

## Ribbentrop, Joachim Von

(1893 -1946), Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany from 1938 to 1945.

A wine and spirits exporter who paid a distant relative for permission to add the noble "von" to his name, Ribbentrop joined the Nazi Party in 1932. In January 1933 Hitler used Ribbentrop's home to hold some of the strategy meetings that led to his rise to national power at the end of that month. Ribbentrop quickly became Hitler's foreign-policy advisor, in which capacity he negotiated Germany's naval agreement with Great Britain in 1935 and its alliance with Italy and Japan in 1936 (see also Axis). From 1936 to 1938 Ribbentrop served as Germany's ambassador to England. Despite the fact that he originally supported the idea of having a diplomatic relationship with England, he became more and more anti-British during his time as ambassador.

Ribbentrop was named Foreign Minister in February 1938. In August 1939, just days before the German army invaded Poland kicking off World War II, Ribbentrop reached the peak of his career with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. It was also known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, named for the two foreign ministers who made the deal. After that point, Ribbentrop became less and less influential within the Nazi hierarchy, as Hitler was no longer interested in diplomacy. Ribbentrop's attempt to convince Hitler not to betray the Nazi-Soviet Pact fell on deaf ears, and less than two years after signing the agreement, German troops invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941.

Unlike many other Nazis, Ribbentrop was not an extreme antisemite, and did not completely understand how serious Hitler was about solving the "Jewish question" in Europe until early 1943. At that point, trying to curry favor with the *Fuehrer*, Ribbentrop embarked upon a personal campaign to pressure Germany's allies and satellite states to allow the deportation of their local Jews.

After the war, Ribbentrop was convicted at the Nuremberg trial and sentenced to death. He was hanged in 1946.