

Rising '44 by Norman Davies.  
Macmillan 2003.

For many Jews the Polish city of Warsaw is synonymous, in the context of the Second World War, with the words 'ghetto' and 'uprising'. Yet we forget all too easily in contemplating the suffering and Nazi genocide of Poland's Jewry, exemplified by the Warsaw Ghetto, and the suffering inflicted on them after the war by the Poles themselves, that the conflict itself began with the invasion of Poland and that the Germans reserved an especial cruelty for the treatment of their neighbour and its citizens.

In 1944, with the Soviet army on the advance and the Allies feeling a growing sense of confidence in victory over the Nazi menace, the Poles, in their fifth year of a brutal occupation, were encouraged to rise up against their enemies. In the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, the Poles seized the opportunity to punish the Germans with courage and ferocity, believing that their liberation was at hand. What the fighters of Warsaw, and those who supported their cause, failed to realize was that they were pawns in a much bigger game of global *realpolitik*, and in the end the Allies allowed them to be crushed by the German army. In the aftermath, Warsaw was almost completely razed to the ground.

This is the story that Professor Norman Davies so brilliantly tells in *Rising '44*, based on archive research and eye witness testimony - a story of heroism, self-sacrifice and betrayal. This is a piece of the jigsaw of the Second World War that has been ignored for decades, and it is worth reading to fill the gaps in one's knowledge and deepen one's appreciation of the still-after-nearly-sixty-years incredible barbarism of Nazi Germany.

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