

History Knowledge Organiser

Conflict and tension 1918 - 1939 Causes of WW2



Hitler was to blame

In Mein Kampf Hitler vowed to overturn Versailles and take Lebensraum (living space). This was the basis of his foreign policy and meant he would have to invade countries. This could start a war. He also vowed to make Germany strong again.

Hitler hated Communism and wanted to stop it by invading Russia which would start a war.

Appeasement

The policy of appeasement aimed to prevent another war and is linked particularly with Chamberlain. Many believe he made a mistake by trusting Hitler. Britain and France could have stopped Germany. Opportunities such as the Rhineland were missed and Chamberlain even worked with Hitler in Munich to give him the Sudetenland. This prompted the Nazi Soviet Pact.

Key dates

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| 1933 | Hitler leaves League of Nations disarmament conference |
| 1935 | Rearmament Rally |
| 7/3/1936 | Remilitarisation of the Rhineland |
| October 1936 | Rome-Berlin Axis |
| 12/3/1938 | Anschluss with Austria |
| Sep 1938 | Munich Agreement |
| 15/3/1939 | Hitler invades Czechoslovakia |
| 1939 | Nazi Soviet Pact |
| 1/9/1939 | Germany invaded Poland |
| 3/9/1939 | Britain declares war on Germany |

The failure of the League

Its structure and organisation made the League weak. Its lack of army meant it could not force nations to comply. Membership - countries could leave, the USA never joined and USSR and Germany were not allowed to join at first. Manchuria showed that the League was weak and would not deal with a member of the council. Abyssinia showed Britain and France undermine it.

The Nazi Soviet Pact

Stalin felt alienated by the Munich Agreement and this encouraged him to sign the pact even though he and Hitler hated each other. It was a truce to agree to share Poland. This would help Hitler avoid a war on two fronts and give him back up from the USSR. This made him more confident about invading Poland even though Britain and France had promised to protect them.

The Depression

The Wall Street Crash and subsequent depression made countries around the world look inwards and desperate to sort their own problems. This meant there was less international cooperation. Desperate people turned to extremist parties and Leaders including Hitler and Mussolini. The League also could not afford to put effective economic sanctions on aggressors.

Treaty of Versailles

By the 1930's many people believed that Germany had been treated too harshly including Britain. As a result they didn't stop the Anschluss. Germany had lost land to create new countries like Poland (also the USSR who wanted the land back) and Czechoslovakia. Hitler has promised to overturn the Treaty of Versailles and reunite all German speaking peoples in a greater Germany.

KEY VOCABULARY/ TERMS

significant, conclude, imply, attitude, contrast, overall, cooperate, furthermore, infer, bias, widespread, trigger
Communism, Mein Kampf, Lebensraum, Treaty of Versailles, Manchuria, Abyssinia, Depression, aggressors,
economic sanctions, international cooperation, appeasement, Nazi-Soviet Pact, Anschluss, dictators, extremist.