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In: The New Leader

Sees Stalin's Game "No Blow to Cause of Peace".

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Debate:

Klaus Mann
Eugene Lyons

Sees Stalin's Game "No Blow To Cause of Peace"

By KLAUS MANN

YOU have invited me to give my opinion on Soviet-Russia's new politics and especially on the "so-called non-aggression pact between Hitler and Stalin and the partition of Poland between Germany and Russia."

I must admit that I regard it as a difficult, almost insoluble task to confine my remarks with reference to such complex and significant questions within the frame-work of a short letter. A comprehensive work might be written about the analogies and differences between Soviet-Russia and the Third Reich. I have never overlooked the similarities between these two new-type state structures and incidentally have already referred to them publicly, before the non-aggression pact.

But even to this day I shall not cease to believe in fundamental differences between the Nazi-regime and the Soviets. The Third Reich is bad in its very substance; there is no such thing as "good elements," nor "great purpose" that could justify the low means employed. The goals are as miserable as the means by which their attainment is contemplated.

The Third Reich has brought the German people and the world nothing but danger, disturbance, suffering and degradation. Its existence is not an event shaped by history, but murderous assassination upon civilization and progress. To be just, the same cannot quite be said of the Soviet-Union. This case is more complicated. I do not wish to nor will I at this point sum up what the Soviets have accomplished—and how much has been sinned. There does not seem any doubt in my mind that in the case of the Russian state we are at least dealing with a *problem*—possibly a bitter, a tragic problem—; in the case of the Third Reich it is nothing more or less than filthiness.

IT is a matter of course that at the very moment, when Soviet-Russia draws near to Nazi-Germany, the similarities between the two forms of government become particularly pronounced, while the differences fade into the background.

You will believe me when I say that the first indications of such a rapprochement between the dictatorships of Moscow and Berlin

profoundly shocked, confused and alarmed me also. I have never been a Communist. My sympathies for the Soviet-Union were above all those of a Democrat and passionate antifascist, who looked upon Socialist Russia as one of the strongest potential opponents of

After the Pact

TWO days before Stalin revealed to the West that there still exists something new under the diplomatic sun—by announcing his pact with Hitler—Cortiss Lamont, who likes to think of himself as the upper "clawss" gone left—released a statement to the press purporting to explain the difference between the Nazi and Communist dictatorships.

This document, once exposed in The New Leader as an attack on the Committee for Cultural Freedom, had some 300 signatures attached to it, although it was known as the statement of the Committee of 400.

After the pact The New Leader felt that many of the statement's signers would like to express their opinions on the startling change of events—and we began polling them. Many and varied replies came in.

Among the first to issue a statement was Klaus Mann, author of several books and son of Thomas Mann. His reply is printed here with an accompanying answer by Eugene Lyons.

Each week in the future The New Leader will print the replies of others who signed the Lamont document.



Stalin

are mysterious; one thing only is certain, that his power has increased tremendously. That does not mean that I concur with his tactics. On the contrary, I subscribe to the sentence that I read in "The New Republic" of September 27: "Stalin's invasion of Poland from the east has too much in common with Hitler's invasion from the west for any defender of Soviet morals to feel comfortable about it."

THERE remains only the question whether this tactics—whose undeniable analogy to Nazi-tactics repel us—will work out favorably for the Nazi-Fuehrer in the long run.

To be sure for the time being this question does not seem to have moral significance; but it has all the more political weight. And all things political can—or must—have moral consequences. In London the view seems to be taken, "that Russia's invasion of Poland, fatal as it was to the Polish cause, will in the long run turn out to be a terrible headache to Adolf Hitler." Bill Henry reports from England: "One week's developments indicate that Russia stymied Hitler in the Ukraine, chased him from the Rumanian border oil fields and, by placing a big army bordering on 30,000,000 Slavs he is trying to assimilate, will provide a constant threat on his eastern frontier."

The opinion prevails generally, that Hitler walked into a trap when he sent Herr von Ribbentrop to Moscow. He did not succeed in bluffing the Allies into a new appeasement through the Russian pact. So far the only one to profit by this sinister business are the Russians.

England and France are still hesitating in officially designating Stalin as their enemy—although realizing that he never could be their friend. It seems to me, that we should not be more rash than the governments of London and Paris. I have always known what it is that kept a person of my breeding and convictions at a distance from the Moscow dictatorship, and the recent events have tended to make it clearer to me than ever. In cold calculation Stalin is playing an extremely daring and untransparent game. As long as he is not plainly playing it for Hitler, I should not like to admit, that it must work absolutely against our cause—the cause of peace, of freedom and of social progress.

fascism and one of the most powerful guarantors of European peace. In this my view I have perhaps been mistaken.

I say "perhaps"; for what is happening in Northern and Eastern Europe today or is in preparation, does not seem to me clear at all; at any rate the real decisions are still unknown to us. Stalin's intentions and objects