



The Nazi Invasion of Poland: The History of the Campaign that Started World War II

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures *Explains the politics of the 1930s and how Hitler and Stalin agreed to carve up Poland

*Includes accounts of the fighting written by soldiers *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading

*Includes a table of contents “The object of the war is ... to physically to destroy the enemy. That is why I have prepared, for the moment only in the East, my 'Death's Head' formations with orders to kill without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language. Only in this way can we obtain the living space we need.” – Hitler, August 1939 Throughout 1938 and 1939, conflict broke out across Europe after the social and economic disorder brought about by World War I helped the Nazis rise to power in Germany. In 1937, Adolf Hitler declared the Treaty of Versailles void and began aggressively annexing parts of the European continent. Europe’s attempts to appease him, most notably at Munich in 1938, failed, as Nazi Germany swallowed up Austria and Czechoslovakia by 1939. Italy was on the march as well, invading Albania in April of 1939. The straw that broke the camel's back, however, was Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1 of that year. Two days later, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany, and World War II had begun in earnest. Of course, as most people now know, the invasion of Poland was merely the preface to the Nazi blitzkrieg of most of Western Europe, which would include Denmark, Belgium, and France by the summer of 1940. The resistance put up by these countries is often portrayed as weak, and the narrative is that the British stood alone in 1940 against the Nazi onslaught, defending the British Isles during the Battle of Britain and preventing a potential German invasion. In particular, the campaign in Poland is remembered as one in which an antiquated Polish army was quickly pummeled by the world’s most modern army. Polish lancers charging in a valiant yet idiotic attack against German tanks is the only image from the 1939 Nazi-Soviet invasion of Poland remaining in the popular imagination today. Originating as a piece of Nazi propaganda, paradoxically adopted by the Poles as a patriotic myth, the fictional charge obscures the actual events of September 1939. Outnumbered, outgunned, and under-equipped, the Polish army nevertheless inflicted heavy losses on the invading Wehrmacht. In fact, only the unexpected advance of Soviet forces from the east put a quick end to the struggle and saw the Polish republic partitioned again after just 20 years of independence. Nonetheless, the campaign that started World War II was a bloody sign of things to come as the conflict engulfed the globe. The Nazi Invasion of Poland: The History of the Campaign that Started World War II chronicles the beginning of the war in Europe. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the invasion of Poland like never before, in no time at all.

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