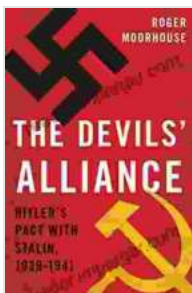


Unveiling the Unholy Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939-1941

As the ominous clouds of World War II gathered over Europe, two of history's most infamous dictators, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, shocked the world with a secret pact that would forever alter the course of the conflict.



The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939-1941

by Roger Moorhouse

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

On August 23, 1939, the foreign ministers of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov, signed a non-aggression pact in Moscow. Known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, this agreement was ostensibly designed to prevent war between the two countries.

However, the secret protocols attached to the pact revealed a far more sinister agenda. These protocols outlined a plan to divide Eastern Europe

between Germany and the Soviet Union. Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were to be within the Soviet sphere of influence, while Germany would have control over western Poland and Danzig.

The Genesis of the Pact

The origins of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact can be traced back to the complex interplay of international relations in the late 1930s. Germany, eager to expand its territory and avenge its defeat in World War I, had been aggressively pursuing a policy of appeasement towards Nazi sympathizers in Europe.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, wary of Germany's growing power and its own territorial ambitions, had been seeking to secure its borders. Stalin, the ruthless dictator who had orchestrated the Great Purge, saw an alliance with Hitler as a way to avoid a two-front war and to expand Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.

The Impact of the Pact

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had a profound impact on the outbreak of World War II. Just days after the pact was signed, Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, marking the beginning of the war. The Soviet Union, as per the agreement, invaded eastern Poland on September 17th.

The pact effectively gave Hitler a free hand in Western Europe, allowing him to conquer Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France with relative ease. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, annexed the Baltic states, eastern Poland, and parts of Finland.

The Betrayal

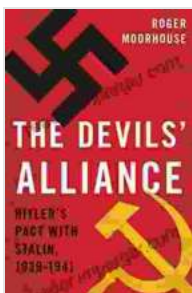
The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was never intended to be a lasting alliance. Both Hitler and Stalin were opportunists who were only interested in their own territorial gains. In June 1941, just two years after the signing of the pact, Germany launched a surprise invasion of the Soviet Union, codenamed Operation Barbarossa.

The German invasion shattered the fragile alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union. The two countries would fight a bloody and protracted war that lasted until the surrender of Germany in 1945.

The Legacy of the Pact

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact remains one of the most infamous diplomatic agreements in history. It was a betrayal of trust that allowed Hitler to launch World War II and led to the deaths of millions of people.

The pact also served as a reminder of the complex and often unpredictable nature of international relations. It showed that even in the face of impending war, self-interest can cloud judgment and lead to disastrous consequences.



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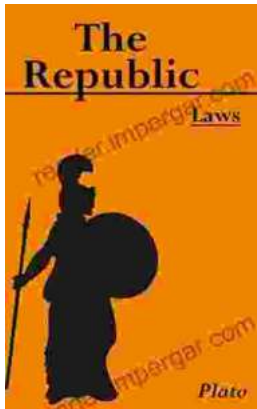
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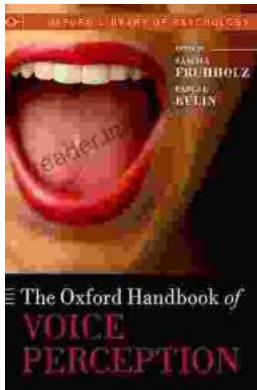
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