



Periods

- 📅 9000 BC-ca 1200. Prehistoric Estonia
- 📅 ca 1200-1558. Estonian middle ages
- 📅 1558-1710. Estonia under Swedish rule
- 📅 1710-1850. The Baltic Landesstaat
- 📅 1850-1914. National awakening
- 📅 1914-1920. The First World War and Estonian independence
- 📅 1920-1939. The Republic of Estonia between the two World Wars
- 📅 **1939-1945. Estonia and World War II**
 - Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and Soviet military bases
 - Soviet occupation and takeover of Estonia in 1940
 - German invasion of Estonia in 1941
 - German occupation in Estonia 1941-1944**
 - The Red Army invasion of Estonia in 1944
 - External links
- 📅 1945-1985. The Soviet Period
- 📅 1985-1991. Restoration of independence

German occupation in Estonia 1941-1944

Germany had no intention of restoring the independence of the countries occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940. The Baltic countries and Belarus were now subjected to civilian occupation power. Four general commissariats were united into one state commissariat, Ostland, which in turn was answerable to the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, headed by Alfred Rosenberg. The laws valid before 20 June 1940 were restored if they were in compliance with German laws. The local administrative body operated at the general commissariat level - the [Estonian Self-Administration](#) headed by Hjalmar Mäe. The reasons for the relatively relaxed occupation regime in Estonia, compared with, for example, Latvia, include the fierce anti-Soviet sentiments of the Estonians, their higher standing in the German 'race table', the closeness of Finland, the civil and military double power, and the fact that Estonia was a strategically important rear area, a purveyor of agricultural products, and the producer of oil shale. Oil shale became increasingly important as Germany's fuel deposits fell into the hands of the enemy.

Political repression in the occupied territories, including Estonia, was supervised by Heinrich Himmler's SS and police system. The German security police in Estonia were established on the basis of the *Einsatzgruppe A Sonderkommando 1a*, who arrived here together with the *Wehrmacht*. The Estonian security police were subservient to their German counterpart. By early 1942, all of the one thousand [Jews still in Estonia were exterminated](#). Along with the Estonian Jews, about 8000 other Estonian citizens were killed. The main non-racial accusation was cooperation with the Soviet regime (participation in the crimes of the Soviet regime, simply belonging to the Communist Party, etc). In the course of the German occupation, other Jews brought to the concentration camps in Estonian territory from elsewhere in Europe were killed there, a total of 7500-7800 people. Among those who arrested and killed Jews were Estonians serving in the German secret police and army. In addition, about one third of the approximately 45,000 war prisoners held in Estonia perished, mostly due to exhaustion and epidemics.

There was no guerrilla movement in Estonia comparable to that in France or in the Balkans. For the majority of the Estonian population, enemy number one was the Soviet Union, which had destroyed their independent statehood and local national elite, as well as eliminating private ownership and previous social relations. The activity of the [Soviet partisans](#) despatched to Estonia was thus insignificant. They managed a few acts of disruption, but because of the population's anti-Soviet sentiments, most of them tried to simply hide at their relatives', were quickly captured or gave themselves up voluntarily. The national resistance movement that emerged among the intelligentsia and aspired to restore independence became much more widespread. After people lost hope in autumn 1941 that the Germans were going to restore Estonia's independence, and after the declaration of the Atlantic Charter, they directed their efforts towards the Western countries. The pre-war acute political discord between the pro-government people and those supporting opposition parties was overcome in early 1944, when the last Prime Minister, [Jüri Uluots](#), cooperated with the underground [National](#)



HJALMAR MÄE GIVING A SPEECH

RELATED ITEMS

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- 📄 The Estonian soldiers in World War II in three different uniforms
- 📄 Holocaust in Estonia
- 📄 National resistance to the German occupation in Estonia 1941-1944
- 📄 Attempt to restore Estonian independence in 1944

[Committee of the Republic of Estonia](#). Despite their anti-German orientation, the national resistance movement considered it essential to oppose the invading Red Army. In September 1944, when the Germans were leaving, Prime Minister Jüri Uluots, acting as President, formed the government headed by [Otto Tief](#). After Estonia was occupied by the Red Army, the members of the resistance movement were arrested and sent to prison camps.

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German invasion of Estonia in 1941

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The Red Army invasion of Estonia in 1944

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