

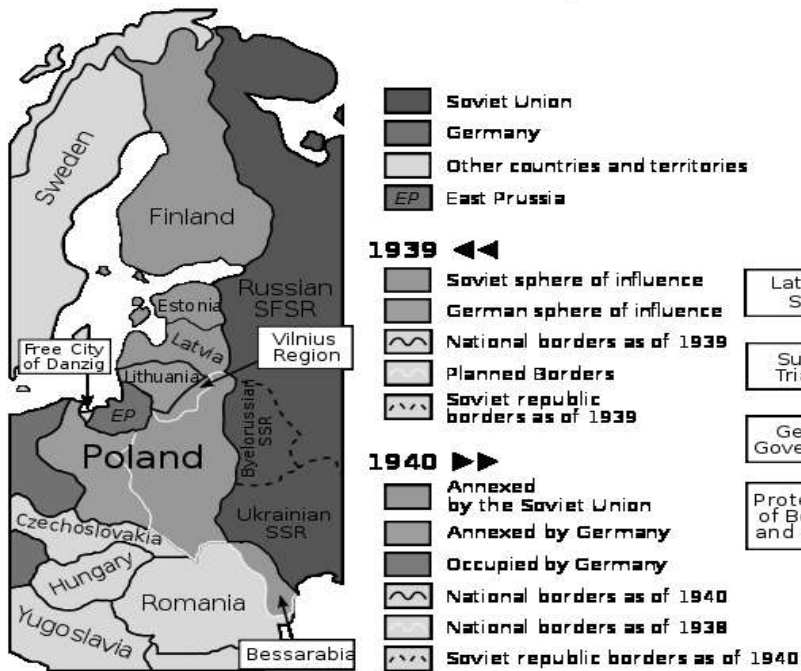
Hitler and Stalin – The Non-Aggression Pact

At first glance, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany should have been the greatest of enemies. The ideologies are at completely different ends of the political spectrum – Nazi fascism at the far right of the spectrum, while communism is at the far left. Communism stands for a stateless society where all are equal. No one is rich or poor in a communist system. In Communism, it is the community that holds the production and the major resources. On the other hand, Fascism pertains to state and it considers state on top of everything. In fascism the state is all embracing. For the fascists, no human values exist outside the state. Fascism believes that everything is within the State and nothing is above the State or outside the State or against the State. Fascism believes in nationalism (includes economic nationalism), corporatism (includes economic planning), militarism and totalitarianism (dictatorship and social interventionism). In both cases the State is the most important body, but the State serves very different roles in the country. It is important to note, however, that both are AUTHORITARIAN styles of government.

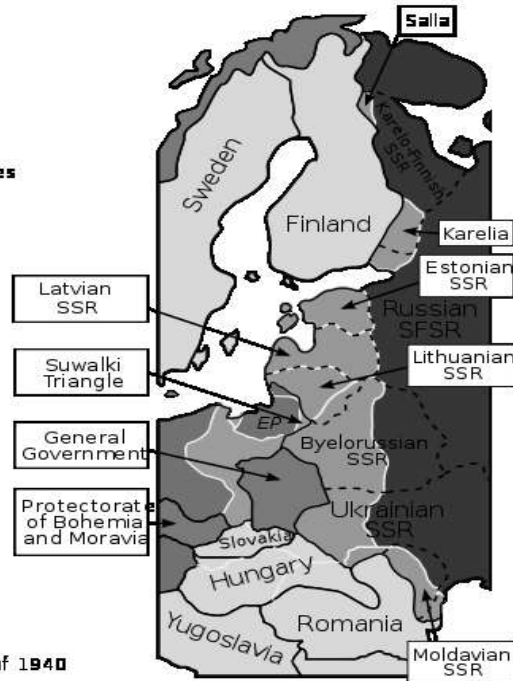
With this in mind, we now turn to the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939. In the days prior the German invasion of Poland, the Nazi government signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. In this pact, they agreed not to attack one another and to divide Europe between the two nations. Very importantly, they also agreed to remain neutral if any other nation attacked either the Soviet Union or Germany. There would be no fighting between the Nazis and the Communists during World War II.

According to the Pact, which became known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact because of the respective foreign ministers for each country, Europe would be divide up as shown. With the exception of Finland, we can see that the two countries essentially stuck to their agreement through to 1941. The possibility of a German-Soviet alliance was terrifying to the Allied nations, who feared that they may team up to launch an all out attack against Europe and possibly the rest of the world.

Planned division of Central Europe according to Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact



Actual territorial changes 1939-1940



What made this pact so curious was that during the Spanish Civil War, the Soviets backed the Spanish Republican Party (who had been elected legally by the people) while the Germans backed General Franco, leader of the Spanish Fascist Party and person in charge of the rebellion. Both sides eventually came to an agreement to end their participation in the War, but had fought on opposite sides of one another for many years.

While the non-aggression pact shocked the world, and led Great Britain to sign an alliance against invasion with Poland on August 25, 1939, what would be most shocking – and unknown at the time – was that there were secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that were unknown to the world. Most notably, there was also a secret protocol to the pact, revealed only after Germany's defeat in 1945, according to which the states of Northern and Eastern Europe were divided into German and Soviet "spheres of influence". In the North, Finland, Estonia and Latvia were assigned to the Soviet sphere. 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. 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. 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.

There were, however, cracks in this alliance. Although Finland had been promised to the Soviets, the Germans instead took claim over that country. Part of their agreement also outlined that each country would supply the other with war materials; in August 1940, however, 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 a peace accord with Germany. The suspension created significant resource problems for Germany. The Soviets also became alarmed when Hitler signed a mutual defense agreement with Italy and Japan, which caused them to sign their own non-aggression treaty with Japan to ensure that they would not be attacked from both sides.

The final and dramatic break came on June 22, 1941, when Hitler launched a full scale attack into the Soviet Union. Stalin had ignored several warnings that Germany was likely to attack, and ordered no full-scale mobilization of forces. After the launch of the invasion, the territories gained by the Soviet Union due to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact were lost in a matter of weeks. Within six months, the Soviet military had suffered 4.3 million casualties and Germany had captured three million Soviet prisoners. The imports of Soviet raw materials into Germany over the duration of the countries' economic relationship proved vital to Barbarossa. Without Soviet imports, German stocks would have run out in several key products by October 1941, and Germany would have already run through its stocks of rubber and grain before the first day of the invasion. With this, the Soviets were brought into the Allied nations with Britain and France to fight against Germany. Many historians believe that this was a crucial error by Hitler, and perhaps led to his ultimate demise.