

Molotov's Grandson Joins Russian Remembrance Procession

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The signing of the pact of mutual assistance between the governments of the Russia and Great Britain in the war against Germany. Russia's Vyacheslav Molotov signing the pact on July 23, 1941.

The grandson of Vyacheslav Molotov — Stalin's protege and signatory on the 1939 pact with Nazi Germany — joined the "Immortal Regiment" procession in Russia's Nizhny Novgorod on Monday, carrying his grandfather's portrait, according to a post on his Facebook page.

Molotov's grandson Vyacheslav Nikonov is head of the Russian State Duma committee on education.

Molotov served as foreign minister of the Soviet Union from 1939 to 1949 and signed a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany, known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, which called for the carving up Europe.

The agreement held until June 1941, when Hitler's army attacked the Soviet Union after occupying France. Molotov died more than 40 years later in 1986 in Moscow and is buried in the capital's prestigious Novodevichy cemetery. He was 96 years old.

Three years after his death, Mikhail Gorbachev's government formally denounced the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact, as well the annexation of the Baltic States and the partition of Poland.

Moscow's defensiveness about the Soviet Union's pact with the Nazis has increased sharply after Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who in 2009 denounced the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact as "unacceptable from the moral point of view," "harmful" and "dangerous," in May 2015 defended it as Moscow's response to being isolated by the West.

Molotov's grandson Nikonov wrote in 2014 that it was a "a branch of the Aryan tribe from the Carpathian mountains," that had inhabited Russia and ultimately destroyed Nazism, the Moskovsky Komsomolets news portal reported at the time.

The procession in Nizhny Novgorod and other Russian cities was to commemorate those killed while the Soviet Union fought Nazi Germany in World War II. Over half a million people attended the event in Moscow, state news agency Interfax reported Monday.

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