

WHY DID HITLER INVADE RUSSIA?

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Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Barbarossa

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Why Did Hitler Invade Russia?

As early as 1925, Hitler made his intentions clear in *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle"). He would invade the Soviet Union, asserting that the German people needed *Lebensraum* ("living space", i.e. land and raw materials) and that these should be sought in the east.

Nazi racial ideology cast the Soviet Union as populated by "untermenschen" ethnic Slavs ruled by their "Jewish Bolshevik" masters. *Mein Kampf* said Germany's destiny was to turn "to the East" as it did "six hundred years later" and "the end of the Jewish domination in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a State."

Thereafter, Hitler spoke of an inescapable battle against "pan-Slav ideals", in which victory would lead to "permanent mastery of the world", though he said they would "walk part of the road with the Russians, if that will help us." Accordingly, it was Nazi stated policy to kill, deport or enslave the Russian and other Slavic populations and repopulate the land with Germanic peoples.

Operation Barbarossa

Operation Barbarossa (German: *Unternehmen Barbarossa*) was the code name for Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union during World War II that began on 22 June 1941. Over 4.5 million troops of the Axis powers invaded the USSR along a 2,900 km (1,800 mile) front. Planning for Operation Barbarossa started on 18 December 1940; the secret preparations and the military operation itself lasted almost a year, from spring 1940 to winter 1941.

Barbarossa's operational goal was to effect a rapid conquest of the European part of the Soviet Union west of a line connecting the cities of Arkhangelsk and Astrakhan, often called the A-A line.

At its end in January 1942, the Red Army had repelled the Wehrmacht's strongest blow. Hitler had not achieved the expected victory, but the Soviet Union's situation remained dire. Tactically, the Germans had won some resounding victories and occupied some of the most important economic areas of the country, mainly in Ukraine. Despite these successes, the Germans were pushed back from Moscow, and they could never mount an offensive simultaneously along the entire strategic Soviet-German front again.

Operation Barbarossa's failure led to Hitler's demands for further operations inside the USSR, all of which eventually failed, such as continuing the Siege of Leningrad, Operation Nordlicht, and Battle of Stalingrad, among other battles on the occupied Soviet territory.

Operation Barbarossa is still the largest military operation, in terms of manpower, area traversed, and casualties, in human history. Its failure was a turning point in the Third Reich's fortunes. Most importantly, Operation Barbarossa opened up the Eastern Front, which became the biggest theater of war in world history.

Operation Barbarossa and the areas that fell under it became the site of some of the largest battles, deadliest atrocities, highest casualties, and most horrific conditions for Soviets and Germans alike - all of which influenced the course of both World War II and the 20th century history.

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