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Nearly Half of Russians Support Soviet-Nazi Non-Aggression Pact

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Vyacheslav Molotov and Joachim von Ribbentrop, September 28, 1939 **Public Domain (PD-USGov-Congress)**

Nearly half of Russian citizens approve of 1939's Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, a Levada Center poll released on Wednesday has found.

Thirteen percent of Levada's respondents said they "definitely approve" of the pact, while 32 percent they "somewhat approve" of it.

A combined 17 percent said they "definitely" or "somewhat" disapprove of the treaty that the USSR and Nazi Germany signed on Aug. 23, 1939.

Two-fifths of the 1,600 people polled said they had "heard of" the pact and "think that it happened in real life," the survey revealed. One-third said they've never heard of it, while 17 percent said the pact was a "fake."

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Named after the countries' respective foreign ministers, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact delineated the Soviet and German spheres of interest in Eastern Europe.

President Vladimir Putin defended the pact in 2015, saying Moscow signed it after Western states snubbed its efforts to "create an anti-fascist bloc in Europe."

While serving as prime minister in 2009, however, he denounced the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact calling it "collusion to solve one's problems at others' expense."

Wednesday's poll revealed a 5-percent drop in support for the Soviet-Nazi treaty from its peak in 2015. Levada conducted the latest poll across 48 Russian regions from Aug. 18 to Aug. 22, 2017.

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