

WORLD AT WAR



EDITED BY DUNCAN HILL

WORLD

WAR



1914-1939

CLASSIC, RARE AND UNSEEN PHOTOGRAPHS

Daily Mail

'The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.' So said British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey on the eve of the Great War in 1914. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the event that plunged the continent into darkness for four long years, but it was merely the catalyst to a long-expected confrontation between Europe's two great power blocs. It had been 40 years since the major powers had taken to the battlefield, and there were many keen to show their might and mettle. The grim realities of trench warfare made a mockery of Germany's intention to deliver a speedy knockout blow to Britain and France, then look east to its Russian foe. This would be an attritional conflict marked by catastrophic loss of life, often for marginal territorial gain. Places such as Ypres, Verdun and the Somme would forever become bywords for industrial-scale slaughter.

Even as 'the war to end all wars' raged, Britain and Russia faced internal strife, too. 'England's extremity is Ireland's opportunity' was the mantra of Republican leaders, who wanted to unchain themselves from the Westminster yoke. When the country was partitioned in 1921, it didn't end the centuries-old 'Irish question', merely ushered in a new chapter. The Bolsheviks seized control in Russia in 1917, bringing an end to three centuries of tsarist rule. High ideals evaporated after Stalin took over; he proved a greater tyrant than any Romanov autocrat.

Spain was riven by civil war in the 30s, while Japan invaded China on a wave of nationalist feeling. Mussolini craved military glory, as well as insisting that the trains in Italy run on time. He invaded Abyssinia in 1935, thumbing his nose at the League of Nations, which offered little practical help to one of its member states. The many conflicts that took place around the globe between 1914 and 1939 showed that diplomacy was all too often incapable of arresting military and political ambition, and that the notion of collective security was just that: a noble idea.

*World at War: 1914-39* uses contemporaneous reports and photographs from the *Daily Mail* archives, including many eyewitness accounts, to show how the conflicts of that period developed, describing the key battles, tactical decisions and turning points that settled the outcome.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY

**Daily Mail**



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