

OUTBREAK OF WAR IN EUROPE

1. Weakness of the league of the nations

The League of Nations was established by the Treaty of Versailles. It was hoped that it would usher in a new system of international relations, where nations would strive together for peace. The League did achieve some success in resolving conflicts in the 1920s. However, weakness in its structure and organisation, its association with the Treaty of Versailles, and a lack of commitment amongst the major powers severely affected its authority and credibility.

Failure of disarmament

- Disarmament was seen as the most effective step to prevent another world war and to establish world peace
 - > the League of Nations did not achieve this
- Successes achieved in this area were a result of individual major European powers, not the League of Nations
- Failure of disarmament meant that:
 - (i) Powerful countries still had military opportunities for war
 - (ii) Nothing to stop them from engaging in conflicts

Disarmament was seen as the most effective step in the desire to prevent another world war and to establish world peace. However, the League did not achieve much success in this area. Successes achieved in disarmament were the result of individual major European powers, and not the League. International relations were still being determined by powerful nations who acted on their own. The failure to achieve disarmament not only meant that power countries still had the military capacity for war, but also that there was nothing to stop them from engaging in conflicts.

Attempts at disarmament during the 1920s and 1930s

- Several attempts made at disarmament
- Major European powers were not always cooperative
 - > At times took matters into their own hands
 - ☐ E.g. Locarno treaties - negotiated by major powers, rather than the LON
- General unwillingness to disarm
 - > make country less able to defend itself against foreign attacks
- Major powers did not trust each other
 - > wanted to ensure national interests were protected

Example 1

- Washington Naval Conference (1921) was successful in limiting the size of the Navies of the major powers through setting the ratio of tonnage of capital ships:
 - >Parties involved: Britain, USA, Taiwan, France, Italy
 - Ratio of 5:5:3:1.67:1.67
- However, it was organised by the USA, who was not in the League of Nations.
- Negotiated outside the league

Example 2

- 1925 Locarno Treaties (1925) guaranteed Germany's respect of Belgian and French borders, the demilitarisation of the Rhineland, and the acceptance of the Weimar Government to settle any disputes.
- Parties involved: Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia
- Negotiations took place outside the control of the League

Conclusion

- Failure of disarmament showed importance of US involvement
 - >US was not a League member but commanded more respect than the League itself. (Weakened European Nations)
- Major powers such as Britain and France were weakened economically and militarily after World War 1 and the Great Depression.
 - >Did not want to lose out by fighting another war
 - >Did not want to be disadvantaged economically in their rebuilding process
- Their refusal to cooperate meant that no progress could be made by the League.
- Atmosphere of distrust grew among the major powers
 - >By 1930s, inability of powers to work together led to growing distrust and tension
 - >Led to the outbreak of World War 2

There were several attempts made at disarmament. The Washington Naval Conference of 1921 was one such example. However, the major European powers were not always cooperative. At times, they took matters into their own hands. The 1925 Locarno Treaties were also negotiated by the major powers themselves, rather than the League.

When the League attempted to organise a disarmament conference in 1926 and in the 1930s, the major powers refused to cooperate. There was a general unwillingness to disarm as it would make the country less able to defend itself against foreign attacks and conflicts. The major powers did not trust each other and wanted to ensure that they had the ability to protect their own national interests. The failure of disarmament also showed how important the involvement of the USA was. Though it was not a League member, the USA commanded much more respect than the League itself, which was made up of weakened European nations.

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The only two nations capable of enforcing the League's will were Britain and France. However, being severely weakened by World War 1 and later by the Great Depression of 1929, both nations saw their own national interests as more important than those of the League. Their refusal to reduce their armed forces and unwillingness that no meaningful progress could be made by the League towards disarmament. By the 1930s, the inability of the powers to trust each other and work towards disarmament contributed to a general atmosphere of distrust and tension which would eventually lead to World War 1.

The failure of the league: The Abyssinian Crisis 1935

Failure to intervene in the Abyssinian Crisis

- Served as prime example of ineffectiveness in maintaining world peace and resolving conflicts
- Would convince Hitler that the League would not stand in his way of his plans for expansion.

The League's failure to intervene in the Abyssinian Crisis in 1935 served as a prime example of its ineffectiveness in maintaining world peace and resolving conflicts. This incident would later convince Hitler that the League would not be able to stand in the way of his ambitious plans for expansion.

Implications of the Abyssinian Crisis

- By 1935-League suffered many blows to credibility
- Abyssinia had common borders with British colonies, much closer to Europe
- More reason for Britain and France to intervene when Italy invaded Abyssinia.
- **BUT** Britain and France were allies with Italy under the Stresa Front-did not want to make enemies with Mussolini
- League imposed limited economic sanction on Italy
 - > Fearful that an embargo would drive Mussolini to go into an alliance with Hitler
 - > This led to Italy taking over Abyssinia in May 1936
- Failure of major powers to stop Italy made both Hitler and Mussolini even bolder in their ambitions
- Britain and France's decision to avoid offending Mussolini proved to be a mistake.
- Mussolini strengthened his friendship with Hitler, who had supported Italy's actions.
- A treaty of friendship, the Rome-Berlin Axis, was signed in November 1936.

By 1935, League had suffered many blows to its credibility, especially from its failure to intervene in the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. However unlike Manchuria, Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) has common borders with British colonies, and was also much closer to Europe. There was therefore more reason for League, and the major powers like Britain and France, to intervene when Italy needed invaded Abyssinia in 1935. However, Britain and France were allies with Italy and its leader, Mussolini.

Fearful that an embargo on oil would drive Mussolini into an alliance with Hitler, the League imposed limited economic sanctions on Italy. The League's failure to impose meaningful sanctions not only limited its demise, but also resulted in the Italian takeover of Abyssinia in May 1936. The failure of the major powers and the a league to stop Italy's invasion of Abyssinis thus made Mussolini and Hitler even bolder in their ambitions. Britain and France decision to avoid offending Mussolini proved to be a mistake, as Mussolini established the ROME=Berlin Axis with Hitler later in the same year.

Stresa Front

The Stresa Front was an agreement made in Stresa, Italy on 14 April 1935 between France, Britain and Italy. Alarmed by German rearmament the agreement was made to affirm the Locarno Treaties and to declare the importance of the continued independence of Austria. The parties also agreed to resist antsy attempt by Germany to change the Treaty of Versailles.

2. Hitler's Expansionist Policy

- Hitler came into power in 1933
 - >Immediately challenged the Treaty of Versailles
 - >Adopted an aggressive foreign policy
- Took advantage of events and used threats of violence to achieve his aims
- It Became obvious that Britain and France, his greatest rivals, were reluctant to go to war and were willing to compromise and avoid another disaster like World War 1.
- Abolished the Treaty of Versailles and emboldened to go further with every successful step
- Germans resented the Treaty of Versailles and believed that Hitler was justified in his actions.

Apart from the weakness of the League of Nations. Hitler's expansionist foreign policy played a major role in contributing towards the outbreak of World War 2 in Europe. Many of Hitler's aim, such as the abolition of the Treaty of Versailles and bringing about the union of Germany and Austria, were spelt out in Mein Kampf and the Nazi Party's Twenty-Five Point Programme. When Hitler came to power in 1933, he immediately began to challenge the Treaty of Versailles and adopted an aggressive foreign policy.

Hitler cleverly took advantage of events and also used the threat of violence to achieve his aims. It became obvious that his most powerful potential enemies, Britain and France, were reluctant to go to war, and were willing to compromise to avoid another disaster like World War 1. As Hitler set about abolishing the Treaty of Versailles, he was emboldened to go further with each successful step he took. The German people resented the Treaty of Versailles and believed that Hitler was justified in his actions.

Hitler Aims

Establish a Greater Germany	Create Lebensraum (Living space)	Establish the superior Aryan race
This would be done by acquiring lands such as Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and uniting all ethnic Germans living in these countries with those in Germany.	To facilitate further German expansion, large areas in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union must be conquered.	This would be done by rebuilding Germany's once-proud armed forces and exterminating 'inferior army'.

Year	Actions taken by Hitler
From 1933 onwards	Resumed conscription and rearmament in Germany
March 1936	Remilitarisation of the Rhineland
1937	Involvement in the Spanish Civil War
March 1938	Anschluss with Austria
October 1938	Gained control of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia
March 1939	Invasion and control of Czechoslovakia
August 1939	Signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact
September 1939	Invasion of Poland

Withdrawal from the League of Nations and Geneva Disarmament Conference (Oct 1933)

- Hitler began rearmament **when he came to power in 1933**
 - >He wanted to restore Germany's pride and strength after the humiliation on TOV
 - >Massive rearmament programme to build up Germany's defences
 - >1933-1934 -Stepped up Secret rearmament and conscription
- Militarization program was only announced to the world in 1935
 - >After Hitler took complete control of the office of chancellor and president.
 - >After building up Germany army till he was confident
- By March 1935, Germany possessed 350-plane Luftwaffe and a 300,000 strong army. Compulsory conscription was instituted and an army of 350,000 was planned ©wzkai
 - >Violation of the Treaty of Versailles-German army and Navy was severely limited
 - ☐ Allowed to only possess 100,000 men, no airforce or submarine and to forbid conscription.
- Hitler emphasised that he was committed to peace - to allay the Allies's fear
- The Allies had a stronger military than Germany even though they were weakened in World War 1.
- Thus in position to keep Germany in check.

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- HOWEVER, due to the pacifist mood in countries like Britain and the weakness of League of Nations
 - >Allies only verbally protested instead of imposing sanctions on Germany
- Hitler was free to transform Germany into a formidable and dangerous military powers
- The **League of Nations** took no action
- Britain even signed the Anglo-German agreement in June 1935, allowing Germany's limited build up of its Navy.
- Germany began to spend large amounts of military production from 1936.

When they came to power, the Nazis immediately began to take systematic steps to abolish the Treaty of Versailles. At the Geneva Disarmament Conference, Hitler proposed that the French disarm to the level of armaments that the Treaty of Versailles allowed Germany. Otherwise, Germany should be allowed to rearm to the level of the French. The French naturally objected to this. Hitler used their objection as an excuse to withdraw from both the conference and the League of Nations. Once Hitler had withdrawn from the League, he took concrete action to increase Germany's military capabilities towards achieving his expansionist aims.

Remilitarisation of the Rhineland

- Hitler's confidence and popularity amongst German people increased with the remilitarization of the Rhineland.
- Hitler always complained about its demilitarisation
 - >Which was accepted by the Weimar Government in the Locarno Treaties
- 7 March 1936-Hitler ordered troops to cross the Hohenzollern Bridge and remilitarize the Rhineland.
- Used the Franco-soviet Alliance as an excuse, saying that Germany was under threat from France and Soviet Union
 - >That they should be able to defend their own borders
- Hitler was fairly sure Britain would sympathise with Germany but was not sure about France.
- Hitler did not send a strong force into the Rhineland
 - >Lacked essential equipment
 - >No air support
 - >To withdraw if attacked
- French did not retaliate with force
 - >They were about to hold election-politicians did not want to be seen starting a war
 - >British was in pacifist mood -French knew they would not be supported against Hitler
- League of Nations condemned Hitler's actions BUT DID NOTHING ELSE
- Hitler's timing was perfect
- League was distracted with Abyssinian Crisis
- If Britain and France responded to this second violation (Remilitarisation of Rhineland) with a show of force, they could have contained Hitler.
- Hitler's gamble paid off- there was no resistance
- His standing among the German people and army increased tremendously ©wzkai

- He even became bolder

Hitler's confidence and his popularity amongst the German people also increased through the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland. Hitler often complained about the permanent demilitarisation of the Rhineland ordered by the Treaty of Versailles. This demilitarisation had also been accepted by the Weimar Government under the Locarno Treaties in 1925. On 7 March 1936, Hitler ordered German troops to cross the Hohenzollern Bridge and remilitarise the Rhineland. He used the Franco-Soviet Alliance as an excuse saying that Germany was now under the threat from France and the Soviet Union, and should be allowed to defend its own frontiers.

Although Hitler was fairly sure that many in Britain would sympathise with Germany, he was not sure about France's response. In fact, Hitler did not send a strong force into Rhineland. His troops lacked essential equipment and they however, did not respond with force. With France about to hold elections at that time, no French also knew that the British were unlikely to support them against Hitler.

The League of Nations condemned Hitler's actions, but did nothing else. Hitler's timing was perfect, as the League was distracted by the Abyssinian Crisis at the time. Had the French and British responded to Hitler's second violation of the Treaty of Versailles with a show of force, they might have had a chance of containing him. Hitler's gamble paid off, and he met with no resistance. As a result, his standing among the German people and with the German army increased tremendously. He became even bolder in his demands.

Franco-Soviet Alliance

The treaty was signed on 2 May 1935 between France and the Soviet Union after Hitler's announced Germany's rearmament to the world in March 1935. The alliance was intended to provide a check on Germany's aggression, and both countries promised to come to each other's aid if Germany invaded either side. However, such aid could only be given with the approval of the League of Nations and the countries under the Locarno Treaties. In addition, the French government refused to accept plans on how to coordinate its military with the Soviet Union should either party be attacked by Germany. As a result, the effectiveness of the alliance was greatly undermined. Hitler used the alliance as an excuse to remilitarise Rhineland.

Involvement in Spanish war (1936)

- A civil war broke out in Spain in 1936 between the Republicans who were loyal to the Spanish Republic, and the Nationalists, who were largely militarists and fascists
- **Spanish Civil war occurred between right-wing generals and left-wing groups.**
- **General Francisco was a fascist.**
- Italy (who was a fascist country) and Germany decided to aid General Franco.
- USSR aided the left-wing groups
- Clear to Hitler that Britain and France wanted to avoid conflict - probably will take no action against him.

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- Hitler sent warplanes. Soldiers and equipment to support the Spanish Nationalist Forces.
- Involvement in Spain was to divert British and French attention from the expansion plans into Eastern Europe.
- Provided opportunities to test out his army and airforce while fighting alleged communists.
- Hitler encouraged Italian involvement in Spain
- **League of Nations did not take any action on Germany**
- **Hitler pointed out the perils of communist involvement on the Republicans side of the conflict - resonated with Britain's and France's disdain for communism.**
- Hitler smartly portrayed himself as the defender of civilization against communism.
- He hated communism
 - >Made it public with signing Anti-Comintern pact with Japan in 1936
 - >Added to the perception that Western powers could trust him, making British and French intervention in Spain more remote.
- Lack of aggression strengthened Hitler's view that Britain and France were weak.
 - >This made Hitler more aggressive

It was by now obvious to Hitler that Britain and France were eager to avoid conflict, and that they would probably take no action against him. During the Spanish Civil War in 1937, Hitler sent soldiers, equipment and warplanes to support the Spanish Nationalist forces. German planes made devastating raids on several Spanish cities, resulting in heavy civilian casualties. Hitler's involvement in Spain was designed to divert British and French attention from his plans for expansion into Eastern Europe. It also gave him the opportunity to test his army and air force while fighting against alleged communists. Hitler also encouraged Italy's involvement in Spain.

As Hitler expected, the League of Nations took no actions against Germany for its intervention in Spain. He had pointed out to Britain and France the perils of communist involvement on the Republicans side of the conflict, which resonated with Britain and France's disdain and fear of communism. In addition, Hitler also portrayed himself to be the defender of civilisation against communism. He hated communism, and made public by signing the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan in 1936. This added to the perception that the western powers could trust Hitler, and made British and French intervention also strengthened Hitler's view that Britain and France were weak, which in turn made him more aggressive.

Anti-Comintern Pact

The Anti-Comintern Pact was an agreement signed between Nazi Germany and Japan on 25 November 1936. It was aimed against the Communist International or Comintern, which was founded by Lenin in 1919 to promote communist uprising in the rest of the world. Hitler hated communism, and had initially planned to improve relations with Britain by seeking to isolate the Soviet Union.

His fierce anti-Soviet stance was also one of the reasons why the Soviet Union was not invited to the Munich Conference later in 1938. Italy also joined the Anti-Conference Pact in November 1937, which led to the formation of what came to be known as the Axis powers.

Spanish Civil war

In 1936, right-wing Nationalist rebels took part in a military coup against the Republican government of Spain, which had the support of the communists and other left-wing groups. This led to a bloody civil war. Italy and Germany aided the Nationalists, who were supported by conservative elements in Spain, such as the military, the Roman Catholic Church and many landowners and business people. The republicans received aid from the Soviet Union as well as volunteers from other European countries and the USA. After a bitter struggle, the Nationalists finally took control of Spain in 1939.

German Unification with Austria

- Hitler wrote in Mein Kampf that he felt that Germany and Austria (his homeland) belonged together.
- Many people from Austria and Germany strongly supported this union.
 - > Even more so now since the Treaty of Versailles did not allow this union after World War 1 when Austria wanted to,
- Many Austrians saw this contradiction to the principle of self-determination which the Allies insisted on.
- Hitler was stopped by Mussolini in 1934 when he tried to take over Austria.
 - > They both became allies in 1936
- Austrian Nazis were encouraged by Hitler to stir up instability and push for Anschluss
 - > A political union
- Pressured Austrian chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg to agree
- Told him that only Anschluss would stop demonstrations and riots in Austria
- A plebiscite was held unwillingly by Schuschnigg to decide if the Austrians supported a political union with Germany. (**Plebiscite is a vote by which the people of a country express an opinion for or against a government proposal.**)
- Hitler sent troops into Austria in pretext of keeping order during the voting.
- 99.75 percent voted for Anschluss. However, as the chancellor resigned, the plebiscite was cancelled.
- Hitler was able to annex Austria on 13 March 1938 due to the troops marching in to lay claim over Austria.
- This was another violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
- **Britain and France did not take action**, proving Hitler yet again that Britain and France were weak, increasing his confidence towards more rigorous expansionism.
- Austria's gold and iron ore, army and weapons were now at Hitler's disposal.

Hitler made it clear in Mein Kampf that he felt that Germany and his homeland Austria, belonged together. We have also seen that the idea of political union between Austria and Germany had been considered and rejected before in 1867, following the Austro-Prussian War. However, by the time of the Treaty of Versailles, considerations that prevented such a union before no longer applied. Many people from both Austria and Germany also strongly supported such an union. It was even more so since the Treaty of Versailles did not allow Austria to join Germany at the end of World War 1 when Austria wanted to. Many Austrian-born Germans saw this as contradicting the principle of self-determination which the Allies themselves insisted on. Hitler was stopped by Mussolini when he tried to take over Austria in 1934. By 1936 however, both men had become allies.

Hitler encouraged Austrian Nazis to make trouble and push for Anschluss (political union) with Germany. He then tried to pressurise Kurt Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, into agreeing. He told Schuschnigg that only Anschluss would stop the demonstrations and riots in Austria. Schuschnigg unwillingly called a plebiscite to see if Austrian people supported a political union with Germany. Hitler send troops into Austria, supposedly to keep order during the voting. 99.75 percent of the population voted for Anschlusss. Austria was annexed on 13 March 1938, and Germany thus achieved Anschlusss without any conflict. This was again a violation of the Treaty of Versailles and once again, Britain and France did nothing. Austria's resources of gold and iron ore were now at Hitler's disposal, as were its army and weapons.

Czechoslovakia- Munich Agreement

- Hitler's next target was Czechoslovakia.
- Population of Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia was largely German.
- Under the influence of the Nazi Party leader in the Sudetenland, the Germans in Czechslovakia demanded to be part of Germany.
- Hitler threatened to go to war for Sudetenland if necessary.
- Edward Benes, Czech's leader, was willing to fight against Germany should it invade.
 - > Possessed a modern army
 - > Britain, France and the USSR promised to support Czechoslovakia should an invasion occur.
- However, in keeping with the policy of appeasement to avoid waging war in Europe, Britain and France signed the Munich Agreement with Germany and Italy on 29 September 1938 to promise not to invade other countries.
- Czechs and Soviets who had a mutual military assistance treaty, were not consulted at all.
- Benes resigned and on 1 October 1938, Hitler's troops marched into Sudetenland.
 - > Hitler gained control of Sudetenland without a fight.
 - > Set his eyes in occupying the whole of Czechoslovakia
- Hitler broke the Munich Agreement, but Britain and France did not take any action.
 - > Hitler was warned that war would be declared on Germany should Hitler decide to invade Poland.

In line with his plan for a Greater Germany, Hitler targeted Czechoslovakia next. The population of the Sudetenland area in Czechoslovakia was largely German. Under the influence of the Nazi Party Leader in Sudetenland, these Germans demanded to be part of Germany, and Hitler threatened to go to war for the Sudetenland if necessary.

The Czechs had a modern army and Czech leader Edvard Benes was willing to fight. Britain, France and the Soviet Union had also promised to support them if they were attacked. However, in keeping with the policy of appeasement, to avoid waging a war in Europe, the leaders of Britain and France, along with Hitler and Mussolini, signed the Munich Agreement on 29 September 1938, deciding that Germany would gain control of the Sudetenland. The Czechs and the Soviets, who had a mutual military assistance treaty, were not consulted at all. Benes resigned and German troops marched into the Sudetenland on 1 October 1938. Having gained control of the Sudetenland without having to fight, Hitler began to set his sights even further occupying the whole of Czechoslovakia.

Invasion of Czechoslovakia

- 16 March 1939 - Hitler invaded and took over control of the entire Czechoslovakia.
- British PM Neville Chamberlain realised Hitler could not be trusted.
- Fears that Poland would be Hitler's next target.
- Hitler was warned by Britain and France that war would be declared on Germany should Hitler decide to invade Poland.

On 16 March 1939, Hitler invaded and took over the rest of Czechoslovakia. Neither the Czechs nor the Allies fought back. By this time, Britain's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain realised Hitler could not be trusted. His fear was that Poland would be Hitler's next target. Britain and France warned Hitler accordingly that they would go to war with Germany if he invaded Poland.

Nazi-soviet Non-Aggression Pact (August 1939)

- Hitler continued to set his sight on further expansion.
- Wanted to take over Poland
- Hitler and Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August 1939.
 - > To last for 10 years
 - > Assurance that Germany and USSR would not attack each other and problems will be resolved in a friendly manner.
- Gave Hitler assurance that he could invade Poland without having to face the USSR on the Eastern Front.
- Secret protocol in the pact.
 - > Divided Eastern Europe into Soviet and German Spheres of influence.
 - > Soviet rights to the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) were recognised by the German and Soviet Union.
 - > Poland was divided between them.
- The Pact benefited the USSR
 - > Stalin had perceived the West as instigating Hitler to attack the USSR.

->The pact acted as a breathing space to build up military strength in the event of a possible war with Germany.

->Needed a buffer (Poland) in the event that Germany decided to attack the USSR.

- Stalin did not trust Hitler, but he felt that working with Germany would benefit the USSR more than the British at that point in time.

IN RESPONSE.....

- Britain and Poland signed a mutual defence treaty promising to wage war on any aggressors towards Poland.
- Hitler through the previous events, banked on Britain and France not reacting to Germany's invasion.

Hitler continued to set his sights on further expansion for Germany. He wanted to take over Poland and hoped that the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact would allow him to do so without having to go to war with the Soviet Union. On 23 August 1939, Germany and Soviet Union had signed the Non-Aggression Pact that was to last for ten years. It stated that Germany and the Soviet Union would not attack each other, and would resolve any problems between them in a friendly manner. A secret protocol in the pact also divided Eastern Europe into Soviet and German spheres of influence. Soviet rights over the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) were recognised by both Germany and the Soviet Union, and Poland was also divided between them. In response, Britain and Poland signed a mutual defence treaty.

Reasons For Signing The Nazi-Soviet Pact

Stalin did not trust the Germans while Hitler detested communist ideology. Why then did they sign such an agreement?

<u>Hitler</u>	<u>Stalin</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wanted to ensure that the Soviet Union would not be involved in Germany's invasion of Poland.• Wanted to avoid fighting a war on two fronts, which proved disastrous for Germany in World War 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did not trust the Allies, especially when the Soviet Union was not consulted in the signing of the Munich Agreement.• Thought that the Allies were encouraging Hitler to expand into Eastern Europe.• Needed breathing space to prepare itself militarily for a possible war with Germany.• Needed a land buffer in Poland in the event of an invasion by Germany,• Failure of the Franco-Soviet Alliance added to Stalin's resolve to use any means necessary to secure the Soviet Union's borders.

Invasion of Poland (September 1939)

- Since 1937, Germany has demanded for the “free city” of Danzig.
 - >Danzig was a port city and most of the population was German.
 - >Poland refused to give in to negotiations for Danzig to belong to Germany.
- Hitler has demanded for the Polish Corridor to build a railway to reconnect Germany to East Prussia (considered to be a part of Germany)
 - >Polish leaders distrusted Hitler and feared the loss of Polish independence.
 - ☐ Tensions increased.
- 29 August 1939 - Hitler again demanded for Danzig and included the Polish Corridor.
 - >Britain and France knew Hitler could not be trusted but were willing to resume negotiations
 - >Hitler was convinced Britain and France could not intervene and declare war.
- Negotiations did not go the way Hitler expected that he invaded Poland on 1st September 1939.
- However, this time around Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3rd September 1939.
- This finally led to World War 2.

Hitler's invasion of Poland was the last straw that triggered World War 2. Since 1937, Hitler had demanded for the 'Free city of Danzig to be part of Germany. Danzig was a port city and most of its population was Germans. Hitler also wanted a railroad built across the Polish corridor to reconnect Germany with East Prussia, which was considered to be part of Germany. However Polish leaders distrusted Hitler and feared the loss of Poland's independence. Tensions increased between Poland and Germany and negotiations broke down. On 29 August 1939, Hitler again demanded for Danzig but this time he also demanded control of the Polish Corridor. Though Britain and France realised that Hitler could not be trusted, they were still willing to resume negotiations with Germany regarding Danzig. This convinced Hitler that they would not declare war on Germany. When negotiations did not proceed as he had hoped, he invaded Poland on 1 September. However, Britain and France kept their promise this time, and declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939.

3. Policy of Appeasement

- Policy of appeasement adopted by Britain and France played a major role in contributing towards the outbreak in World War 2 in Europe.
- Some historians blame this policy for the outbreak of the war.
- They believe that if Britain and France had stood up to Hitler when he first started to violate terms of the Treaty of Versailles, war could have been avoided.
- However, **it made Britain and France appear weak.**
 - >Made Hitler even bolder in pursuing his foreign policy aims.
- Why did Britain and France choose the policy of appeasement?

The policy of appeasement adopted by Britain and France towards Germany also played a major role in contributing towards the outbreak of World War 2 in Europe. Some historians blame the adoption of this policy for the outbreak of World War 2. They believe that if Britain and France had stood up to Hitler when he first started to violate the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, war could have been avoided. There were a number of reasons why they pursued such a policy.

Fear of Another Major War

- World War 1 had a huge impact on Britain and France. Both nations suffered tremendous losses in the war and were not militarily prepared for another war of a similar scale.
- Public disgust towards war and effects of the Great Depression on both countries' made rearmament difficult even if their leaders wanted it.
- Both countries-democracies-politicians needed to take public opinion into account in policies made.
- Chamberlain realised that public support would be little if war were to be fought against Germany.
 - >Lack of interest shown by Britain when Germany remilitarized the Rhineland.
 - >Public enthusiasm for the Munich Agreement.

World War 1 had a huge impact on Britain and France. Both nations suffered tremendously losses in the war, and were not militarily prepared for another war of a similar scale. Public disgust towards war, along with the effects of the Great Depression on the economies of both countries, made rearmament very difficult even if their leaders wanted it. Both countries were democracies and politicians were aware that they need to take in public opinion into account in any new policies they made. Although he disliked war, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain also realised that he would not have public support in a war against Germany. The lack of interest shown by Britain when Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland and public enthusiasm for the Munich Agreement seemed to support this view. However, there were those who did not support the policy of appeasement, such as Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden, Britain's Foreign Secretary.

Weakness of the League of Nations (This is important)

- Main aim of the League was to solve international disputes peacefully.
 - >The League proved ineffective when it had to deal with strong powerful countries like Italy and Germany.
 - >Britain adopted a policy of appeasement to satisfy Hitler and prevent another war instead of relying on the League.

The main aim of the League of Nations was to resolve international disputes peacefully. Many people hoped that this would be the case and relied on the League to help settle disputes. However, as we have seen earlier, the League proved to be ineffective when it had to deal with strong, powerful countries. As a result, instead of relying on the League to act, the British adopted a policy of appeasement to satisfy Hitler and prevent the outbreak of another major war.

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Buying time to rearm (This is also important)

- Britain and France were militarily and economically weakened after World War 1.
- By appeasing Germany, Britain and France would obtain enough time to rearm and strengthen themselves militarily.

World War 1 had weakened the economies and militaries of Britain and France. Some historians believe that they followed an appeasement policy in part to give themselves time to rearm.

Genuine sympathy of Germany over the Treaty of Versailles

- Many British including Chamberlain viewed the Treaty of Versailles to be too harsh on Germany.
- When Hitler claimed that the ethnic Germans in Czechoslovakia were being oppressed Chamberlain believed that the grievances were justified.
- Chamberlain thought Hitler's intentions were only limited to granting these Germans self-determination (a key goal of the Treaty of Versailles)
- Believed that by giving in to Hitler, he could help prevent another war.

Many British politicians, including Chamberlain, thought that the Treaty of Versailles had dealt with Germany too harshly. When Hitler claimed that ethnic Germans in Czechoslovakia were being oppressed, Chamberlain believed that Hitler's grievances were justified. He thought that Hitler's intent were only limited to granting these Germans self-determination, which was a key goal of the Treaty of Versailles itself. He believed that by giving in to Hitler, he could help prevent another war. Some British politicians even admired Hitler and his aids, seeing them as strong and patriotic.

Chamberlain's misjudgement of Hitler

- Chamberlain believed that Hitler was a man who can be reassured.
- Wrongly believed that Hitler's aim was to revise the Treaty of Versailles, and not to abolish it.
 - > Believed that he would therefore be satisfied with negotiations and agreements.
- Was convinced that Hitler's demands would stop after gaining control of the Sudetenland, during the Munich Agreement.
 - > Chamberlain gave in to Hitler's demands believing that Hitler would be satisfied and stop his expansionist policies.

Chamberlain believed that Hitler was a man who could be reasoned with. His views of Hitler were encouraged by Lord Halifax's meeting with Hitler in November 1937, as well as his own meeting with Hitler a year later. Chamberlain came to the conclusion that Hitler's word could be relied upon. He wrongly believed that Hitler's aims were limited to revising the Treaty of Versailles instead of abolishing it, and could therefore be satisfied with negotiations and agreements. He believed Hitler's promise that he would cease making demands once he controlled the Sudetenland. In actual fact, Hitler repeatedly made promises to Chamberlain and then broke them.

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Fear of Communism

- November 1937- Lord Halifax met with Hitler, Goebbels and Goering in Germany.
- Although Nazi system that profoundly offended British opinion, Hitler had achieved keeping communism out of his country
 - >Hitler had banned the communist Party and put its leaders in concentration camps.
- Many leaders in Britain and France hated and feared communism - vastly different from their ideas of democracy and capitalism.
- Seen as a bigger threat than Hitler's and Mussolini's fascism.
- Despite Germany's rapid remilitarisation process from 1935, a stronger Germany was seen as an effective shield against the Soviet Union.
 - >Germany was seen to be against communism.
 - >Germany would be a potential ally against communism
 - >Britain and France realised a stronger Germany could check the spread of communism to the west.

In November 1937, Lord Halifax met Hitler, Goebbels and Goering in Germany. In his diary, Lord Halifax records what he told Hitler: "Although there was much in the Nazi system that profoundly offended British opinion, I was not blind to what he (Hitler) had done for Germany, and to the achievement from his point of view of keeping communism out of his country." Hitler had banned the Communist Party and put its leaders in concentration camps. Many leaders in Britain and France hated and feared communism, which was vastly different from their ideas of democracy and capitalism. It was seen as a bigger threat than Hitler's and Mussolini's fascism. Although the Western powers were aware of Germany's rapid remilitarisation programme from 1935 onwards, they believed that a stronger Germany could act as a shield against the Soviet Union, and prevent the spread of communism to the West. They therefore saw Hitler as a potential ally against communism.

Examples of Appeasement

1. Anglo-German Naval Agreement

- Treaty of Versailles stated that the German navy should consist of only six warships that were over 10000 tons and no submarines.
- Despite this, the British signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in June 1935.
- Allowed Germany to have a navy which had one-third the tonnage of Britain's surface fleet and an equal tonnage of submarines.
- This signalled the beginning of appeasement.
- Britain hoped these concessions would reduce German anger at the treaty and stabilise Europe.
- Agreement had placed limits on Germany so that should Hitler continue to build its navy, it would not pose a significant threat to Britain.
- However - only resulted in arousing the threat of the French and confused the British people.

- As a member of the Stresa Front, Britain was the only one condemning Germany for breaking the Treaty of Versailles but was encouraging this very behaviour.

The Treaty of Versailles clearly stated that the German navy should consist of only six warships that were over 10,000 tons and no submarines. Despite this, the British signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in June 1935. It allowed Germany to have a navy which had one-third tonnage of Britain's surface fleet and an equal tonnage submarines. This agreement signalled the beginning of appeasement. It was hoped that these concessions would reduce German anger at the Treaty of Versailles and stabilise Europe. In addition, the agreement sought to place limits on Germany should Hitler continued to build its navy, so that it would not pose a significant threat to Britain. However it only resulted in arousing the anger of the French and confusing the British people. As a member of the Stresa Front, Britain had only recently condemned Germany for breaking the Treaty of Versailles. Now it seemed Britain was encouraging this very behaviour.

Germany was allowed to rearm so now Hitler owes you a debt so he will not attack. It is considered a gentleman agreement. In which a way that Britain provides a leeway for Germany so that they would not attack Britain. They wanted to stop Germany to stop attacking because they thought Germany wanted to change the Treaty of Versailles but Hitler wanted to destroy it. France was upset as this made them the next target of Hitler because of the Treaty of Versailles.

2. Lack of action against Hitler's acts of aggression

- Hitler took steps to abolish the Treaty of Versailles and pursue the goal of German expansion.
- Western powers did not take effective measures to keep Hitler in check.
- This allowed him to be more ambitious and daring.

Hitler took steps to abolish the Treaty of Versailles and pursue his goal of German expansion. The Western powers did it take effective measures to keep Hitler in check while he took each of these steps, allowing him to become more ambitious and daring.

3. Munich Agreement

- Hitler declared that he would go to war for the Sudetenland if necessary.
- The Czechs had a modern army and their leader Benes was willing to fight.
- Britain, France and Soviet Union has also promised to support Czechoslovakia
- War was imminent and led to where people in Britain were preparing for war by digging trenches and building air-raid shelters.
- To defuse the threat of war, Chamberlain met with Hitler and gave in his demands to take over Czechoslovakia.
- Hitler's troops took over Sudetenland on 1 October 1938.
- War had been temporarily avoided at the expense of Czechoslovakia.
- Hitler later invaded the whole of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939
- Appeasement had clearly failed and policy was abandoned.

- After Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact was signed, Chamberlain knew Hitler could not be trusted and started preparing for war.
- When Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany.
- As agreed in the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Agression pact, Soviet Union also invaded eastern Poland on 17 September 1939.
- The Nazis and Soviets abided by the terms of the pact until Germany's surprise invasion of Soviet Union on 22 June 1941.

Hitler declared that he would go to war for the Sudetenland if necessary. The Czechs had a modern army, and their leader Benes was willing to fight. Britain, France and the Soviet Union had also promised to support Czechoslovakia. In such a situation, it seemed that war was imminent. People in Britain even prepared for war by digging trenches and building air-raid trenches. To defuse the threat of war, Chamberlain met with Hitler and gave in to his demands to take over Sudetenland.

Hitler's troops took over the Sudetenland on 1 October 1938. War had been temporarily avoided, but at the expense of Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain was warmly welcomed by the British public, and he delivered his famous statement in which he declared that he had secured peace in our time'. However, not everyone was optimistic.

Hitler later then invaded and took over the rest of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939. Appeasement had clearly failed and the policy was abandoned. By the time the Nazi-Soviet Non aggression Pact was signed in 1939, Chamberlain knew that Hitler could not be trusted, and prepared for war. When Germany attacked Poland on 1 September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. World war 2 had begun. As agreed in the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Soviet Union also invaded eastern Poland on 17 September 1939. The Nazis and Soviets abided by the terms of the pact until Germany's surprise invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941.

It was a bit late for Britain to rearm as Germany started to rearm 1935 while Britain was rearming in 1939. Which makes it harder for Britain to keep up.

Conclusion

Hitler's invasion of Poland triggered the deadliest conflict in human history - World War 2. The war not only devastated Europe's economy, it also resulted in heavy casualties. Millions died or were wounded and displaced. Although Hitler achieved successes in the first few years of the war, he made too many gambles, including actions that brought the US into the war against him. His invasion of the Soviet Union, as well as resistance of the Allies, would also play major roles in affecting the course of the war. After more than six years, Germany was defeated in the war which it had started.

Reasons For World War 2 In Europe

Weakness Of The League Of Nations	Hitler's Expansionist Policy	Policy Of Appeasement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure of disarmament process 2. Ineffectiveness in maintaining world peace and resolving conflicts. (The Abyssinian Crisis) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Withdrawal from the League of Nations 2. Conscription and Rearmament (1935) 3. Remilitarisation of the Rhineland (1936) 4. Involvement in the Spanish Civil War (1936) 5. Anschluss with Austria (1938) 6. Munich Agreement (1938)- Occupation of Sudetenland and invasion of Czechoslovakia. 7. Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (1939) 8. Invasion of Poland (1939) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fear of another major war 2. Weakness of the League of Nations 3. Buying time to rearm 4. Genuine sympathy for Germany 5. Chamberlain's misjudgement of Hitler 6. Fear of communism

Part 5 and 6 is important lol (revise in depth for that)

Hitler-> Inference

Purpose= why

Template

The cartoon was published because the author wanted to convince and persuade the (audience) that ... Source A" ".This means that... By doing so...

Reliability

Source a is reliable in saying _(reason)_ as it is supported by Source X.Source A says"____".This means thatSource X supports A.Source X says"____".This means that ____ Source X suggests A,A is therefore reliable.

Source A is not so reliable in saying ____ as it is challenged by Source Y. Source Y says "____". As it is challenged by Source Y, Y says "____". This means that since Source Y changed A, A is not so reliable.

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