

AUSTRIA

On 12th of March 1938 German troops marched into Austria to annex the German-speaking nation into the Third Reich. It was a blatant violation of the Versailles Treaty signed at the end of the First World War, which forbade the merger of both countries for fear of excessively strengthening Germany.

A map of Europe with the country of Austria highlighted in a solid red color. The word "Austria" is written in black text across the red area. The rest of the map shows the outlines of European countries in a light teal color.

Austria

AUSTRIA - NOT A VICTIM BUT HITLER'S COLLABORATOR

Are there words that could describe our feelings? Can the heart and eyes grasp the enthusiasm and joy, that after such a long absence the Fuhrer is back in our capitol?

Cried the Austrian radio commentator in Haldenplatz in Vienna¹.

FEBRUARY 1938 – in line with the country's pro-German sentiments the Chancellor of Austria, Kurt Schuschnigg, met with Adolph Hitler. The Chancellor pledged to hold a referendum on the annexation of Austria to Germany and the extension of power of the Austrian Nazis from the Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei Österreichs (DNSAPÖ) [German National-Socialist Workers Party of Austria].

MARCH 1938 – Hitler without waiting for the referendum, ordered the German army to march into Austria; and majority of Austrians enthusiastically received their German brothers.

APRIL 1938 – Austria, with the approval of the Austrian people, who historically and linguistically were a part of the German nation, merged into the German Third Reich. The Austrian administration was absorbed into the administration of the German Third Reich. The Austrian government and the Austrian people accepted as their own rulers, the German National-Socialist Workers Party of Austria – Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei Österreichs (DNSAPÖ), which joined the structures of the Third Reich. With the merger of Austria with Germany, the Austrian armed forces became part of the joint German-Austrian army of the German Third Reich. The Austrians joined the army of the Third Reich contributing 22 divisions and 12 spare regiments². Austrians provided the German Reich, the majority of the architects and executors of crimes committed during their fascist terror:

- Adolph Hitler was born and raised in the Austro-Hungarian Empire;
- Proportionally to the population, the Austrians constituted the largest group among concentration camp staff, extermination camps and in senior positions in the SS;

¹ Sławomir Szof, „Anschluss Austrii” – audycja z cyklu „Dźwiękowy przewodnik po historii najnowszej – Niemcy. Polskie Radio 1998.

² Encyklopedia II wojny światowej. Warszawa 1975, s. 47; Czesław Madajczyk, *Faszyzm i okupacja 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1984.



Hitler announces Anschluss (annexation) of Austria in Heldenplatz (Heroes' Square), Vienna on 15th March 1938
(Photo: Wikipedia/bundesarchiv/creative commons)

CROATIA

Support for Hitler:

Volunteers: 74,000

Including 20,000 volunteers for the SS



On December 1, 1918, the kingdoms of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS) were created on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the former European possessions of the Turks and in 1929 adopted the name Yugoslavia. On 6 April 1941 the Third German Reich invaded Yugoslavia. On 10 April 1941 Croatia announced its independence and became an independent state under the protectorate of Germany. Within days, the new state joined the Pact of Three, declaring war on Britain and became Hitler's ally.

MILITARY COLLABORATION

Prior to World War II, pro-German fascist (Ustase) were operating in Croatia under the command of Ante Pavelic, who assumed power in Croatia after independence. It is estimated that from 1941 to 1945 the Ustase of Ante Pavelic could have murdered between 500,000 and a million people. More than half of their victims were Serbs⁸.

Croatian volunteers: SS – 20,000 (13 Volunteer Bosnia-Herzegovina Mountain Divisions; Croatian One; a division of European Muslims with local Volksdeutsch and Catholic Croats, who incidentally wore Muslim fez hats instead of traditional hats, and adopted the name of the 13th Mountain Division of the SS Handschar, that is derived from the Croatian word *handzar* meaning Turkish saber. Wehrmacht: around 20,000 volunteers in three Croatian infantry divisions. In addition, approximately 32,000 volunteers served in the police forces of the Third Reich and 1,800 in the Italian army⁹.

The Third Reich was also supported by two volunteer Croatian fighter formations, a bomber squadron and 350 soldiers of the Croatian Maritime Legion in Kriegsmarine.

THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EXTERMINATION OF JEWS

In 1941, about 35,000 to 40,000 Jews lived within the borders of the independent state of Croatia. By April 1941, Croatia had already introduced a racial law on purity of blood that ordered the Jews to wear a band with the Star of David and thus defined Jews in racial terms. Uniquely however, Jews who were in mixed marriages and so-called half-Jews qualified as so-called honorary Aryans, and were not included in this group. They were treated more gently and did not suffer persecution. The next stage of anti-Jewish policy in the country came with the expulsion of Jews from the cities into concentration camps. At the beginning

of June 1941, the Danica and Krušica camps were established in Croatia, where communists, political prisoners and Jews were deported. In the autumn of 1941, the Jasenovac-Stara Gradiška extermination camp was established and became known as the "Yugoslav Auschwitz". Some 19,000 Croatian Jews were murdered there. In August 1942, a mass deportation of about 5,000 Croatian Jews began. They were transported to German-Austrian extermination centers built by the Third Reich in [Translator's note – German occupied] Poland, primarily to KL Auschwitz. In May 1943, another deportation was carried out. Following these deportations, the only Jews remaining in Croatia, were those who qualified as honorary Aryans, or those who were recognized as important to the Croatian state and bearing a special letter. In total, around 39,000 Croatian Jews perished during World War II; three quarters, approximately 30,000, were murdered by the Croatian Ustase of Ante Pavelic¹⁰. It is estimated that around only seven to nine thousand Jews survived the war.

PUNISHMENT FOR HELPING JEWS

The penalty for hiding Jews was not specified.

END OF THE WAR

After the end of the war on May 9th 1945, Croatia was incorporated back into Yugoslavia. Josip Broz Tito, a Croatian, became the head of the new state. Croatia however lost its independence and found itself in the communist bloc. Croatia did not regain its independence until 1991, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc in 1989.



Soldiers of the Croatian Muslim formation Waffen-SS Handschar (Fot. Wikipedia/Domena publiczna)

⁸ Wojciech Rodak, *Ustaszę i Ante Pavelić. Wszystkie zbrodnie chorwackich faszystów*, „Nasza Historia, Warszawa, 15 października 2019.

⁹ Chris Bishop, *Zagraniczne formacje SS – Zagraniczni ochotnicy w Waffen-SS 1940-1945*, Warszawa 2005, s. 99-104.

¹⁰ Wojciech Rodak, *Ustaszę...*

Chapter III

**HITLER'S COLLABORATORS
AMONGST THE
OCCUPIED COUNTRIES**



ALBANIA

Support for Hitler:

7,000 volunteers in SS

1,000 as part of the Albanian militia Vullnetara

Albania

A map of Europe with the country of Albania highlighted in red. The rest of the map is in a light teal color. A red-bordered box in the upper left contains text about Albanian support for Hitler. The word 'Albania' is written in black text with a horizontal line underneath it, positioned to the left of the red-highlighted country.

ITALIAN OCCUPATION

On April 7 1939, in breach of international obligations, the Italians occupied Albania and overthrew the Albanian King Zogu I, who had fled to Greece. On April 16 1939, the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III, proclaimed himself King of Albania. After 1941, part of Kosovo and Chameria were incorporated into the Albanian protectorate.

GERMAN-AUSTRIAN OCCUPATION

From September 10 1943, after the capitulation of Italy, Albania was occupied by German and Austrian troops. There was a strong resistance movement, especially the communist one.

ADMINISTRATIVE COLLABORATION

During the years 1939-43, Albania formed an integral part of Italy. After the occupation of Albania by the Germans and Austrians, the Albanian administration began to cooperate with the occupiers.

POLITICAL COLLABORATION

After the occupation of Albania in 1943, the Germans and Austrians established a puppet Albanian government with the police and the army. The fascist National Union (*Balli Kombetar*) was active in Albania.

MILITARY COLLABORATION

After the occupation of Kosovo in 1943, the Germans and the Austrians organized a paramilitary militia called *Vulnetara* consisting of 1,000 Albanians. Its task was ethnic cleansing aimed at Jews, Serbs, Gypsies and people of other nationalities. 7,000 Albanian volunteers served in the 21st Mountain Division of *Waffen-SS Skanderbeg* (1st Albanian); the core of the formation was a reinforced battalion of about 300 Albanians who had previously served in the 13th SS Division. The Albanian division gained notoriety. Most of the Albanians serving in the SS did not want to fight for the Germans and Austrians. From the beginning, they were primarily occupied with the massacres of the Serb population in Kosovo and Metochia. The purpose of these massacres was to expel or murder the non-Albanian population living in Western Macedonia, ensuring there are no Jews, Serbs or Gypsies, and create an ethnically and religiously pure and homogeneous [Muslim] Greater Albania.



Albanians in *Waffen-SS Skanderbeg*

THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EXTERMINATION OF JEWS

About 500 Jews lived in Albania before the war. After Kosovo and parts of Macedonia were incorporated into Albania in April 1941, the number of Jews increased significantly (refugees from Macedonia, Serbia, Germany, Austria and Poland). The occupation of Albania by the Third Reich in November 1943 changed the position of the Jews, whose number is estimated at 800-2,000. It is estimated that several hundred Albanian Jews survived the war in hiding.

PUNISHMENT FOR HELPING JEWS

There were no regulations penalizing helping Jews.

END OF THE WAR

In November 1944 the Germans and Austrians and shortly thereafter also the Greek partisans stationed in the country left Albania¹⁴.

¹⁴ Andrew S., Williamson G., *German Mountain Ski Troops 1939-45*, Oxford 2001; Andrew S., Williamson G., *The Waffen SS* (3) 11. to 23. Divisions, Oxford 2004; Bishop Ch., *Zagraniczne formacje SS, Zagraniczni ochotnicy w Waffen SS w latach 1940-45*, Warszawa 2006; Blond P. W., *Siepacze Hitlera, Oddziały SS do zwalczania partyzantki*, Warszawa 2008; Czekalski T., *Albania*, Warszawa 2003; Koreski A., *Albania. Krótki zarys dziejów*, Warszawa 1988; Piekalkiewicz J., *Wojna na Bałkanach 1940-45*, Warszawa 2008.

A map of Europe and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is highlighted in red. A semi-transparent red box is overlaid on the map, containing text. The text reads: "RUSSIANS AND NATIONS OF THE USSR" in large, bold, red capital letters. Below this, in smaller black text, it says "Support for Hitler: Ca. 800,000 volunteers". The label "Soviet Union" is written in black text on the red area of the map.

RUSSIANS AND NATIONS OF THE USSR

*Support for Hitler:
Ca. 800,000 volunteers*

Soviet Union

In August 1939, Stalin signed trade agreements with Hitler that allowed the exchange of military technology and equipment to the Soviets to provide the Germans and Austrians with a Soviet raw materials and food. In the period September 1939 – June 1941, Stalin provided Hitler with: 1.6 million tons of grain; 900,000 tons of kerosene; 200,000 tons of cotton; 140,000 tons of manganese; 200,000 tons of phosphates; 20,000 tons of chrome ore; 18,000 tons of rubber; 100,000 tons of soybeans; 500,000 tons of iron ore; 300,000 tons of scrap and iron crude; 2,000 tons of platinum. Trade between Stalin and Hitler was so great that in October 1940, it reached 80% of the total imports into Germany and Austria. By June 1941, it had not fallen below 50%. However, the transport of Soviet food and raw materials ceased with Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union; the last trains carrying Soviet goods crossed the border a few days before the attack by the Third Reich. The rapid conquest of Europe by Hitler's troops in 1939-1941, would not have been possible without the food and raw material support of the Soviet Union³⁴.

COUNTRY OCCUPIED FROM

22 June 1941.

DEFENSIVE FIGHT

The Soviet Union fought from June 1941 to May 8, 1945.

CAPITULATION

The Soviet Union did not sign the surrender.

Collaboration at the administrative level

The Third Reich introduced its own administration in the occupied territories of the Soviet republics.

POLITICAL COLLABORATION

Due to the terrible living conditions in the Soviet States under Stalin, the Soviet peoples surrendered en masse to the Germans and Austrians; 3 million people therefore, found themselves in German-Austrian captivity.

MILITARY COLLABORATION

The Third Reich made the decision to utilize the Soviet prisoners of war in their army. The Russians and representatives from all the nations of the USSR, estimated at 800,000 to one million soldiers, fought alongside Hitler in the following formations:

Hiwis units (volunteer helpers) serving as orderlies, workers and drivers from the fall of 1941.

Szumas self-defense units, from the turn of 1941/42; they were eventually reorganized into regular police forces. They fought at the front and collaborated in mass executions.

The Osttruppen Volunteer Units were formed by nations that lived in Russian and Soviet captivity. Volun-

teers fought against the Soviets, hoping to regain the freedom of their nations. They wore the uniforms of the Third Reich, guarded communication lines, fought partisans, but sometimes also defended German position on the front lines. Osttruppen were organized according to ethnicity. Among the Osttruppen units, two categories were distinguished: Ost-Bataillonen, in which Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians served, and Turk-Bataillonen, in which representatives from the Asiatic republics served, including Kalmyk's and Turkmen.

RONA – The Russian National Liberation Army (Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Narodnaya Army). Founded by Bronislaw Kamiński near Bryansk, it was transformed into the 29th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division (1st Russian). In August 1944, Kamiński's RONA participated in the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising, committing particularly brutal crimes against Polish insurgents and the civilian population of Warsaw. Kamiński's fate is not fully understood. Some sources say that he died in an ambush organized by Polish partisans; others state that his crimes in Warsaw disturbed even the Germans and Austrians and he was shot by them.

SS Rodionowa (BSRN – Bojewoj Soyuz Ruskogo Naroda), the formation was established in April 1941, in Suwałki, Poland and was headed by the chief of staff of the Soviet 227 division pseud. "Rodionov"; it was a unit of about 500 soldiers that become part of the SS. In December 1942, a second Russian unit was formed under the command of NKVD Major E. Błażewicz. Both formations were combined into the Russian SS regiment under the command of "Rodionov". On August 16 1943, the regiment's soldiers destroyed the German officers' quarters and joined the Soviet partisans.

The Russian Nationalist National Army (RNNA Russkaja Nacjonalnaja Narodnaja Army) was formed in 1941, from Soviet prisoners of war and deserters. In 1942, it comprised 7,000 soldiers dressed in Soviet uniforms with tsarist insignia, believing themselves to be the nucleus of the Russian liberation army. The Germans and Austrians dismembered the formation and dressed it in their own uniforms. Many Russians then deserted and the unit was dissolved.

The Germans and Austrians formed numerous eastern legions (Ost-Legionen) from the Soviet prisoners of war. In May 1943, there were 10 regiments, 170 battalions, 221 companies and 11 independent platoons. These formations were created according to national identity: the Armenian Legion (Armenische Legion), the Azerbaijani Legion (Aserbeidschanische Legion), the Georgian Legion (Georgische Legion), the North Caucasian Legion (Nordkaukaschische Legion), the Turkmen-Kalkaschische Legion), Turkmen Legion

³⁴ Marcin Dobrowolski, *Jak ZSRR wykarmil III Rzeszę*, w: „Puls Biznesu”, Warszawa 19 sierpnia 2016.

A map of Europe with the country of Poland highlighted in a solid red color. A white callout box with a red border is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the map, containing the text 'POLAND' in a large, bold, red serif font, and 'Support for Hitler: 0' in a smaller, black, italicized serif font below it. The word 'Poland' is also written in a black sans-serif font directly on the red-colored territory of the country. The rest of the map shows the outlines of other European countries and the surrounding seas in a light teal color.

POLAND

Support for Hitler: 0

Poland

In accordance with the provisions of the secret protocol concluded on August 23 1939, between Hitler and Stalin, known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, The Third Reich and the Soviet Union decided to divide Poland among themselves.

INVASION OF POLAND BY GERMANS AND AUSTRIANS:

1 September, 1939 – World War II began.

SOVIET INVASION:

17 September, 1939

DEFENSIVE FIGHT

On September 8 1939, the Germans reached the middle Vistula and Warsaw. The Poles fought a murderous battle with the Germans on the Bzura River that relieved the capital. On September 17 1939, before the battle with Germany on the Bzura River had ended, the Red Army attacked Poland from the east. On September 28 1939, the Germans entered Warsaw. During October 2-5 1939, the last battle of the Polish defensive war took place near Kock. To maintain the continuity of the Polish State, part of the army and the Polish government left the country on September 17 1939 and went to France via Romania.

The last shots of the defensive war had not subsided when the Poles, under German-Bolshevik occupation, began a conspiratorial fight against the occupiers:

- On September 27 1939, the Polish Government in Exile was established in Paris (after the fall of France, it moved to London) to rule Poland and command the Polish army outside of Poland.
- On September 27 1939, Poles still residing in Poland, under the dual German, Soviet occupation began building the Polish Underground State, the structure of which consisted of underground political parties, underground administration, education and the underground army – the Polish Home Army. The head of the Polish Underground State was the Polish Government in exile. In the years 1939-1945, the underground Polish army – the Home Army, numbered 350,000 soldiers. Moreover, tens of thousands of Poles fought against both occupiers in other clandestine civil and military formations. The most significant of the Poles struggle for freedom occurred during the German retreat known as the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. The Uprising aimed to oust the German army and seize control of the city before the advancing Soviet army occupied it. [Translator's comment: *This was the single largest military effort taken by any European resistance movement during the war. Poles fought for 63 days however, their fight for freedom from the Germans and from the approaching Russians was abandoned by their western al-*

lies, who despite initial promises, did not support the fight as Poland was already 'given' by Roosevelt and Churchill to Stalin at the Yalta Conference].

Polish soldiers in Polish uniforms also fought with the Germans on all fronts of World War II:

- Throughout the war in the Mediterranean and in the Battle of the Atlantic.
- 1940 – Narvik: on the night of 27-28 May, with the participation of the Polish Podhale Rifle Brigade, the Allies recaptured the Norwegian port of Narvik from Germany. Polish ships: "Błyskawica", "Sobieski", "Batory" and "Burza", as well as the destroyer "Grom" and the motor ship "Chrobry" also fought off the coast of Norway.
- 1940 – Defense of France: on the eve of the German invasion, the Polish Army in France numbered over 80,000. Soldiers: 1. Gen. Bronisław Duch's 1st Grenadier Division fought in Lorraine; The 2nd Division of Foot Rifles of General Bronisław Prugar-Ketling stopped the Germans at St. Hippolyte and Maich; The 10th Armored Cavalry Brigade of General Maczek fought from June 14 in Champagne; The Independent Podhale Rifle Brigade defended the so-called Breton bastion; 150 Polish pilots shot down over 50 German planes; Polish Navy ships covered the evacuation of Allied forces and Polish merchant ships transported soldiers and civilians to British ports.

On 6 June 1940, in the face of the collapse of France, Polish General Sikorski agreed with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill that Great Britain would help in the evacuation and would also accept the entry of the government of the Republic of Poland and the Polish Army. In May and June 1940, over 17,000 Polish soldiers were transported across the English Channel.



Pilots of the Polish 303 Squadron, 1940.
(Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Chapter VII

NEUTRAL STATES
1939–1945



NEUTRAL STATES



Lichtenstein

Andorra

Vatican

