

Stalin & Hitler: Treacherous Alliance

Stalin and Hitler, ideologically opposed leaders, forged a complex, treacherous relationship that profoundly shaped World War II. Initial interactions involved suspicion.



Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Signed on August 23, 1939, this non-aggression treaty between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union shocked the world. It included secret protocols dividing Eastern European territories.



Stalin's Strategic Rationale



01 Military Modernization

The pact provided a crucial period for the Soviet Union to enhance its military capabilities and prepare for future confrontation with Germany.

02 Territorial Expansion

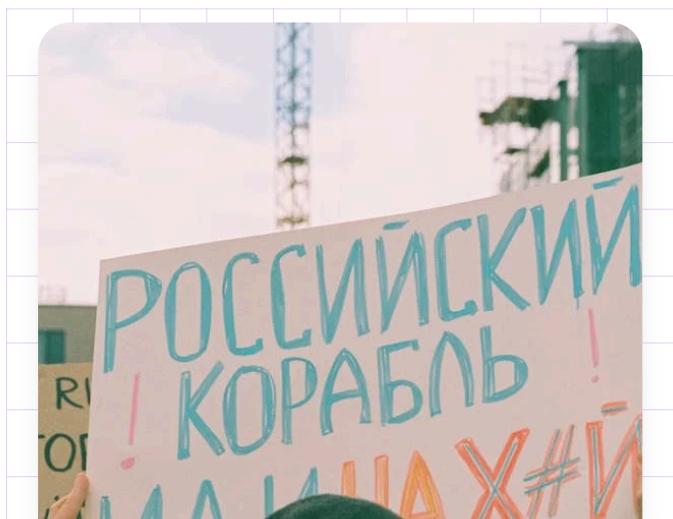
The secret protocols allowed the USSR to annex parts of Eastern Poland, the Baltic states, and exert influence over Finland, expanding its western frontier.

Hitler's Motives for the Pact

Hitler's primary motivation for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was to secure Germany's eastern flank, preventing a devastating two-front war.

Focus Military Efforts

The pact enabled Germany to concentrate its forces on the invasion of Poland and subsequent campaigns in Western Europe.



Poland's Invasion and Division



Hitler's Secret Plans: Soviet Border

01 Conquest Plans Maintained

Hitler harbored long-term plans for conquering *Soviet territories* even after signing the non-aggression pact, a clear act of deception.

The immediate consequence was the joint invasion and division of Poland in September 1939. Soviet forces occupied the east, and Germany took the west, marking the official start of World War II in Europe.

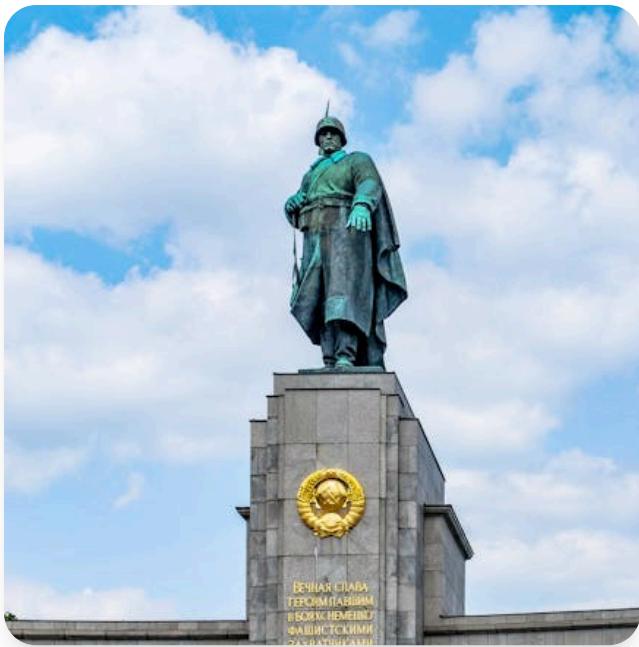
Economic Exchange under the Pact

From 1939-1941, the Soviet Union supplied *oil, grain, and minerals* to Nazi Germany. This vital economic exchange fueled Germany's war machine, enabling its conquest of Western Europe.



02 Troop Build-up on Border

Germany began to mass troops along the Soviet border, intensifying the geopolitical landscape and signaling impending conflict.



Operation Barbarossa: Pact Broken

Germany's *Operation Barbarossa* on June 22, 1941, violently ended the non-aggression pact. This invasion forced the USSR to join the Allies, drastically shifting WWII's trajectory and revealing the pact's cynical core.