



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Communism: A History of Repression, Violence, and Victims

Chapter 8 Assessments and Assignments

Create the Context

Homework or class-preparation activity that incorporates the content provided in this chapter:

- **Read** the chapter story and essay, The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Katyn Massacre
- **Watch** the videos listed below as a primer on the Pact and its deadly consequences:
 - *Molotov-Ribbentrop: The Pact That Changed Europe's Borders (4 minutes)*
<https://youtu.be/MuBRvARuLi4>
 - *Katyn massacre | The War Crime that the Soviet Union tried to hide in WWII (10 minutes)*
<https://youtu.be/lWnr3g-phvQ>

Wrap-Up Questions

- What were the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact? What did both sides gain in the agreement?
- How did the Soviets treat the peoples of the nations they invaded after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact?
- Why did the Soviets conduct the Katyn Massacre?
- How did Nazi Germany use the discovery of the Katyn Massacre?
- What tools of communism did the Soviets employ before, during, and after the Katyn Massacre?
- What is it about communist systems like the Soviet Union that makes them hide their crimes—even those committed decades ago—from their own citizens and the world?
- How do you think the Katyn Massacre affects Russian and Polish relations today?

Assessments

- **In-Class Assessment 1: Letting the World Know**

Divide the class into groups. Each group will play underground Polish journalists and resistance leaders in 1944 attempting to share information about the massacre with the outside world. Have each group independently determine ways to smuggle the information out of the country. Remember, this is the age before reliable radios, the Internet, and cell phones. All means of communication are monitored by the occupying forces, and the borders are sealed. Each group must determine the type of information that would most resonate with the outside world, which knows nothing of the event. How do they convince skeptical outsiders, and how do they get the information out? They will then present their findings to the class.

- **Take-Home Assessment: Create**

Have students create a visual representation of the people affected by the Katyn massacre. For example, they could create a breakdown of the number of people killed from each walk of life (their backgrounds, professions, social classes, etc.). Students could create a graph or infographic to demonstrate the human toll of the massacre.

Primary Source Activity

Ask students to read through the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and highlight the main phrases that stand out to them. Have them explain the phrases' significance and consequences.

Primary Source

Text of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact

The Government of the German Reich and The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics desirous of strengthening the cause of peace between Germany and the U.S.S.R., and proceeding from the fundamental provisions of the Neutrality Agreement concluded in April, 1926 between Germany and the U.S.S.R., have reached the following Agreement:

Article I. Both High Contracting Parties obligate themselves to desist from any act of violence, any aggressive action, and any attack on each other, either individually or jointly with other Powers. **Article II.** Should one of the High Contracting Parties become the object of belligerent action by a third Power, the other High Contracting Party shall in no manner lend its support to this third Power. **Article III.** The Governments of the two High Contracting Parties shall in the future maintain continual contact with one another for the purpose of consultation in order to exchange information on problems affecting their common interests. **Article IV.** Neither of the High Contracting Parties shall participate in any grouping of Powers whatsoever that is directly or indirectly aimed at the other party. **Article V.** Should disputes or conflicts arise between the High Contracting Parties over problems of one kind or another, both parties shall settle these disputes or conflicts exclusively through friendly exchange of opinion or, if necessary, through the establishment of arbitration commissions. **Article VI.** The present Treaty is concluded for a period of ten years, with the proviso that, in so far as one of the High Contracting Parties does not advance it one year prior to the expiration of this period, the validity of this Treaty shall

automatically be extended for another five years. **Article VII.** The present treaty shall be ratified within the shortest possible time. The ratifications shall be exchanged in Berlin. The Agreement shall enter into force as soon as it is signed.

[The section below was not published at the time the above was announced.]

Secret Additional Protocol. Article I. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and U.S.S.R. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party. **Article II.** In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San. The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish State and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments. In any event both Governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement. **Article III.** With regard to Southeastern Europe attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political disinterestedness in these areas. **Article IV.** This protocol shall be treated by both parties as strictly secret.

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the Government of the German Reich v. Ribbentrop Plenipotentiary of the Government of the U.S.S.R. V. Molotovⁱ

ⁱ “Modern History Sourcebook: The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, 1939,” Fordham University, accessed July 13, 2022, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1939pact.asp>.