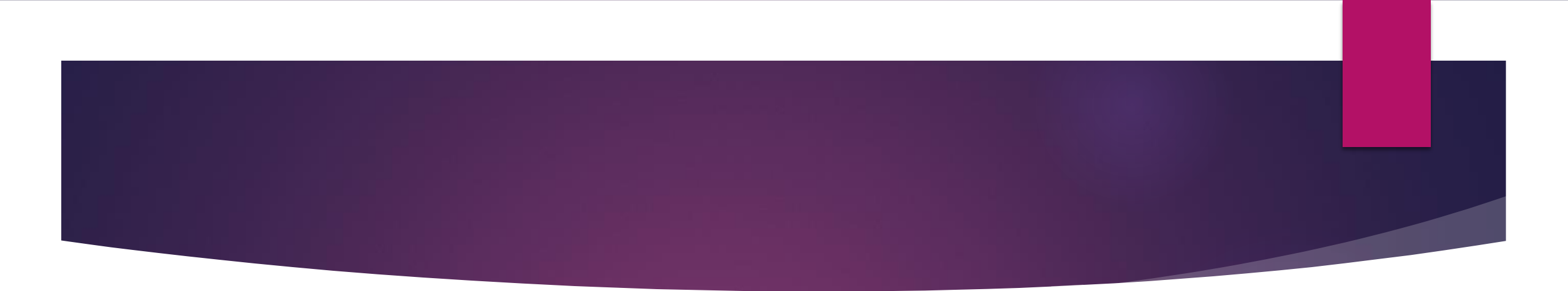


International situation of Poland before WWII and the September Campaign of 1939

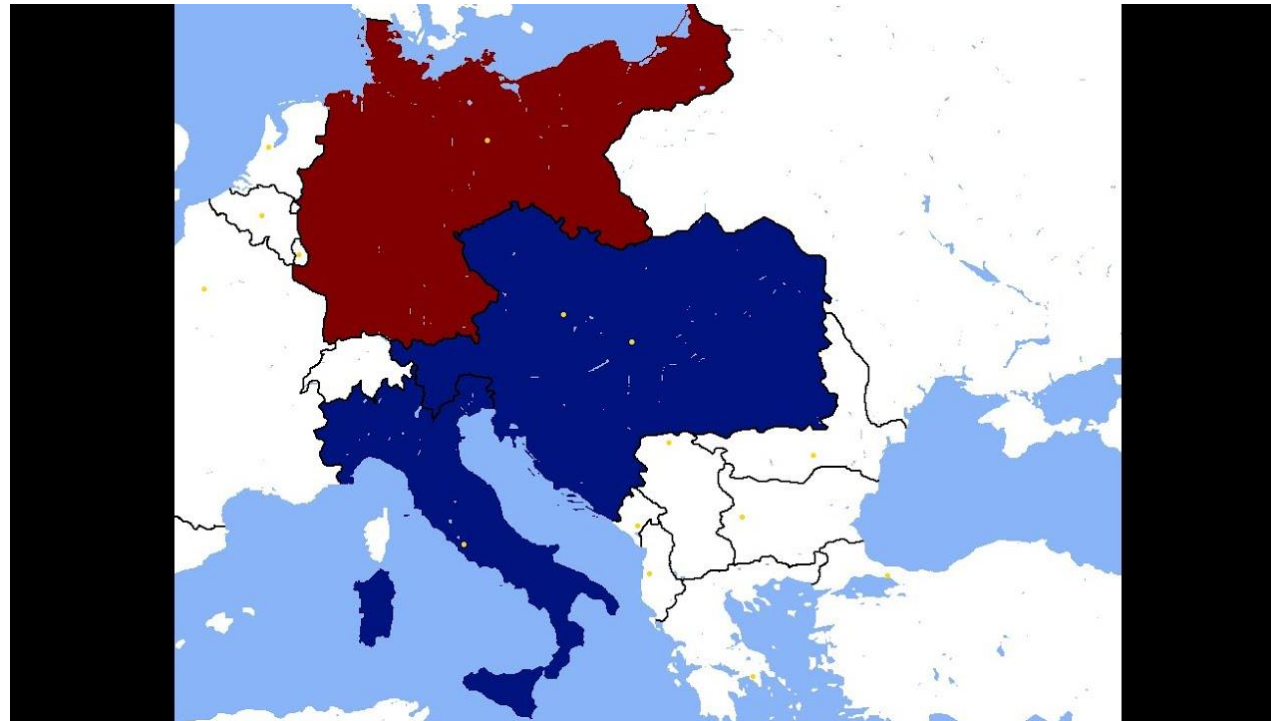
PROF. RADOSŁAW DOMKE

Hitler's rise to power



- 
- ▶ At the very beginning, Germany made no claims.
 - ▶ Over time, Hitler began to talk more and more boldly about revising the Treaty of Versailles.
 - ▶ Already in *Mein Kampf* he wrote about the living space for Germans in the East.
 - ▶ Poland began to be called the bastard of the Treaty of Versailles.

German revisionism



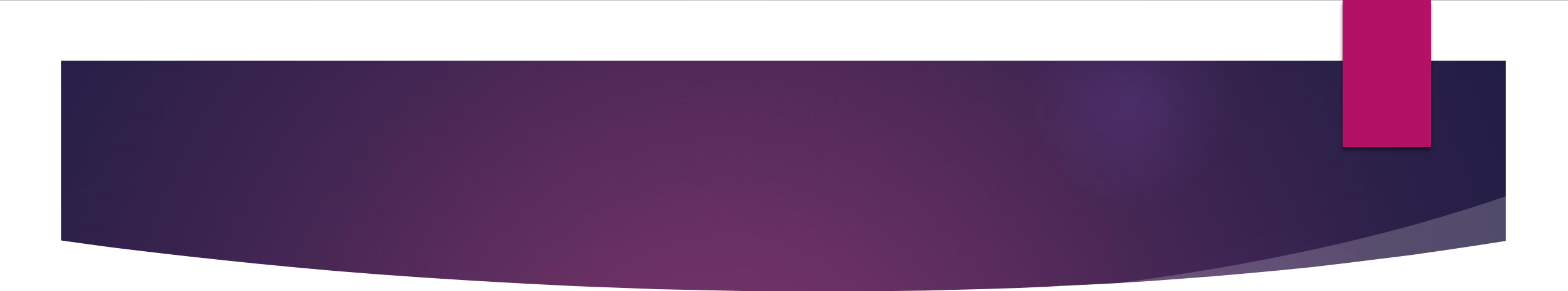
Annexation of Zaolzie (in propaganda „regained territories” for the first time)





Demands towards Poland



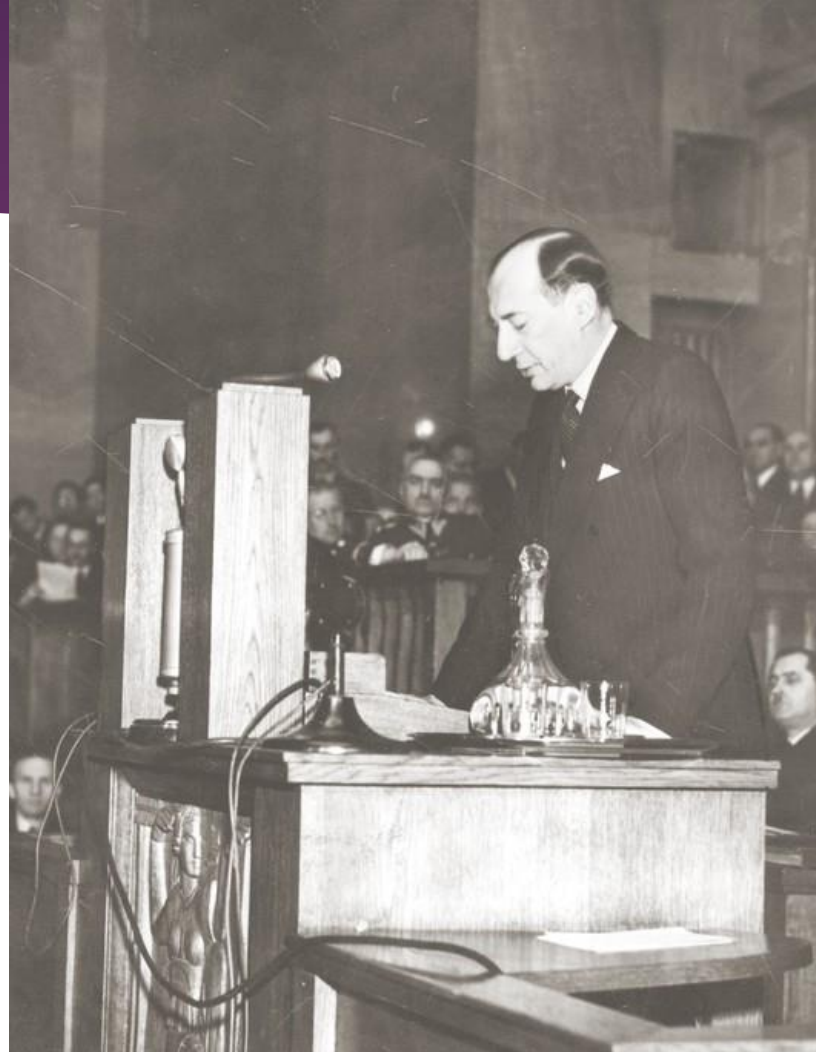
- 
- ▶ After several years of neutrality in mutual relations in 1934-1938, the Third Reich tightened its policy towards Poland
 - ▶ In October 1938, three demands were made:
 - ▶ Extraterritorial highway and railway line, Annexation of the Free City of Gdańsk to the Reich, Poland's accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact.
 - ▶ All demands were rejected by Poland.

Polish-Hungarian border (III 1939)



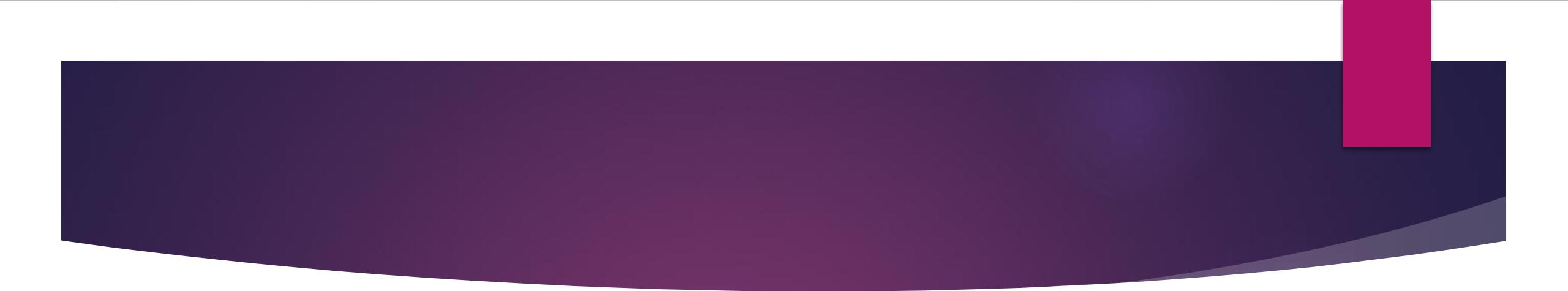
Speech by Józef Beck on May 5, 1939

- ▶ “Peace is a precious and desirable thing. Our generation, bloodied in wars, certainly deserves a period of peace. But peace, like almost all things in this world, has its price, high but measurable. We in Poland do not know the concept of peace at any cost. There is only one thing in the lives of people, nations and countries that is priceless. That thing is honor.”





Ribbentrop-Molotov Treaty



- 
- ▶ On August 23, 1939, a pact was signed in Moscow which included a secret protocol dividing Central Europe into two spheres of influence: German and Soviet.
 - ▶ Both sides wanted time to be able to secretly arm themselves
 - ▶ In this way, Hitler gained a hidden ally
 - ▶ The USSR pledged to go to war against Poland within two weeks of its outbreak
 - ▶ The German-Soviet agreement was de facto another partition of Poland

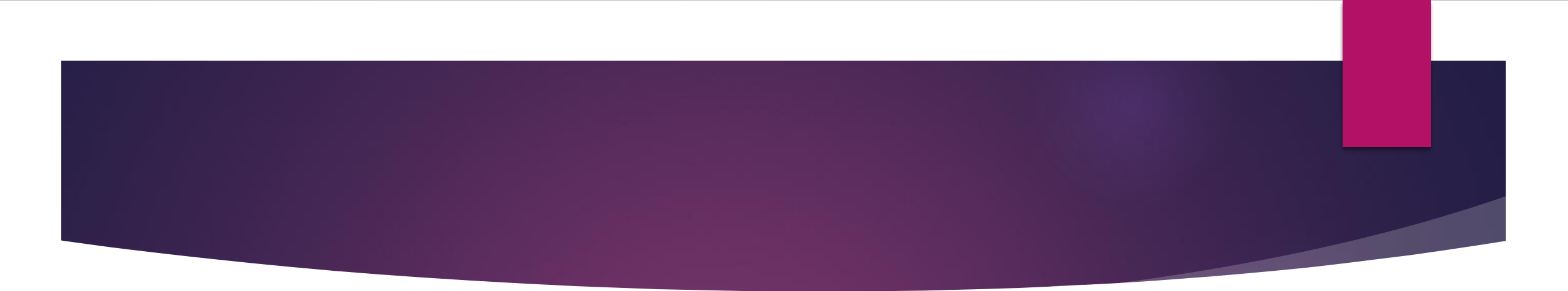
Planned division of Eastern Europe under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

-  Soviet zone of influence
-  German zone of influence







- 
- ▶ On September 28, another German-Soviet pact took place, correcting the common border.
 - ▶ This sanctioned the actual division of Poland between these two countries, which had already taken place

Gwarancje brytyjskie i mobilizacja armii

- ▶ On August 25, 1939, in London, the governments of Poland and Great Britain signed an alliance agreement. It did not save Poland in September 1939, but it forced Hitler into war with Great Britain - something he wanted to avoid at all costs. The arrangement was a development of the earlier British guarantees of March 1939.

Fallweiss

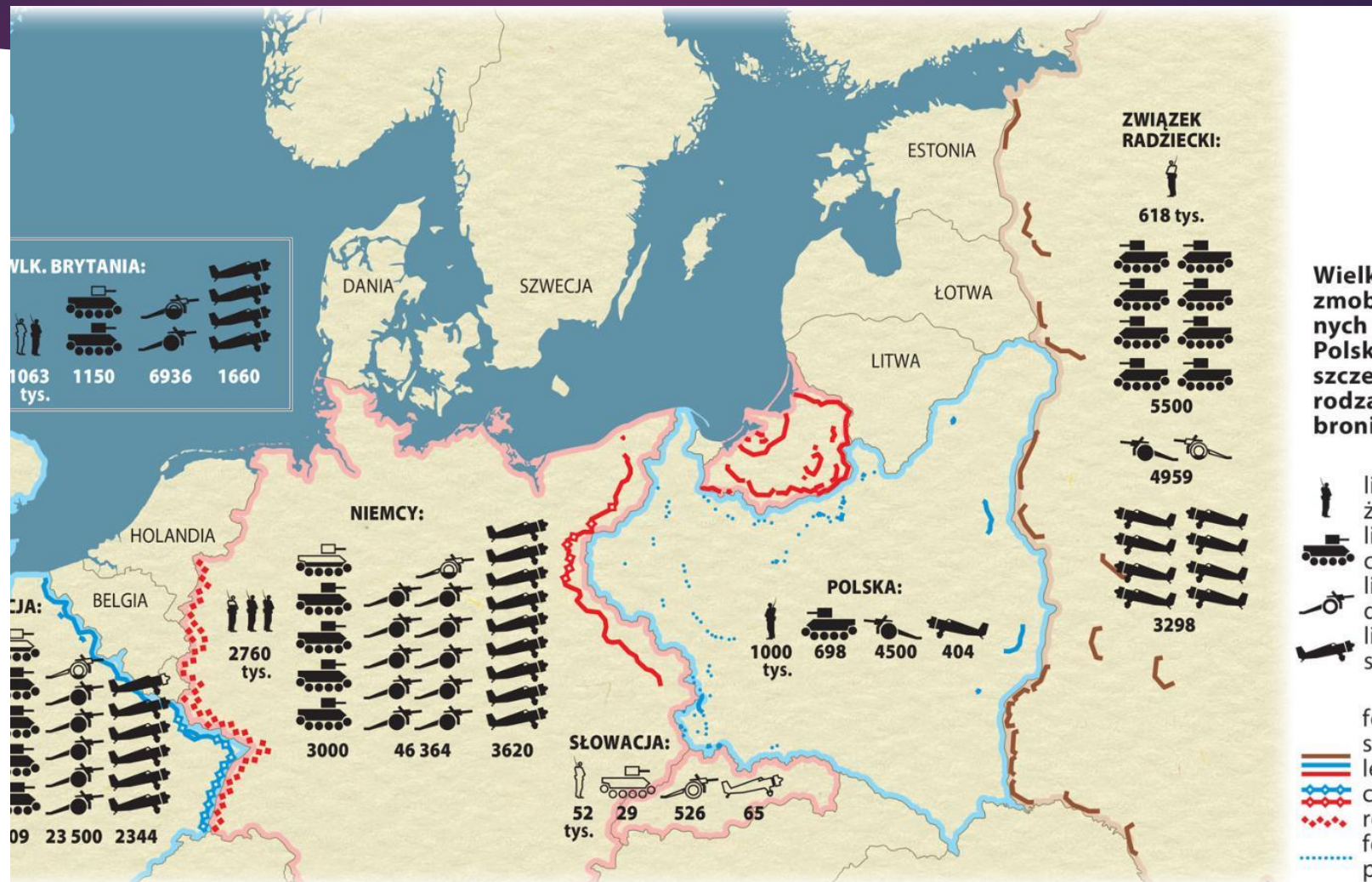
- ▶ On August 25, 1939, in London, the governments of Poland and Great Britain signed an alliance agreement. It did not save Poland in September 1939, but it forced Hitler into war with Great Britain - something he wanted to avoid at all costs.
- ▶ The plan was to quickly conquer Poland using blitzkrieg
- ▶ It was assumed that Poland would be conquered within 1-2 weeks

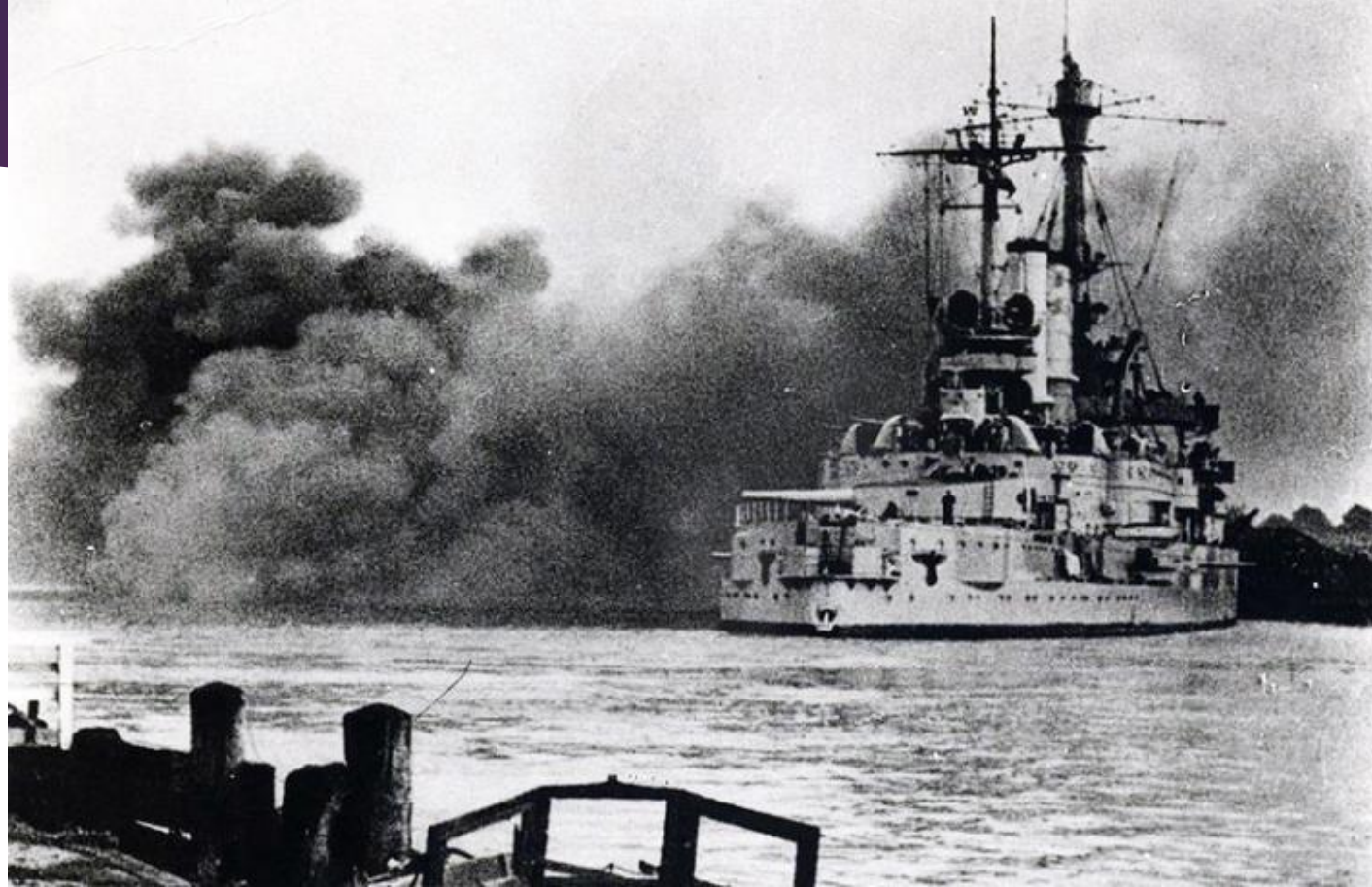
Gliwice provocation

- ▶ The provocation took place on Thursday, August 31, 1939, at 8 p.m. Attackers posing as Silesian insurgents were allowed into the building of the Gliwice radio station, located 10 km from the border with Poland. Earlier, on a personal telephone order from Heinrich Himmler, the radio station's security was removed and two policemen were sent there, one of whom let the attackers into the facility, and the other was arrested along with the radio station crew to make sure they did not act rashly.

German attack

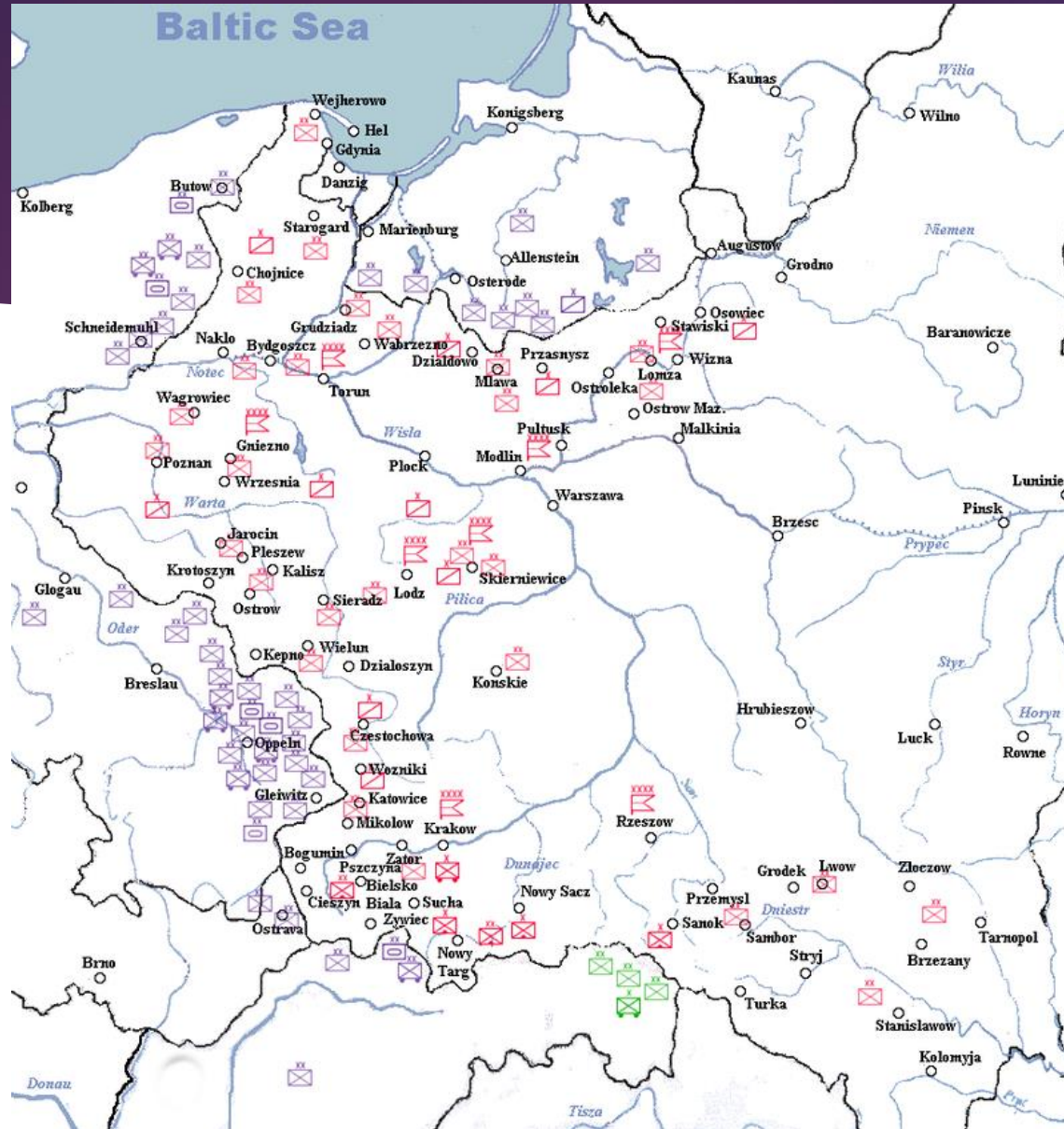
The balance of forces





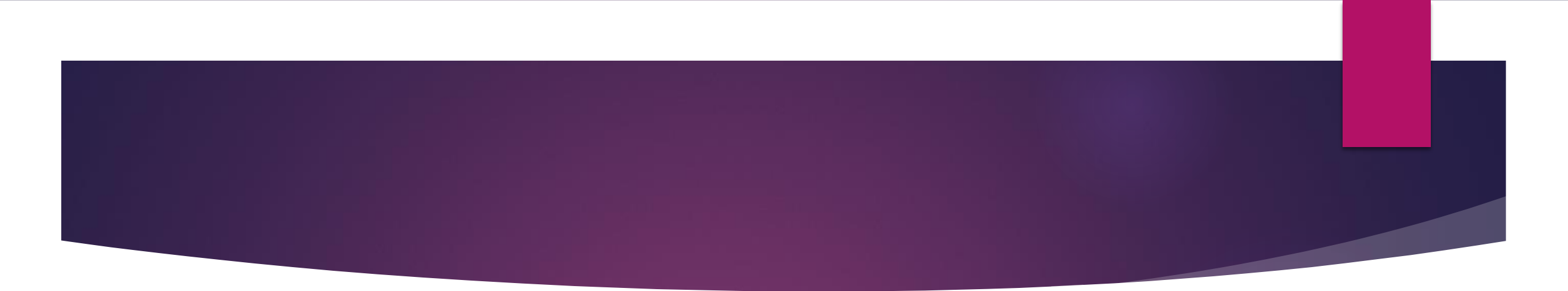
Battle for the borders





The nature of war 1939

- ▶ Germany's aggression against Poland was an extremely brutal war campaign in which war crimes were an everyday occurrence. The Wehrmacht - the army of National Socialist Germany - waged a war in violation of international conventions and with complete contempt for the enemy.

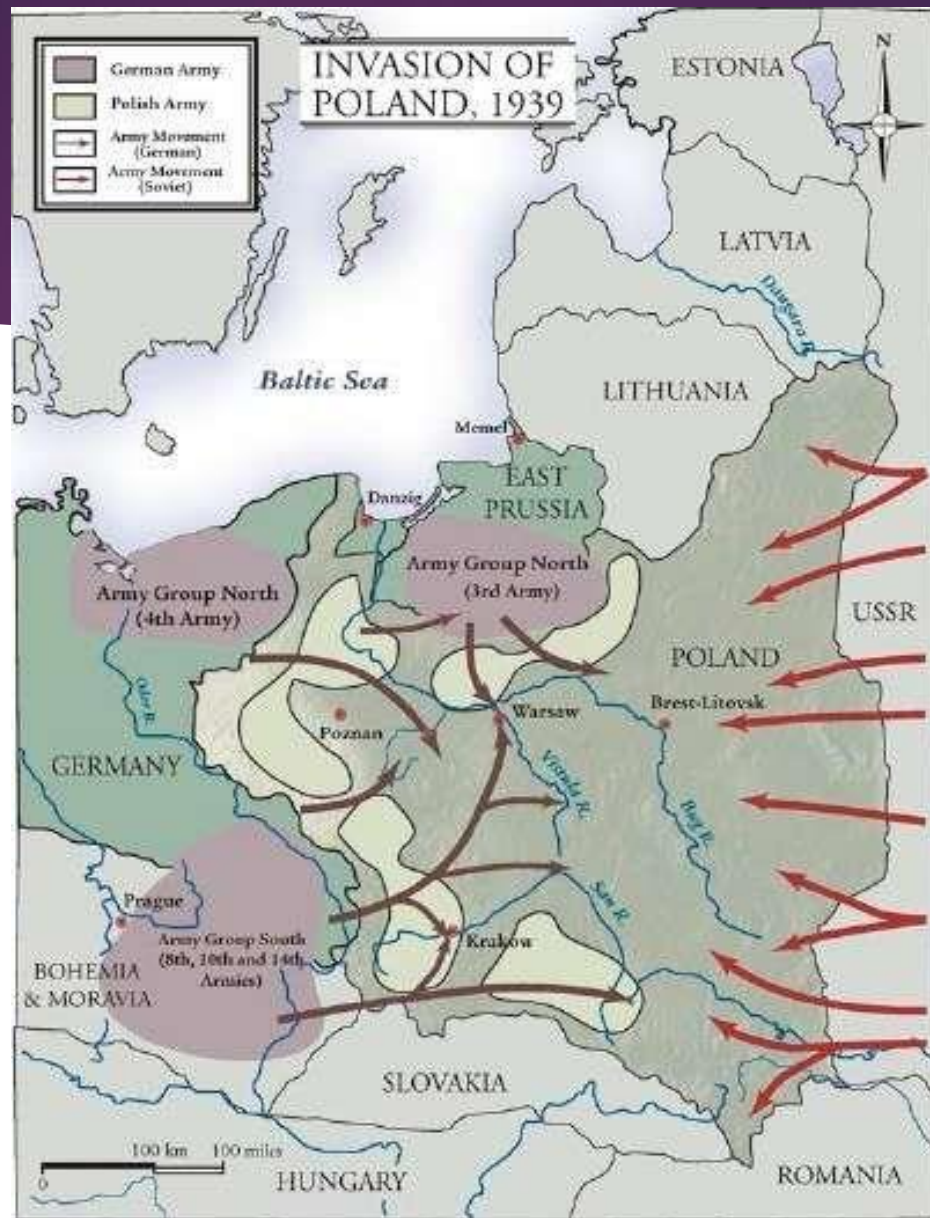
- 
- ▶ Residents of Gdynia arrested by the Germans in the first days of the occupation. Between September 14 and 30, 1939, a large-scale "purification operation" (German: Säuberungsaktion) was carried out in Gdynia, as a result of which nearly 2,500 people were arrested. Many of them were later murdered in Piaśnica or the Stutthof concentration camp.

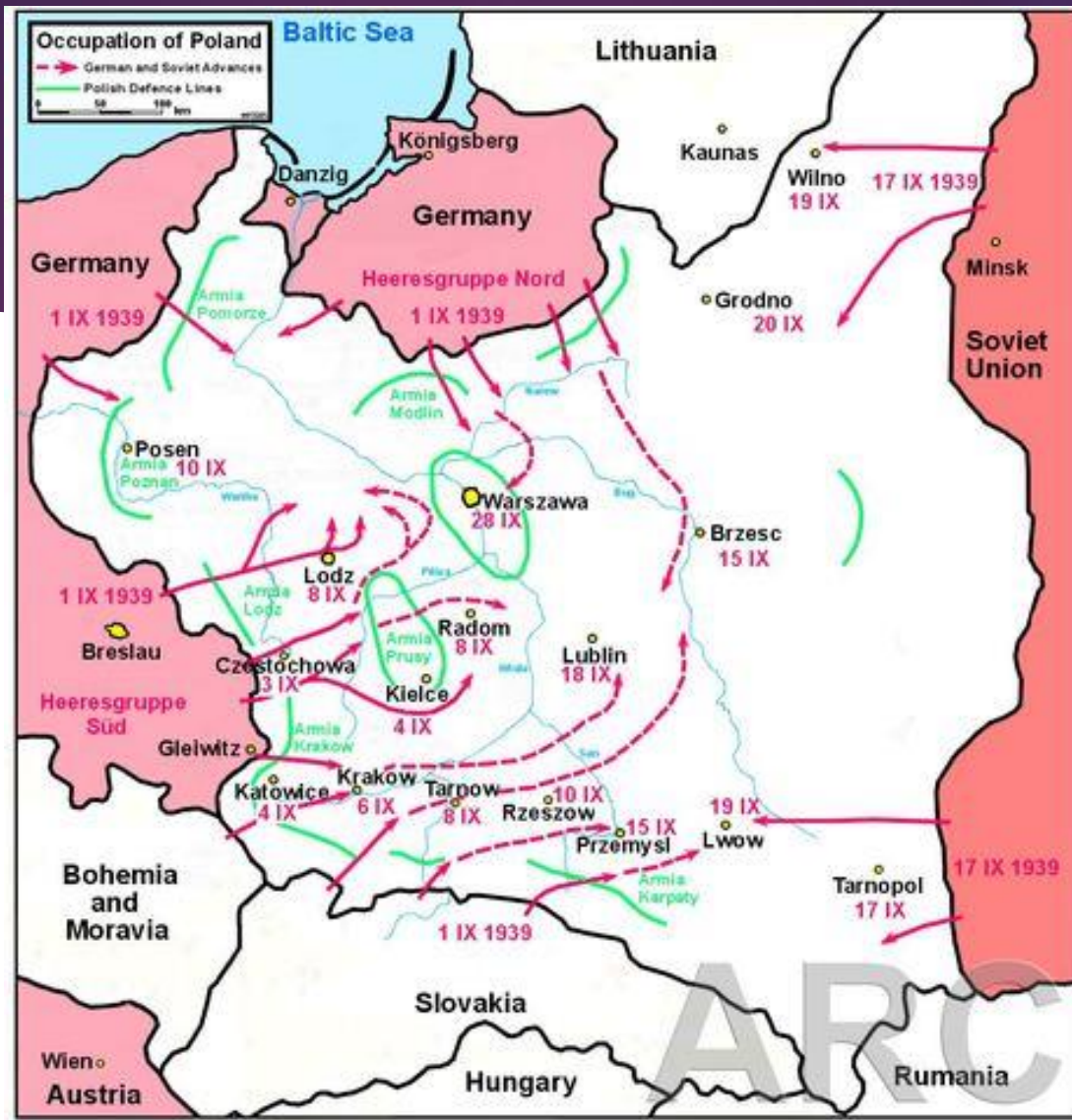
Sztutowo (Stutthof)



Maps of Poland's defensive war in 1939







ARC

Bitwa nad Bzurą



Soviet attack





Defense of Warsaw







Capitulation (6 X 1939)

- ▶ On October 6, the battle of Kock, the last battle of the September campaign, ended. The act of surrender was signed by General Franciszek Kleberg

Poland's defensive war of 1939 as a national symbol

- ▶ Westerplatte
- ▶ defense of the Gdańsk post office
- ▶ defense of Hel Peninsula
- ▶ defense of Warsaw
- ▶ „The 4th partition of Poland”
- ▶ betrayal of allies
- ▶ The myth of the long defensive war

What if...?

The end

