means rejection of peace. Even Lloyd George, that typical representative of the British bourgeoisie, knows this.<sup>[3]</sup> It was in these circumstances, and when Germany agreed to stop her anti-Soviet activities, abandon the Agreement Against the Communist International and recognize the inviolability of the Soviet frontiers, that the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty was concluded. The plan of Britain, the United States and France was to egg Germany on to attack the Soviet Union, so that they themselves, "sitting on top of the mountain to watch the tigers fight", could come down and take over after the Soviet Union and Germany had worn each other out. The Soviet-German non-aggression treaty smashed this plot. In over-

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looking this plot and the schemes of the Anglo-French imperialists who connived at and instigated war and precipitated a world war, some of our fellow-countrymen have actually been taken in by the sugary propaganda of these schemers. These crafty politicians were not the least bit interested in checking aggression against Spain, against China, or against Austria and Czechoslovakia; on the contrary, they connived at aggression and instigated war, playing the proverbial role of the fisherman who set the snipe and clam at each other and then took advantage of both. They euphemistically described their actions as "non-intervention", but what they actually did was to "sit on top of the mountain to watch the tigers fight". Quite a number of people throughout the world have been fooled by the honeyed words of Chamberlain and his partners, failing to see the murderous intent behind their smiles, or to understand that the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty was concluded only after Chamberlain and Daladier had made up their minds to reject the Soviet Union and bring about the imperialist war. It is time for these people to wake up. The fact that the Soviet Union worked hard to preserve world peace to the very last minute proves that the interests of the Soviet Union are identical with those of the overwhelming majority of mankind. This is the first question I wanted to talk about.

Some people say that now that the second imperialist world war has broken out, the Soviet Union will probably take sides -- in other words, the Soviet Red Army seems to be on the point of joining the German imperialist front. I consider this view incorrect. On whichever side, the Anglo-French or the German, the war that has just broken out is an unjust, predatory and imperialist war. The Communist Parties and the people of all countries should rise up against it and expose the imperialist character of both belligerents, for this imperialist war brings only harm and no benefit whatever to the people of the world, and they should expose the criminal acts of the social-democratic parties in supporting the imperialist war and betraying the interests of the proletariat. The Soviet Union is a socialist country, a country in which the Communist Party is in power, and it necessarily maintains a clear-cut twofold attitude towards wars: (1) It firmly refuses to take part in any unjust, predatory and imperialist war and maintains strict neutrality towards the belligerents. Hence the Soviet Red Army will never disregard principles and join either of the imperialist war fronts. (2) It actively supports just and non-predatory wars of liberation. For instance, it helped the Chinese people in their war of the Northern

Expedition thirteen years ago and the Spanish people in their war against Germany and Italy up to this last year; it has been helping the Chinese people in their War of Resistance Against Japan for the last two years and the Mongolian people in resisting Japan for the last few months; and it will certainly give help to any war for the liberation of the masses or of a nation which may break out in other countries in the future, and will certainly give help to any wars that contribute to the defence of peace. The history of the Soviet Union in the last twenty-two years has already proved this, and history will prove it again in the future. Some people regard the Soviet Union's trade with Germany, which is based on the Soviet-German commercial agreement, as an act of participation in the war on the German side. This view, too, is wrong, for it confuses trade with participation in war. Trade must not be confused with participation in war or with rendering assistance. For example, the Soviet Union traded with Germany and Italy during the Spanish war, yet nobody in the world said that the Soviet Union was helping Germany and Italy in their aggression against Spain; on the contrary, people said that it was helping Spain in resisting this aggression, the reason being that the Soviet Union actually did give help to Spain. Again, during the present Sino-Japanese war the Soviet Union is trading with Japan, but nobody in the world is saying that the Soviet Union is helping Japan in its aggression against China; on the contrary, people say that it is helping China to resist this aggression, the reason being that it actually is helping China. At present, both sides in the world war have trading relations with the Soviet Union, but this cannot be regarded as assistance to either, still less as taking part in the war. Only if the nature of the war changes, if the war in one or more countries undergoes certain necessary changes and becomes advantageous to the Soviet Union and the peoples of the world, will it be possible for the Soviet Union to help or participate; otherwise it will not. As for the fact that the Soviet Union is obliged to trade to a greater or lesser extent on more or less preferential terms with one or another of the belligerents according to how friendly or hostile it happens to be, that depends not on the Soviet Union but on the attitude of the belligerents. But even if one or several countries adopt an anti-Soviet attitude, the Soviet Union will not break off trade relations with them so long as they, like Germany before August 23, are willing to maintain diplomatic relations and conclude trade treaties with it, and do not declare war on it. It should be clearly understood that such commercial relations do not mean assistance,

much less participation in war. This is the second question I wanted to talk about.

Many people in China are bewildered by the fact that Soviet troops have entered Poland.<sup>[4]</sup> The Polish question should be viewed from various angles, from that of Germany, of Britain and France, of the Polish government, of the Polish people and of the Soviet Union. Germany started the war in order to plunder the Polish people and smash one flank of the Anglo-French imperialist front. By its nature, Germany's war is imperialist and should be opposed, not approved. As for Britain and France, they have regarded Poland as an object of plunder for their finance capital, exploited her to thwart the German imperialist attempt at a world re-division of the spoils, and made her a flank of their own imperialist front. Thus their war is an imperialist war, their so-called aid to Poland being merely for the purpose of contending with Germany for the domination of Poland, and this war, too, should be opposed, not approved. As for the Polish

government, it was a fascist, reactionary government of the Polish landlords and bourgeoisie which ruthlessly exploited the workers and peasants and oppressed the Polish democrats; moreover, it was a government of Greater Poland chauvinists which ruthlessly oppressed the non-Polish minority nationalities -- the Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Jews, Germans, Lithuanians and others, who number more than ten million; it was itself an imperialist government. In the war, this reactionary Polish government willingly drove the Polish people to serve as cannon-fodder for British and French finance capital, and it willingly served as a sector of the reactionary front of international finance capital. For twenty years the Polish government consistently opposed the Soviet Union and, during the talks between Britain, France and the Soviet Union, it obstinately rejected the Soviet offer to help it with troops. Moreover, it was an utterly incompetent government, its huge army of over 1,500,000 collapsed at the first blow, and it brought the country to ruin in just two weeks, leaving the Polish people under the heel of German imperialism. Such were the towering crimes of the Polish government and it would be wrong for us to waste any sympathy on it. As for the Polish people, they are victims; they should rise up against the oppression of the German fascists and against their own reactionary landlord and bourgeois classes, and establish an independent, free and democratic Polish state. Without the slightest doubt, our sympathy must go out to the Polish people. As for the Soviet Union, its actions have been perfectly

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just. It was confronted by two problems. The first problem was whether to let the whole of Poland fall under the rule of German imperialism or to help the minority nationalities of eastern Poland win their liberation. It chose the second course. A vast stretch of territory inhabited by Byelorussians and Ukrainians had been snatched from the new-born Soviet state by the German imperialists as far back as 1918 when the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, and it was later arbitrarily put under the rule of the reactionary Polish government by the Treaty of Versailles. What the Soviet Union has now done is merely to recover its lost territory, liberate the oppressed Byelorussians and Ukrainians and save them from German oppression. The news dispatches of the last few days show how warmly these minority nationalities are welcoming the Red Army with food and drink as their liberator, while not a single report of this kind has come in from western Poland which has been occupied by German troops or from the places in western Germany which have been occupied by French troops. This shows clearly that the Soviet Union's war is a just and non-predatory war of liberation, a war helping to liberate weak and small nations and free the people. On the other hand, the war being waged by Germany and by Britain and France is an unjust, predatory and imperialist war for the oppression of other nations and peoples. The second problem confronting the Soviet Union was Chamberlain's endeavour to continue his old anti-Soviet policy. His policy was, first, to impose a large-scale blockade on Germany and bring pressure on her from the west; second, to try to form an alliance with the United States and to buy over Italy, Japan and the countries of northern Europe so as to isolate Germany; and third, to bribe Germany with the offer of Poland, and even of Hungary and Rumania. In short, Chamberlain resorted to all kinds of intimidation and bribery to get Germany to renounce the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty and turn her guns on the Soviet Union. This intrigue has been going on for some time and will continue. The powerful Soviet army's entry into eastern Poland, with the aim of recovering the Soviet Union's own territory and liberating the weak and small nationalities there, was at the same time a practical move to prevent the forces of German aggression from expanding eastward and to frustrate Chamberlain's intrigue. Judging by

the news reports of the last few days, this Soviet policy has been most successful. It is a concrete manifestation of the identity of the interests of the Soviet Union with those of the overwhelming majority of mankind, including those of

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the oppressed people under reactionary Polish rule. This is the third question I wanted to talk about.

The whole situation since the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty constitutes a great blow to Japan and a great help to China; it strengthens the position of those resisting Japan and weakens the capitulators. The Chinese people have rightly welcomed this treaty. However, since the signing of the Nomonhan truce agreement,<sup>[5]</sup> British and U.S. news agencies have been busy spreading the story that a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression treaty is about to be signed, and this has caused concern among some Chinese people, who think that the Soviet Union may no longer help China. I believe they are wrong. The nature of the Nomonhan truce agreement is the same as that of the previous Changkufeng truce agreement;<sup>[6]</sup> that is to say, the Japanese militarists, being compelled to admit defeat, have had to recognize the inviolability of the Soviet and Mongolian frontiers. These truce agreements will enable the Soviet Union to increase rather than decrease its aid to China. As for the talk about a Japanese-Soviet non-aggression treaty, the Soviet Union has been proposing it for many years but Japan has invariably rejected it. Now there is a section of the Japanese ruling class that wants such a treaty with the Soviet Union, but whether the Soviet Union will be willing depends on the basic principle of whether the treaty will accord with the interests of the Soviet Union and of the overwhelming majority of mankind. Specifically, it depends on whether the treaty will conflict with the interests of China's war of national liberation. Judging from Stalin's report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 10 this year and Molotov's speech at the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on May 30, I think the Soviet Union will not alter this basic principle. Even if such a treaty were to be concluded, the Soviet Union would certainly not agree to anything that would restrict its freedom of action in helping China. The interests of the Soviet Union will always conform and never conflict with the interests of China's national liberation. I hold this as absolutely beyond doubt. People who are prejudiced against the Soviet Union are capitalizing on the Nomonhan truce agreement and on the talk about a Japanese-Soviet non-aggression treaty in order to make trouble and stir up ill feeling between the two great nations of China and the Soviet Union. This is what the British, U.S. and French intriguers and the Chinese capitulators are doing; it is highly dangerous and we must thoroughly expose their dirty tricks. It is obvious that

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China's foreign policy must be one of resistance to Japanese aggression. This policy means primarily relying on our own efforts, while not ignoring any possibility of securing help from abroad. Now that the imperialist world war has broken out, foreign help is coming chiefly from three sources: (1) the socialist Soviet Union, (2) the people of the capitalist countries, and (3) the oppressed nations in the colonies and semi-colonies. These are our only reliable sources of help. Anything else that might be called foreign help, even if it might become available, can only be regarded as supplementary and temporary. Of course, China should try to obtain such supplementary and temporary

foreign help, but must never depend too much on it or consider it reliable. China should maintain strict neutrality towards the belligerents in the imperialist war and not join either side. To maintain that China should join the Anglo-French imperialist war front is a capitulator's view, which is harmful to the War of Resistance as well as to the independence and liberation of the Chinese nation, and it should be flatly rejected. This is the fourth question I wanted to talk about.

These four questions are being widely discussed by our fellow-countrymen. It is a very good thing that they are giving attention to the study of international problems, to the relations between the imperialist world war and China's War of Resistance and between the Soviet Union and China, because their aim is victory over Japanese aggression. Here I have given some of my basic views on these questions, and I hope that readers will not spare their comments.

## NOTES

[1] The League of Nations was an organization formed by Britain, France, Japan and other imperialist powers after World War I for the re-division of the world through bargaining and temporary adjustments of conflicting interests. In 1931 the Japanese imperialists occupied China's Northeast and in 1933 Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in order to be able to extend her aggression more freely. In the same year the German fascists came to power, and later they, too, withdrew from the League of Nations to facilitate their preparations for a war of aggression. It was in 1934, when the threat of a fascist war of aggression was growing, that the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations; in this way the possibility arose of this imperialist organization for the re-division of the world being turned into one that might serve the cause of world peace. Italy withdrew from the League of Nations after her invasion of Abyssinia in 1935. [p. 275]

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[2] The Treaty of Mutual Assistance Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and France and the Treaty of Mutual Assistance Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Czechoslovak Republic were concluded in 1935. [p. 275]

[3] The British bourgeois politician Lloyd George, who had been Prime Minister during World War I, declared in Parliament in November 1938 when Britain, France, Germany and Italy were going to negotiate, that peace could not be won by rejecting Soviet participation in the negotiations. [p. 276]

[4] On September 1, 1939, the Germans invaded Poland and occupied most of her territory. On the 17th the reactionary Polish government fled abroad. On the same day, the Soviet Union dispatched its troops to eastern Poland in order to recover its own lost territories, emancipate the oppressed Ukrainian and Byelorussian peoples and check the eastward drive of the German fascist troops. [p. 279]

[5] The Nomonhan truce agreement was concluded in Moscow in September 1939. In May 1939 the Japanese and the puppet "Manchukuo" troops had jointly attacked the troops of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Mongolia at Nomonhan, on the border between Mongolia and "Manchukuo", and were completely defeated by the Soviet and Mongolian forces in a heroic war of self-defence. The Japanese then sued for peace. The truce agreement provided for an immediate cease-fire and the formation of a commission of four, with two representatives from each side, to demarcate the frontier between the Mongolian People's Republic and the puppet state of "Manchukuo" at places where the conflict had taken place. [p. 281]

[6] The Changkufeng truce agreement was concluded in Moscow on August 11, 1938. At the end of July and the beginning of August 1938, the Japanese had committed acts of provocation against the Soviet troops in the Changkufeng district on the border between China, Korea and the Soviet Union and had been vigorously repulsed. The Japanese sued for peace. The truce agreement provided for an immediate cease-fire and the formation of a commission of four, with two representatives from the Soviet side and two from the Japanese-"Manchukuo" side, to investigate the boundary lines and make a final settlement. [p. 281]

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