

WESTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: INVASION

German troops in Paris, British Pathe, January 1st 1940

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[ITN/Source](#)

What is this source?

This source is an extract from a newsreel shown to British audiences in 1940.

The newsreel shows German troops moving into Paris, the capital of France. There are shots of tanks and motorbikes moving through the streets. German soldiers are shown climbing up the Eiffel tower.

What's the background to this source?

Britain and France declared war on Germany in 1939. The war went well for Germany at first. By May 1940 German troops had conquered Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium. British forces pulled out of France in June 1940. France surrendered on June 21st 1940.

A large number of Free French forces under General de Gaulle refused to accept this and remained in England until the D-Day invasions of 1944.

It's worth knowing that...

There was a long history of bitter rivalry between France and Germany and seeing German troops parading through Paris would have devastated the French.

It would also have been very worrying for the British public to see images like this. However, the British government generally felt it was sensible to let the public see images like this since people knew France had fallen. There was no point censoring a clip like this.

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What level of alert should Britain be on?

1. What famous landmarks in Paris can you see in the clip?
2. What clues do we get from this clip about German weapons and tactics?
3. Why would these scenes concern the British government planning Britain's defence?
4. What level of alert would you put Britain on as a result of studying this evidence?

Record your answer in your table you can always change your mind as you study other sources.