Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact
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The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, named after the Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov and the German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, officially the Treaty of Non-aggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was a non-aggression pact signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in Moscow on 23 August 1939. It is also known as the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact or the Nazi–Soviet Pact.

The pact remained in force until the German government broke it by launching an attack on the Soviet positions in eastern Poland on 22 June 1941 contrary to the supplementary protocol of the German-Soviet Frontier Treaty dictating the new European spheres of interest.[2]

The stated clauses of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact were a perceived guarantee of non-belligerence by each party towards the other, and a written commitment that neither party would ally itself to, or aid, an enemy of the other party. In addition to stipulations of non-aggression, the treaty included a secret protocol that divided territories of Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland into German and Soviet "spheres of influence", anticipating potential "territorial and political rearrangements" of these countries. Thereafter, Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. After the Soviet–Japanese ceasefire agreement took effect on 16 September, Stalin ordered his own invasion of Poland on 17 September.[3] Part of southeastern (Karelia) and Salla region in Finland were annexed by the Soviet Union after the Winter War. This was followed by Soviet annexations of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and parts of Romania (Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and the Hertza region). Concern about ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians had been proffered as justification for the Soviet invasion of Poland.
Of the territories of Poland annexed by the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1940, the region around Białystok and a minor part of Galicia east of the San river around Przemyśl were returned to the Polish state at the end of World War II. Of all other territories annexed by the USSR in 1939–40, the ones detached from Finland (Karelia, Petsamo), Estonia (Ingrian area and Petseri County) and Latvia (Abrene) remained part of the Russian Federation, the successor state of the Soviet Union, after 1991. Northern Bukovina, Southern Bessarabia and Hertza remain part of Ukraine.

The existence of the secret protocol was denied by Soviet leadership until 1989, when it was acknowledged and denounced.[4] Some time afterwards the Russian historiography has been inclined to describe the pact as a necessary measure. This includes books by Alexander Dyukov, and one edited by N.A. Narochnitskaya that carries an approving foreword by Russian foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.[4] Vladimir Putin has defended the pact as well.[5][6]

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**Background**

The outcome of the First World War was disastrous for both the German Reich and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. During the war, the Bolsheviks struggled for survival, and Vladimir Lenin recognised the independence of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Moreover, facing a German military advance, Lenin and Trotsky were forced to enter into the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk,[7] which ceded massive western Russian territories to the German Empire. After Germany's collapse, a multinational Allied-led army intervened in the Russian Civil War (1917–22).[8]

On 16 April 1922, Germany and the Soviet Union entered the Treaty of Rapallo, pursuant to which they renounced territorial and financial claims against each other.[9] The parties further pledged neutrality in the event of an attack against one another with the 1926 Treaty of Berlin.[10] While trade between the two countries fell sharply after World War I, trade agreements signed in the mid-1920s helped to increase trade to 433 million Reichsmarks per year by 1927.[11]

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Nazi Party's rise to power increased tensions between Germany and the Soviet Union along with other countries with ethnic Slavs, who were considered "Untermenschen" (inferior) according to Nazi racial ideology.[12] Moreover, the anti-Semitic Nazis associated ethnic Jews with both communism and financial capitalism, both of which they opposed.[13][14] Consequently, Nazi theory held that Slavs in the Soviet Union were being ruled by "Jewish Bolshevik" masters.[15] In 1934, Hitler himself had spoken of an inescapable battle against both Pan-Slavism and Neo-Slavism, the victory in which would lead to "permanent mastery of the world", though he stated that they would "walk part of the road with the Russians, if that will help us."[16] The resulting manifestation of German anti-Bolshevism and an increase in Soviet foreign debts caused German–Soviet trade to dramatically decline.[b] Imports of Soviet goods to Germany fell to 223 million Reichsmarks in 1934 as the more isolationist Stalinist regime asserted power and the abandonment of post–World War I Treaty of Versailles military controls decreased Germany's reliance on Soviet imports.[11][18]

In 1936, Germany and Fascist Italy supported Spanish Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War, while the Soviets supported the partially socialist-led Second Spanish Republic under the leadership of president Manuel Azaña.[19] Thus, in a sense, the Spanish Civil War became also the scene of a proxy war between Germany and the USSR.[20] In 1936, Germany and Japan entered the Anti-Comintern Pact,[21] and were joined a year later by Italy.[19][22]

**Munich Agreement**

Hitler's fierce anti-Soviet rhetoric was one of the reasons why the UK and France decided that Soviet participation in the 1938 Munich Conference regarding Czechoslovakia would be both dangerous and useless.[23] The Munich Agreement that followed[24] marked a partial German annexation of Czechoslovakia in late 1938 followed by its complete dissolution in March 1939,[25] which as part of
the appeasement of Germany conducted by Chamberlain's and Daladier's cabinets.[26] This policy immediately raised the question of whether the Soviet Union could avoid being next on Hitler's list.[27] The Soviet leadership believed that the West wanted to encourage German aggression in the East[28] and that France and Britain might stay neutral in a war initiated by Germany, hoping that the warring states would wear each other out and put an end to both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.[29]

For Germany, because an autarkic economic approach or an alliance with Britain were impossible, closer relations with the Soviet Union to obtain raw materials became necessary, if not just for economic reasons alone.[30] Moreover, an expected British blockade in the event of war would create massive shortages for Germany in a number of key raw materials.[31] After the Munich agreement, the resulting increase in German military supply needs and Soviet demands for military machinery, talks between the two countries occurred from late 1938 to March 1939.[32] The third Soviet Five Year Plan required new infusions of technology and industrial equipment.[30][33] German war planners had estimated serious shortfalls of raw materials if Germany entered a war without Soviet supply.[34]

On 31 March 1939, in response to Nazi Germany's defiance of the Munich Agreement and occupation of Czechoslovakia,[35] the United Kingdom pledged its support and that of France to guarantee the independence of Poland, Belgium, Romania, Greece, and Turkey.[36] On 6 April Poland and the UK agreed to formalize the guarantee as a military alliance, pending negotiations.[37] On 28 April, Hitler denounced the 1934 German–Polish Non-Aggression Pact and the 1935 Anglo-German Naval Agreement.[38]

Starting in mid-March 1939, in attempts to contain Hitler's expansionism, the Soviet Union, Britain and France traded a flurry of suggestions and counterplans regarding a potential political and military agreement.[39][40] Although informal consultations commenced in April, the main negotiations began only in May.[40] At the same time, throughout early 1939, Germany had secretly hinted to Soviet diplomats that it could offer better terms for a political agreement than Britain and France.[41][42][43]

The Soviet Union feared Western powers and the possibility of "capitalist encirclements", had little faith either that war could be avoided, or faith in the Polish army, and wanted nothing less than an ironclad military alliance with France and Britain[44] that would provide a guaranteed support for a two-pronged attack on Germany;[45] thus, Stalin's adherence to the collective security line was purely conditional.[46] Britain and France believed that war could still be avoided, and that the Soviet Union, weakened by the Great Purge,[47] could not be a main military participant,[45] a point that many military sources were at variance with, especially after the sound thrashing administered to the Japanese Kwantung army on the Manchurian frontier.[48] France was more anxious to find an agreement with the USSR than was Britain; as a continental power, it was more willing to make concessions, more fearful
of the dangers of an agreement between the USSR and Germany.[49] These contrasting attitudes partly explain why the USSR has often been charged with playing a double game in 1939: carrying on open negotiations for an alliance with Britain and France while secretly considering propositions from Germany.[49]

By the end of May, drafts were formally presented.[40] In mid-June, the main Tripartite negotiations started.[50] The discussion was focused on potential guarantees to central and east European countries should a German aggression arise.[51] The USSR proposed to consider that a political turn towards Germany by the Baltic states would constitute an "indirect aggression" towards the Soviet Union.[52] Britain opposed such proposals, because they feared the Soviets' proposed language could justify a Soviet intervention in Finland and the Baltic states, or push those countries to seek closer relations with Germany.[53][54] The discussion about a definition of "indirect aggression" became one of the sticking points between the parties, and by mid-July, the tripartite political negotiations effectively stalled, while the parties agreed to start negotiations on a military agreement, which the Soviets insisted must be entered into simultaneously with any political agreement.[55]

**Negotiations**

**Beginning of Soviet–German secret talks**

From April–July, Soviet and German officials made statements regarding the potential for the beginning of political negotiations, while no actual negotiations took place during that time period.[56] The ensuing discussion of a potential political deal between Germany and the Soviet Union had to be channeled into the framework of economic negotiations between the two countries, because close military and diplomatic connections, as was the case before the mid-1930s, had afterward been largely severed.[57] In May, Stalin replaced his Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov, who was regarded as pro-western and who was also Jewish, with Vyacheslav Molotov, allowing the Soviet Union more latitude in discussions with more parties, not only with Britain and France.[58]

In late July and early August 1939, Soviet and German officials agreed on most of the details for a planned economic agreement,[59] and specifically addressed a potential political agreement,[60][61][62][c] which the Soviets stated could only come after an economic agreement.[64]

**August negotiations**
In early August, Germany and the Soviet Union worked out the last details of their economic deal[65] and started to discuss a political alliance. They explained to each other the reasons for their foreign policy hostility in the 1930s, finding common ground in the anti-capitalism of both countries.[66][67][68]

At the same time, British, French, and Soviet negotiators scheduled three-party talks on military matters to occur in Moscow in August 1939, aiming to define what the agreement would specify should be the reaction of the three powers to a German attack.[53] The tripartite military talks, started in mid-August, hit a sticking point regarding the passage of Soviet troops through Poland if Germans attacked, and the parties waited as British and French officials overseas pressured Polish officials to agree to such terms.[69][70] Polish officials refused to allow Soviet troops into Polish territory if Germany attacked; as Polish foreign minister Józef Beck pointed out, they feared that once the Red Army entered their territories, it might never leave.[71][72]

On August 19, the 1939 German–Soviet Commercial Agreement was finally signed.[73] On 21 August, the Soviets suspended Tripartite military talks, citing other reasons.[41][74] That same day, Stalin received assurance that Germany would approve secret protocols to the proposed non-aggression pact that would place half of Poland (border along the Vistula river), Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Bessarabia in the Soviets' sphere of influence.[75] That night, Stalin replied that the Soviets were willing to sign the pact and that he would receive Ribbentrop on 23 August.[76]

The secret protocol

On 22 August, one day after the talks broke down with France and Britain, Moscow revealed that Ribbentrop would visit Stalin the next day. This happened while the Soviets were still negotiating with the British and French missions in Moscow. With the Western nations unwilling to accede to Soviet demands, Stalin instead entered a secret Nazi–Soviet pact.[77] On 24 August a 10-year non-aggression pact was signed with provisions that included: consultation, arbitration if either party disagreed, neutrality if either went to war against a third power, no membership of a group "which is directly or indirectly aimed at the other".

Following completion of the Soviet–German trade and credit agreement, there has arisen the question of improving political links between Germany and the USSR. — Excerpt from the article "On Soviet–German Relations" in Soviet newspaper Izvestia, August 21, 1939.[78]

Most notably, there was also a secret protocol to the pact, revealed only after Germany's defeat in 1945,[79] although hints about its provisions were leaked much earlier, e.g., to influence Lithuania.[80] According to said protocol Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland were divided into German and Soviet "spheres of influence".[79] In the north, Finland, Estonia and Latvia were assigned to the Soviet sphere.[79] Poland was to be partitioned in the event of its "political rearrangement" — the areas east of the Pisa, Narev, Vistula and San rivers going to the Soviet Union while Germany would occupy the west.[79] Lithuania, adjacent to East Prussia, would be in the German sphere of influence, although a second secret protocol agreed to in September 1939 reassigned the majority of Lithuania to the USSR.[81] According to the secret protocol, Lithuania would be granted the city of Vilnius — its historical capital, which was under Polish control during the interwar period. Another clause of the treaty was that Germany would not interfere with the Soviet Union's actions towards Bessarabia, then part of Romania; as the result, Bessarabia was joined to the Moldovan ASSR, and become the Moldovan SSR under control of Moscow.[79]

At the signing, Ribbentrop and Stalin enjoyed warm conversations, exchanged toasts and further addressed the prior hostilities between the countries in the 1930s.[82] They characterized Britain as always attempting to disrupt Soviet–German relations, stated that the Anti-Comintern pact was not aimed at the Soviet Union, but actually aimed at Western democracies and "frightened principally the City of London [i.e., the British financiers] and the English shopkeepers".[83]

On 24 August, Pravda and Izvestia carried news of the non-secret portions of the Pact, complete with the now infamous front-page picture of Molotov signing the treaty, with a smiling Stalin looking on.[41] The news was met with utter shock and surprise by government leaders and media worldwide, most of whom were aware only of the
British–French–Soviet negotiations that had taken place for months. The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was received with shock by Nazi Germany's allies, notably Japan, by the Comintern and foreign communist parties, and by Jewish communities all around the world. So, that day, German diplomat Hans von Herwarth, whose grandmother was Jewish, informed Guido Relli, an Italian diplomat, and American chargé d'affaires Charles Bohlen on the secret protocol regarding vital interests in the countries' allotted "spheres of influence", without revealing the annexation rights for "territorial and political rearrangement".

*Time Magazine* repeatedly referred to the Pact as the "Communazi Pact" and its participants as "communazis" until April 1941.

Soviet propaganda and representatives went to great lengths to minimize the importance of the fact that they had opposed and fought against the Nazis in various ways for a decade prior to signing the Pact. Upon signing the pact, Molotov tried to reassure the Germans of his good intentions by commenting to journalists that "fascism is a matter of taste". For its part, Nazi Germany also did a public volte-face regarding its virulent opposition to the Soviet Union, though Hitler still viewed an attack on the Soviet Union as "inevitable".

Concerns over the possible existence of a secret protocol were first expressed by the intelligence organizations of the Baltic states scant days after the pact was signed. Speculation grew stronger when Soviet negotiators referred to its content during negotiations for military bases in those countries (see occupation of the Baltic States).

The day after the Pact was signed, the French and British military negotiation delegation urgently requested a meeting with Soviet military negotiator Kliment Voroshilov. On August 25, Voroshilov told them "[i]n view of the changed political situation, no useful purpose can be served in continuing the conversation." That day, Hitler told the British ambassador to Berlin that the pact with the Soviets prevented Germany from facing a two front war, changing the strategic situation from that in World War I, and that Britain should accept his demands regarding Poland.

On 25 August, surprising Hitler, Britain entered into a defense pact with Poland. Consequently, Hitler postponed his planned 26 August invasion of Poland to 1 September. According to the defense pact, Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September.
Consequences in Finland, Poland, the Baltic States and Bessarabia

Initial invasions

On 1 September, Germany invaded Poland from the west.\[100\] Within the first few days of the invasion, Germany began conducting massacres of Polish and Jewish civilians and POWs.\[101\][102\] These executions took place in over 30 towns and villages in the first month of German occupation.\[103\][104\][105\] The Luftwaffe also took part by strafing fleeing civilian refugees on roads and carrying out a bombing campaign.\[106\][107\][108\][109\] The Soviet Union assisted German air forces by allowing them to use signals broadcast by the Soviet radio station at Minsk allegedly "for urgent aeronautical experiments".\[110\]
Poland never will rise again in the form of the Versailles treaty. That is guaranteed not only by Germany, but also ... Russia. — Adolf Hitler, Danzig, September 1939 [111]

In the opinion of Robert Service, Stalin did not move instantly; he was waiting to see whether the Germans would halt within the agreed area, and also the Soviet Union needed to secure the frontier in the Far East.[112] On 17 September the Red Army invaded Poland, violating the 1932 Soviet–Polish Non-Aggression Pact, and occupied the Polish territory assigned to it by the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. This was followed by co-ordination with German forces in Poland.[113]

Polish troops already fighting much stronger German forces on its western side desperately tried to delay the capture of Warsaw. Consequently, Polish forces were not able to mount significant resistance against the Soviets.[114]

On 21 September, the Soviets and Germans signed a formal agreement coordinating military movements in Poland, including the "purging" of saboteurs.[115] A joint German–Soviet parade was held in Lvov and Brest-Litovsk, while the countries commanders met in the latter location.[116] Stalin had decided in August that he was going to liquidate the Polish state, and a German–Soviet meeting in September addressed the future structure of the "Polish region".[116] Soviet authorities immediately started a campaign of Sovietization[117][118] of the newly acquired areas. The Soviets organized staged elections,[119] the result of which was to become a legitimization of Soviet annexation of eastern Poland.[120]

Modifying the secret protocols
Eleven days after the Soviet invasion of the Polish Kresy, the secret protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was modified by the German–Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Demarcation,[121] allotting Germany a larger part of Poland and transferring Lithuanian's territory (with the exception of left bank of river Scheschupe, the "Lithuanian Strip") from the envisioned German sphere to the Soviets.[122] On 28 September 1939, the Soviet Union and German Reich issued a joint declaration in which they declared:

After the Government of the German Reich and the Government of the USSR have, by means of the treaty signed today, definitively settled the problems arising from the collapse of the Polish state and have thereby created a sure foundation for a lasting peace in the region, they mutually express their conviction that it would serve the true interest of all peoples to put an end to the state of war existing at present between Germany on the one side and England and France on the other. Both Governments will therefore direct their common efforts, jointly with other friendly powers if occasion arises, toward attaining this goal as soon as possible.

Should, however, the efforts of the two Governments remain fruitless, this would demonstrate the fact that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, whereupon, in case of the continuation of the war, the Governments of Germany and of the USSR shall engage in mutual consultations with regard to necessary measures.[123]

On 3 October, Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg, German ambassador in Moscow, informed Joachim Ribbentrop that the Soviet government was willing to cede the city of Vilnius and its environs. On 8 October 1939, a new Nazi–Soviet agreement was reached by an exchange of letters between Vyacheslav Molotov and the German Ambassador.[124]

The Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were given no choice but to sign a so-called Pact of defence and mutual assistance which permitted the Soviet Union to station troops in them.[122]
The Soviet war with Finland and Katyn Massacre

After the Baltic states were forced to accept treaties,[125] Stalin turned his sights on Finland, confident that Finnish capitulation could be attained without great effort.[126] The Soviets demanded territories on the Karelian Isthmus, the islands of the Gulf of Finland and a military base near the Finnish capital Helsinki,[127][128] which Finland rejected.[129] The Soviets staged the shelling of Mainila and used it as a pretext to withdraw from the non-aggression pact.[130] The Red Army attacked in November 1939.[131] Simultaneously, Stalin set up a puppet government in the Finnish Democratic Republic.[132] The leader of the Leningrad Military District Andrei Zhdanov commissioned a celebratory piece from Dmitri Shostakovich, entitled "Suite on Finnish Themes" to be performed as the marching bands of the Red Army would be parading through Helsinki.[133] After Finnish defenses surprisingly held out for over three months while inflicting stiff losses on Soviet forces, the Soviets settled for an interim peace. Finland ceded southeastern areas of Karelia (10% of Finnish territory),[131] which resulted in approximately 422,000 Karelians (12% of Finland's population) losing their homes.[134] Soviet official casualty counts in the war exceeded 200,000,[135] although Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev later claimed the casualties may have been one million.[136]

At around this time, after several Gestapo–NKVD Conferences, Soviet NKVD officers also conducted lengthy interrogations of 300,000 Polish POWs in camps[137][138][139][140] that were, in effect, a selection process to determine who would be killed.[141] On March 5, 1940, in what would later be known as the Katyn massacre,[141][142][143] orders were signed to execute 25,700 Polish POWs, labeled "nationalists and counterrevolutionaries", kept at camps and prisons in occupied western Ukraine and Belarus.[144]

The Soviet Union occupies the Baltic Republics and part of Romania

In mid-June 1940, when international attention was focused on the German invasion of France, Soviet NKVD troops raided border posts in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia.[122][145] State administrations were liquidated and replaced by Soviet cadres,[122] in which 34,250 Latvians, 75,000 Lithuanians and almost 60,000 Estonians were deported or killed.[146] Elections were held with single pro-Soviet candidates.
listed for many positions, with resulting peoples assemblies immediately requesting admission into the USSR, which was granted by the Soviet Union.\[122\] The USSR annexed the whole of Lithuania, including the Scheschupe area, which was to be given to Germany.

Finally, on 26 June, four days after France sued for an armistice with the Third Reich, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum demanding Bessarabia and, unexpectedly, Northern Bukovina from Romania.\[147\] Two days later, the Romanians caved to the Soviet demands and the Soviets occupied the territory. The Hertza region was initially not requested by the USSR but was later occupied by force after the Romanians agreed to the initial Soviet demands.\[147\] The subsequent waves of deportations began in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

**Holocaust beginnings, Operation Tannenberg and other Nazi atrocities**

At the end of October 1939, Germany enacted the death penalty for disobedience to the German occupation.\[148\] Germany began a campaign of "Germanization", which meant to assimilate the occupied territories politically, culturally, socially, and economically into the German Reich.\[149\][150][151] 50,000–200,000 Polish children were kidnapped to be Germanized.\[152\][153]

Elimination of Polish elites and intelligentsia was part of Generalplan Ost. The Intelligenzaktion, a plan to eliminate the Polish intelligentsia, Poland's 'leadership class', took place soon after the German invasion of Poland, lasting from fall of 1939 till spring of 1940. As the result of this operation in 10 regional actions about 60,000 Polish nobles, teachers, social workers, priests, judges and political activists were killed.\[154\][155] It was continued in May 1940 when Germany launched AB-Aktion,\[152\] More than 16,000 members of the intelligentsia were murdered in Operation Tannenberg alone.\[156\]

Germany also planned to incorporate all land into the Third Reich.\[150\] This effort resulted in the forced resettlement of 2 million Poles. Families were forced to travel in the severe winter of 1939–40, leaving behind almost all of their possessions without recompense.\[150\] As part of Operation Tannenberg alone, 750,000 Polish peasants were forced to leave and their property was given to Germans.\[157\] A further 330,000 were murdered.\[158\] Germany eventually planned to move ethnic Poles to Siberia.\[159\][160]
Although Germany used forced labourers in most occupied countries, Poles and other Slavs were viewed as inferior by Nazi propaganda, thus, better suited for such duties.\[152\] Between 1 and 2.5 million Polish citizens\[152][161\] were transported to the Reich for forced labour, against their will.\[162][163\] All Polish males were required to perform forced labour.\[152\] While ethnic Poles were subject to selective persecution, all ethnic Jews were targeted by the Reich.\[161\] In the winter of 1939–40, about 100,000 Jews were thus deported to Poland.\[164\] They were initially gathered into massive urban ghettos,\[165\] such as 380,000 held in the Warsaw Ghetto, where large numbers died under the harsh conditions therein, including 43,000 in the Warsaw Ghetto alone.\[161][166][167\] Poles and ethnic Jews were imprisoned in nearly every camp of the extensive concentration camp system in German-occupied Poland and the Reich. In Auschwitz, which began operating on 14 June 1940, 1.1 million people died.\[168][169\]

**Romania and Soviet republics**

In the summer of 1940, fear of the Soviet Union, in conjunction with German support for the territorial demands of Romania's neighbors and the Romanian government's own miscalculations, resulted in more territorial losses for Romania. Between 28 June and 4 July, the Soviet Union occupied and annexed Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the Hertza region of Romania.\[170\]

On 30 August, Ribbentrop and Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano issued the Second Vienna Award giving Northern Transylvania to Hungary. On 7 September, Romania ceded Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria (Axis-sponsored Treaty of Craiova).\[171\] After various events in Romania, over the next few months, it increasingly took on the aspect of a German-occupied country.\[171\]

The Soviet-occupied territories were converted into republics of the Soviet Union. During the two years following the annexation, the Soviets arrested approximately 100,000 Polish citizens\[172\] and deported between 350,000 and 1,500,000, of whom between 250,000 and 1,000,000 died, mostly civilians.\[173][d\] Forced re-settlements into Gulag labour camps and exile settlements in remote areas of the Soviet Union occurred.\[118\] According to Norman Davies,\[179\] almost half of them were dead by July 1940.\[180\]

**Further secret protocol modifications, settling borders and immigration issues**
On 10 January 1941, Germany and the Soviet Union signed an agreement settling several ongoing issues.[181] Secret protocols in the new agreement modified the "Secret Additional Protocols" of the German–Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty, ceding the Lithuanian Strip to the Soviet Union in exchange for 7.5 million dollars (31.5 million Reichsmark).[181] The agreement formally set the border between Germany and the Soviet Union between the Igorka river and the Baltic Sea.[182] It also extended trade regulation of the 1940 German–Soviet Commercial Agreement until August 1, 1942, increased deliveries above the levels of year one of that agreement,[182] settled trading rights in the Baltics and Bessarabia, calculated the compensation for German property interests in the Baltic States now occupied by the Soviets and other issues.[181] It also covered the migration to Germany within two and a half months of ethnic Germans and German citizens in Soviet-held Baltic territories, and the migration to the Soviet Union of Baltic and "White Russian" "nationals" in German-held territories.[182]

Soviet–German relations during the Pact's operation

Early political issues

Before the pact's announcement, Communists in the West denied that such a treaty would be signed. Future member of the Hollywood Ten Herbert Biberman denounced rumors as "Fascist propaganda". Earl Browder, head of the Communist Party USA, stated that "there is as much chance of agreement as of Earl Browder being elected president of the Chamber of Commerce."[183] Beginning in September 1939, the Soviet Comintern suspended all anti-Nazi and anti-fascist propaganda, explaining that the war in Europe was a matter of capitalist states attacking each other for imperialist purposes.[184] Western Communists acted accordingly; while before they supported protecting collective security, now they denounced Britain and France going to war.[183]

When anti-German demonstrations erupted in Prague, Czechoslovakia, the Comintern ordered the Czech Communist Party to employ all of its strength to paralyze "chauvinist elements."[184] Moscow soon forced the Communist Parties of France and Great Britain to adopt an anti-war position. On 7 September, Stalin called Georgi Dimitrov, and the latter sketched a new Comintern line on the war. The new line—which stated that the war was unjust and imperialist—was approved by the secretariat of the Communist International on 9 September. Thus, the various western Communist parties now had to oppose the war, and to vote against war credits.[185] Although the French
Communists had unanimously voted in Parliament for war credits on 2 September and on 19 September declared their "unshakeable will" to defend the country, on 27 September the Comintern formally instructed the party to condemn the war as imperialist. By 1 October the French Communists advocated listening to German peace proposals, and Communist leader Maurice Thorez deserted from the French Army on 4 October and fled to Russia.[186] Other Communists also deserted from the army.

The Communist Party of Germany featured similar attitudes. In Die Welt, a communist newspaper published in Stockholm[c] the exiled communist leader Walter Ulbricht opposed the allies (Britain representing "the most reactionary force in the world"[188]) and argued: "The German government declared itself ready for friendly relations with the Soviet Union, whereas the English–French war bloc desires a war against the socialist Soviet Union. The Soviet people and the working people of Germany have an interest in preventing the English war plan."[189]

Despite a warning by the Comintern, German tensions were raised when the Soviets stated in September that they must enter Poland to "protect" their ethnic Ukrainian and Belorussian brethren therein from Germany; Molotov later admitted to German officials that this excuse was necessary because the Kremlin could find no other pretext for the Soviet invasion.[190]

While active collaboration between Nazi Germany and Soviet Union caused great shock in western Europe and amongst communists opposed to Germany, on 1 October 1939, Winston Churchill declared that the Russian armies acted for the safety of Russia against "the Nazi menace."[191]

When a joint German–Soviet peace initiative was rejected by Britain and France on 28 September 1939, Soviet foreign policy became critical of the Allies and more pro-German in turn. During the fifth session of the Supreme Soviet on 31 October 1939 Molotov analysed the international situation thus giving the direction for Communist propaganda. According to Molotov Germany had a legitimate interest in regaining its position as a great power and the Allies had started an aggressive war in order to maintain the Versailles system.[192]

Molotov declared in his report entitled "On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union" (31 October 1939) held on the fifth (extraordinary) session of the Supreme Soviet, that the Western "ruling circles" disguise their intentions with the pretext of defending democracy against Hitlerism, declaring "their aim in war with Germany is nothing more, nothing less than extermination of Hitlerism. [...] There is absolutely no justification for this kind of war. The ideology of Hitlerism, just like any other ideological system, can be accepted or rejected, this is a matter of political views. But everyone grasps, that an ideology can not be exterminated by force, must not be finished off with a war."[193]

Expansion of raw materials and military trading
Germany and the Soviet Union entered an intricate trade pact on February 11, 1940, that was over four times larger than the one the two countries had signed in August 1939.[194] The trade pact helped Germany to surmount a British blockade of Germany.[194] In the first year, Germany received one million tons of cereals, half a million tons of wheat, 900,000 tons of oil, 100,000 tons of cotton, 500,000 tons of phosphates and considerable amounts of other vital raw materials, along with the transit of one million tons of soybeans from Manchuria. These and other supplies were being transported through Soviet and occupied Polish territories.[194] The Soviets were to receive a naval cruiser, the plans to the battleship Bismarck, heavy naval guns, other naval gear and thirty of Germany's latest warplanes, including the Me-109 and Me-110 fighters and Ju-88 bomber.[194] The Soviets would also receive oil and electric equipment, locomotives, turbines, generators, diesel engines, ships, machine tools and samples of German artillery, tanks, explosives, chemical-warfare equipment and other items.[194]

The Soviets also helped Germany to avoid British naval blockades by providing a submarine base, Basis Nord, in the northern Soviet Union near Murmansk.[184] This also provided a refueling and maintenance location, and a takeoff point for raids and attacks on shipping.[184] In addition, the Soviets provided Germany with access to the Northern Sea Route for both cargo ships and raiders (though only the commerce raider Komet used the route before the German invasion), which forced Britain to protect sea lanes in both the Atlantic and the Pacific.[195]

**Summer deterioration of relations**

The Finnish and Baltic invasions began a deterioration of relations between the Soviets and Germany.[196] Stalin's invasions were a severe irritant to Berlin, as the intent to accomplish these was not communicated to the Germans beforehand, and prompted concern that Stalin was seeking to form an anti-German bloc.[197] Molotov's reassurances to the Germans, and the Germans' mistrust, intensified. On June 16, as the Soviets invaded Lithuania, but before they had invaded Latvia and Estonia, Ribbentrop instructed his staff "to submit a report as soon as possible as to whether in the Baltic States a tendency to seek support from the Reich can be observed or whether an attempt was made to form a bloc."

In August 1940, the Soviet Union briefly suspended its deliveries under their commercial agreement after their relations were strained following disagreement over policy in Romania, the Soviet war with Finland, Germany falling behind in its deliveries of goods under the pact and with Stalin worried that Hitler's war with the West might end quickly after France signed an armistice.[199] The suspension created significant resource problems for Germany.[199] By the end of August, relations improved again as the countries had redrawn the Hungarian and Romanian borders, settled some Bulgarian claims and Stalin was again convinced that Germany would face a long war in the west with Britain's improvement.
in its air battle with Germany and the execution of an agreement between the United States and Britain regarding destroyers and bases.\[200\] However, in late August, Germany arranged its own occupation of Romania, targeting oil fields.\[201\] The move raised tensions with the Soviets, who responded that Germany was supposed to have consulted with the Soviet Union under Article III of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact.\[201\]

**German–Soviet Axis talks**

After Germany entered a Tripartite Pact with Japan and Italy, Ribbentrop wrote to Stalin, inviting Molotov to Berlin for negotiations aimed to create a 'continental bloc' of Germany, Italy, Japan and the USSR that would oppose Britain and the USA.\[202\] Stalin sent Molotov to Berlin to negotiate the terms for the Soviet Union to join the Axis and potentially enjoy the spoils of the pact.\[203\][204\] After negotiations during November 1940 on where to extend the USSR's sphere of influence, Hitler broke off talks and continued planning for the eventual attempts to invade the Soviet Union.\[202\][205\]

**Late relations**

In an effort to demonstrate peaceful intentions toward Germany, on 13 April 1941, the Soviets signed a neutrality pact with Axis power Japan.\[206\] While Stalin had little faith in Japan's commitment to neutrality, he felt that the pact was important for its political symbolism, to reinforce a public affection for Germany.\[207\] Stalin felt that there was a growing split in German circles about whether Germany should initiate a war with the Soviet Union.\[207\] Stalin did not know that Hitler had been secretly discussing an invasion of the Soviet Union since summer 1940,\[208\] and that Hitler had ordered his military in late 1940 to prepare for war in the east regardless of the parties' talks of a potential Soviet entry as a fourth Axis Power.\[209\]

**Hitler breaks the Pact**
Nazi Germany terminated the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact at 03:15 on 22 June 1941 by launching a massive attack on the Soviet positions in eastern Poland which marked the beginning of the invasion of the Soviet Union known as Operation Barbarossa.\[100]\] Stalin had ignored several warnings that Germany was likely to invade,\[210][211][212]\] and ordered no 'full-scale' mobilization of forces although the mobilization was ongoing.\[213]\] After the launch of the invasion, the territories gained by the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact were lost in a matter of weeks. Within six months, the Soviet military had suffered 4.3 million casualties,\[214]\] and Germany had captured three million Soviet prisoners.\[215]\] The lucrative export of Soviet raw materials to Nazi Germany over the course of the Nazi–Soviet economic relations (1934–41) continued uninterrupted until the outbreak of hostilities. The Soviet exports in several key areas enabled Germany to maintain its stocks of rubber and grain from the first day of the invasion until October 1941.\[216]\]

Aftermath

Discovery of the Secret Protocol

The German original of the secret protocols was presumably destroyed in the bombing of Germany,\[217]\] but in late 1943, Ribbentrop had ordered that the most secret records of the German Foreign Office from 1933 on, amounting to some 9,800 pages, be microfilmed. When the various departments of the Foreign Office in Berlin were evacuated to Thuringia at the end of the war, Karl von Loesch, a civil servant who had worked for the chief interpreter Paul Otto Schmidt, was entrusted with these microfilm copies. He eventually received orders to destroy the secret documents but decided to bury the metal container with the microfilms as a personal insurance for his future well-being. In May 1945, von Loesch approached the British Lt. Col. Robert C. Thomson with the request to transmit a personal letter to Duncan Sandys, Churchill's son-in-law. In the letter, von Loesch revealed that he had knowledge of the documents' whereabouts but expected preferential treatment in return. Colonel Thomson and his American counterpart Ralph Collins agreed to transfer von Loesch to Marburg in the American zone if he would produce the microfilms. The microfilms contained a copy of the Non-Aggression Treaty as well as the Secret Protocol.\[218]\] Both documents were discovered as part of the microfilmed records in August 1945 by the State Department employee Wendell B. Blancke, head of a special unit called "Exploitation German Archives" (EGA).\[219]\]
The treaty was published in the United States for the first time by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on May 22, 1946, in Britain by the *Manchester Guardian*. It was also part of an official State Department publication, *Nazi–Soviet Relations 1939–1941*, edited by Raymond J. Sontag and James S. Beddie in January 1948. The decision to publish the key documents on German–Soviet relations, including the treaty and protocol, had been taken already in spring 1947. Sontag and Beddie prepared the collection throughout the summer of 1947. In November 1947, President Truman personally approved the publication but it was held back in view of the Foreign Ministers Conference in London scheduled for December. Since negotiations at that conference did not prove constructive from an American point of view, the document edition was sent to press. The documents made headlines worldwide. State Department officials counted it as a success: "The Soviet Government was caught flat-footed in what was the first effective blow from our side in a clear-cut propaganda war."[220]

Despite publication of the recovered copy in western media, for decades, it was the official policy of the Soviet Union to deny the existence of the secret protocol.[221] The secret protocol's existence was officially denied until 1989. Vyacheslav Molotov, one of the signatories, went to his grave categorically rejecting its existence.[222] The French Communist Party did not acknowledge the existence of the secret protocol until 1968, as the party de-Stalinized.[186]


**Stalin's Falsifiers of History and Axis negotiations**

In response to the publication of the secret protocols and other secret German–Soviet relations documents in the State Department edition *Nazi–Soviet Relations* (1948), Stalin published *Falsifiers of History*, which included the claim that, during the Pact's operation, Stalin rejected Hitler's claim to share in a division of the world,[224] without mentioning the Soviet offer to join the Axis. That version persisted, without exception, in historical studies, official accounts, memoirs and textbooks published in the Soviet Union until the Soviet Union's dissolution.[224]

The book also claimed that the Munich agreement was a "secret agreement" between Germany and "the west" and a "highly important phase in their policy aimed at goading the Hitlerite aggressors against the Soviet Union."[225][226]

**Denial of the pact**
For decades, it was the official policy of the Soviet Union to deny the existence of the secret protocol to the Soviet–German Pact. At the behest of Mikhail Gorbachev, Alexander Nikolaevich Yakovlev headed a commission investigating the existence of such a protocol. In December 1989, the commission concluded that the protocol had existed and revealed its findings to the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union.\[217\] As a result, the Congress passed the declaration confirming the existence of the secret protocols, condemning and denouncing them.\[227\][228\] Both successor-states of the pact parties have declared the secret protocols to be invalid from the moment they were signed. The Federal Republic of Germany declared this on September 1, 1989 and the Soviet Union on December 24, 1989,\[229\] following an examination of the microfilmed copy of the German originals.\[230\]

The Soviet copy of the original document was declassified in 1992 and published in a scientific journal in early 1993.\[230\]

In August 2009, in an article written for the Polish newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin condemned the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact as "immoral."\[231\] In 2014 however, he defended the whole non-aggression treaty and raised doubts about the secret protocols, saying that "people still argue about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact".\[232\]

In spite of such statements the present Russian government and media have to some extent moved back to the Soviet position, again using the term “falsifiers of history”. They assert that the invasions of Poland were unconnected to the pact, that the Nazi–Soviet pact was concluded only after fruitless negotiations with Britain and France, and that, by the Munich agreement, Britain and France were at least as culpable for the outbreak of war as the USSR.\[233\][234\]

**Post-war commentary regarding the motives of Stalin and Hitler**

Some scholars believe that, from the very beginning of the Tripartite negotiations between the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France, it was clear that the Soviet position required the other parties to agree to a Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania,\[43\] as well as for Finland to be included in the Soviet sphere of influence.\[235\]

Regarding the timing of German rapprochement, many historians agree that the dismissal of Maxim Litvinov, whose Jewish ethnicity was viewed unfavorably by Nazi Germany, removed an obstacle to negotiations with Germany.\[58\][236][237][238][239][240][241][242\] Stalin immediately directed Molotov to "purge the ministry of Jews."\[243\][239][244\] Given Litvinov's prior attempts to create an anti-fascist coalition, association with the doctrine of collective security with France and Britain, and pro-Western orientation\[245\] by the standards of the Kremlin, his dismissal indicated the existence of a Soviet option of rapprochement with Germany.\[246\][f\] Likewise, Molotov's appointment served as a signal to
Germany that the USSR was open to offers.[246] The dismissal also signaled to France and Britain the existence of a potential negotiation option with Germany.[40][248] One British official wrote that Litvinov's disappearance also meant the loss of an admirable technician or shock-absorber, while Molotov's "modus operandi" was "more truly Bolshevik than diplomatic or cosmopolitan."[249] Carr argued that the Soviet Union's replacement of Foreign Minister Litvinov with Molotov on May 3, 1939 indicated not an irrevocable shift towards alignment with Germany, but rather was Stalin's way of engaging in hard bargaining with the British and the French by appointing a proverbial hard man, namely Molotov, to the Foreign Commissariat.[250] Historian Albert Resis stated that the Litvinov dismissal gave the Soviets freedom to pursue faster-paced German negotiations, but that they did not abandon British–French talks.[251] Derek Watson argued that Molotov could get the best deal with Britain and France because he was not encumbered with the baggage of collective security and could negotiate with Germany.[252] Geoffrey Roberts argued that Litvinov's dismissal helped the Soviets with British–French talks, because Litvinov doubted or maybe even opposed such discussions.[253]

Edward Hallett Carr, a frequent defender of Soviet policy,[254] stated: "In return for 'non-intervention' Stalin secured a breathing space of immunity from German attack."[255] According to Carr, the "bastion" created by means of the Pact, "was and could only be, a line of defense against potential German attack."[255] According to Carr, an important advantage was that "if Soviet Russia had eventually to fight Hitler, the Western Powers would already be involved."[255][256] However, during the last decades, this view has been disputed. Historian Werner Maser stated that "the claim that the Soviet Union was at the time threatened by Hitler, as Stalin supposed ... is a legend, to whose creators Stalin himself belonged.[257] In Maser's view, "neither Germany nor Japan were in a situation [of] invading the USSR even with the least perspective [sic] of success," and this could not have been unknown to Stalin.[258] Carr further stated that, for a long time, the primary motive of Stalin's sudden change of course was assumed to be the fear of German aggressive intentions.[259]

Some critics of Stalin's policy, such as the popular writer Viktor Suvorov, claim that Stalin's primary motive for signing the Soviet–German non-aggression treaty was his calculation that such a pact could result in a conflict between the capitalist countries of Western Europe. This idea is supported by Albert L. Weeks.[260] Claims by Suvorov that Stalin planned to invade Germany in 1941 are debated by historians with, for example, David Glantz opposing such claims, while Mikhail Meltyukhov supports them. The authors of The Black Book of Communism consider the pact a crime against peace and a "conspiracy to conduct war of aggression."[261]

Soviet sources have claimed that soon after the pact was signed, both the UK and US showed understanding that the buffer zone was necessary to keep Hitler from advancing for some time, accepting the ostensible strategic reasoning;[262] however, soon after World War II ended, those
countries changed their view. Many Polish newspapers published numerous articles claiming that Russia must apologize to Poland for the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact.[263]

Two weeks after Soviet armies had entered the Baltic states, Berlin requested Finland to permit the transit of German troops, followed five weeks thereafter by Hitler's issuance of a secret directive "to take up the Russian problem, to think about war preparations," a war whose objective would include establishment of a Baltic confederation.[264]

Remembrance

The European Parliament has proclaimed 23 August 2009, the anniversary of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, as a European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, to be commemorated with dignity and impartiality.[265]

In connection with the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe parliamentary resolution condemned both communism and fascism for starting World War II and called for a day of remembrance for victims of both Stalinism and Nazism on 23 August.[266] In response to the resolution, the Russian lawmakers threatened the OSCE with "harsh consequences".[266][267]

During the re-ignition of Cold War tensions in 1982, the U.S. Congress during the Reagan Administration established the Baltic Freedom Day to be remembered every June 14 in the United States.[268]

See also

Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact
- Timeline of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact
- Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact negotiations
- Walter Krivitsky, Soviet defector who revealed plans of the non-aggression pact before World War II
- Baltic way, protest marking the 50th anniversary of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact

Related
- Nazi–Soviet population transfers
- German–Soviet military parade in Brest-Litovsk
- Stalin's alleged speech of 19 August 1939
- Sykes–Picot Agreement
- Munich Agreement

Notes
a. Russian: Договор о ненападении между Германией и Советским Союзом; German: Nichtangriffsvertrag zwischen Deutschland und der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken.[11]
b. To 53 million RM in German imports (0.9% of Germany's total imports and 6.3% of Russia's total exports) and 34 million RM in German exports (0.6% of Germany's total exports and 4.6% of Russia's total imports) in 1938.[17]
c. On 28 July, Molotov sent a political instruction to the Soviet ambassador in Berlin that marked a start of secret Soviet–German political negotiations.[63]
d. The actual number of deported in the period of 1939–1941 remains unknown and various estimates vary from 350,000[174] to over 2 million (mostly World War II estimates by the underground. The earlier number is based on records made by the NKVD and does not include roughly 180,000 prisoners of war, also in Soviet captivity. Most modern historians estimate the number of all people deported from areas taken by Soviet Union during this period at between 800,000 and 1,500,000,[175][176] for example RJ Rummel gives the number of 1,200,000 million,[177] Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox give 1,500,000.[178]
e. Having been banned in Stockholm, it continued to be published in Zurich.[187]
f. According to Paul Flewers, Stalin's address to the eighteenth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 10, 1939 discounted any idea of German designs on the Soviet Union. Stalin had intended: "To be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them." This was intended to warn the Western powers that they could not necessarily rely upon the support of the Soviet Union.[247]

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62. Roberts 1992a, p. 64.
64. Ericson 1999, pp. 54–5.
69. Watson 2000, p. 713.
70. Shirer 1990, p. 536.
73. Shirer 1990, p. 525.
76. Shirer 1990, p. 528.
82. Shirer 1990, p. 539.
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94. "In Again, Out Again". *Time*. April 7, 1941.
100. Roberts 2006, p. 82
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104. "Um Swiecie". PL.
110. AVП СССР, ф. 06, оп. 1, п. 8, д. 74, л. 20. л. 26. Item 4: "Hilger asked to pass the request of the German Air forces' Chief of Staff (the Germans wanted the radio station in Minsk, when it is idle, to start a continuous broadcast needed for urgent aeronautical experiments. This translation should contain the embedded call signs "Richard Wilhelm 1.0", and, in addition to that, to broadcast the word "Minsk" as frequent as possible. The Molotov's resolution on that document authorised broadcasting of the word "Minsk" only)."
111. "Seven Years War?". *Time*. October 2, 1939.
113. Roberts 2006, p. 43.
5.
188. "Propagat". *Old Gazette* (RU).
207. Roberts 2006, p. 66.


241. Levin, Nora (1988). The Jews in the Soviet Union Since 1917: Paradox of Survival. NYU Press. p. 330. ISBN 0-81475051-6. "[Litvinov] was referred to by the German radio as 'Litvinov-Finkelstein' – was dropped in favor of Vyacheslav Molotov. 'The eminent Jew', as Churchill put it, 'the target of German antagonism was flung aside... like a broken tool... The Jew Litvinov was gone and Hitler's dominant prejudice placated.'"

242. Roberts 1992b: 'Perhaps the only thing that can be salvaged from the wreckage of the orthodox interpretation of Litvinov's dismissal is some notion that, by appointing Molotov foreign minister, Stalin was preparing for the contingency of a possible deal with Hitler. In view of Litvinov's Jewish heritage and his militant anti-Nazism, that is not an unreasonable supposition. But it is a hypothesis for which there is as yet no evidence. Moreover, we shall see that what evidence there is suggests that Stalin's decision was determined by a quite different set of circumstances and calculations.'


251. Resis 2000, p. 33: ‘By replacing Litvinov with Molotov, Stalin significantly increased his options in foreign policy. Litvinov's dismissal served as a warning to London and Paris that Moscow had a third option–rapprochement with Germany. After Litvinov's dismissal, the pace of Soviet–German contacts quickened. This did not, however, mean that Moscow had abandoned the search for collective security, now exemplified by the Soviet draft triple alliance. Meanwhile, Molotov's appointment served as an additional signal to Berlin that Moscow was open to offers. The signal worked; the warning did not.’

252. Watson 2000, pp. 695–722: 'The choice of Molotov reflected not only the appointment of a nationalist and one of Stalin's leading lieutenants, a Russian who was not a Jew and who could negotiate with Nazi Germany, but also someone unencumbered with the baggage of collective security who could obtain the best deal with Britain and France, if they could be forced into an agreement.'

253. Roberts 1992b, pp. 639–57: 'the foreign policy factor in Litvinov's downfall was the desire of Stalin and Molotov to take charge of foreign relations in order to pursue their policy of a triple alliance with Britain and France – a policy whose utility Litvinov doubted and may even have opposed or obstructed.'


257. Maser 1994, p. 64.

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Further reading


External links

- Text of the pact (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1939pact.html)
- Nazi–Soviet Relations 1939–1941 (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/nazsov.asp)
- Modern History Sourcebook, a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts in modern European and World history (http://www.lituanus.org/1989/89_1_03.htm) has scanned photocopies of original documents
- Italy and the Nazi–Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939 (http://users.ju.edu/jclarke/wizzg.html)
- International Conference and booklet on the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact (http://www.secretpact.info/)


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