

# Ch 5. Causes of German & Italian Expansion

## Timeline

- 1861 - March:** Kingdom of Italy established
- 1867 - April:** North German Confederation formed
- 1870 - July:** Italian Unification completed
- 1871 - Jan:** German Unification completed
- 1879 -** the start of 'Scramble for Africa'
- 1884-99:** Germany establishes colonies in Africa and the Pacific
- 1885 -** Italian colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland established in Africa
- 1896 - March:** Italy defeated at battle of Adowa
- 1910 - Dec:** Italian Nationalist Association formed
- 1911-12:** Italo-Turkish war → Italy establishes colony of Italian East Africa
- 1914 - Aug:** WWI begins
- 1915 - May:** Treaty of London
- 1918 - Jan:** Wilson's fourteen points
- 1919 - June:** Treaty of Versailles, **Sept:** Treaty of St. Germain; D'Annunzio seizes Fiume
- 1920 - Jan:** League of Nations established, **Feb:** Hitler launches the Nazi Party
- 1921 - Oct:** Mussolini forms National fascist party
- 1922 - Oct:** March on Rome; Mussolini becomes Prime Minister
- 1923 - Aug:** Corfu Incident, **Nov:** Hitler's unsuccessful Beer Hall Putsch
- 1926 - Sept:** Germany allowed to join League of Nations
- 1929 - Oct:** Stresemann dies; Wall Street Crash
- 1933 - Jan:** Hitler appointed Chancellor
- 1934 - Sept:** Schacht's 'New Plan'
- 1935 - Oct:** Italian invasion of Abyssinia
- 1936 - Sept:** Göring's Four Year Plan
- 1937:** Mussolini launches the Romanita exhibitions

## Overview

- Roots of fascism & its nationalist ideology can be found in the 19th cent when both nations were unified
- Unification completed in Germany in 1871, in Italy in 1870 - achieved by a combination of political devs + internal/external military conflicts
- Once in existence, ultra-nationalists in both countries campaigned for imperial expansion to match France + Britain's colonial dominance
- By the end of the 19th cent → It/Ger. had gained colonies in Africa and the Pacific
- Because of WWI → nationalism increased in both countries as both nations were angered by the peace treaties ... as a consequence fascist movements developed
- In 1922, Mussolini became the PM of Italy and established a fascist dictatorship
- An important part of ideology for both these early fascist parties was an extreme form of nationalism which wanted to redraw borders drawn by 1919-20 peace treaties
- Wallstreet crash 1929 + Great Depression helped the Nazi's gain power in 1933
- The depression made territorial expansion even more attractive as it wd/ bring raw materials
- Depression undermined the League's ability to maintain peace in Europe ... making the growing nationalist/expansionist aims of Fascist Italy + Nazi Germany seem more achievable

## 5.1 What was the Impact of Fascist and Nazi Ideology on Expansionist Foreign Policies in Italy and Germany?

- Between WWI - WWII → lots of political/economic turmoil + many attempted revolutions
- Fascism emerged first in Italy ... it also emerged in Br + Fr but failed
- Portugal + Spain adopted semi-fascist gov's within this period
- Fascist ideology alone didn't contribute to Italy + Ger's expansionist policy ... it was also nationalism

## Fascist Ideology

- Unlike Marxism - Fascism has no coherent/unified ideological root
- Historian Alexander de Grand: key element to Mussolini's 'fascism' was a sort of 'nationalist fascism' that favoured an 'aggressive foreign policy' in order to achieve territorial expansion
  - Other important aspects = 'violent action' and 'racial supremacy'
- Historians R. Griffin and S. Payne argue that a core aspect of fascist ideology is a populist form of 'ultra-nationalism' ... as many nationalists in Europe had moved towards more extreme forms of nationalism prior to Mussolini

## Italian Nationalism before 1933

- Nationalism had been a strong political force since the 19th century - it was a response to French revolution + Napoleonic wars
- Until 19th cent - 'Italy' was a geographical expression, not a country
- *Risorgimento* (Unification of Italy) occurred in 1861 - (it excluded Rome and Venice until 1870)

## Italia Irredenta and Italy's Empire

- The new Italian empire didn't include *all* Italian speakers
- This gave rise to the idea of *Italia Irredenta* (unredeemed Italy) → Italy couldn't be 'whole' unless all Italians lived in one state (incl. Tyrol, parts of Adriatic coast)
- After 1870 achieving this ^ became nationalists goal
  - Strong foreign policy wd/ help unify Italians + create a sense of national pride + gain Italy International respect
- Esp. after 1879 when the scramble for Africa began, Italy keen to take part in colonial expansion
- 1882 - Italy established foothold in Eritrea
- 1855 - Italian forces attempted to push into Ethiopia but were defeated by their army
  - Despite this ... in 1855 Eritrea + Ethiopia became Italian colonies
- 1895 - Italy occupied province of Tigre in Abyssinia ... but lost military defeat in 1896
  - Seen as humiliation
- 1911 - Italy attacked Ottoman-ruled Tripolitania (Italian Turkish war 1911-12)
  - Italy won, land renamed Italian East Africa
- 1834 Italian East Africa became Italian colony of Libya
- Some nationalists still angry about 1896 defeat ... wanted to continue a more aggressive foreign policy

## Impact of WWI and the Peace Treaties of 1914-19

- 1910 - extremely imperialist Italian Nationalist association (**ANI**) formed
  - Wanted to recreate the empire of Ancient Rome (wanted to reinstate Italy's 'glorious' past)
- Italian nationalists saw entering into WWI as way to gain more colonies
- Before 1914, Italy was part of Triple alliance
- Italy's gov didn't take part in war immediately ... wanted to see which side wd/ offer best terms
- Negotiations w/ Triple alliance in 1914/15 revealed that Austria wd/ never concede Trentino or Trieste
- Entente promised these ^ territories + other territories in South Tyrol, Istria and Dalmatia
- Treaty of London May 1915 (Br + Fr promised to support Italy's territorial ambitions) - Italy switched sides to the Triple Entente
- Nov 1917, Italians suffered defeat by Austrians at battle of Caporetto → 40,000 killed
  - Nationalists blamed gov. for being inefficient + failing to supply enough equipment
  - Despite having a victory at Vittorio Veneto in Oct 1918 - many Italians remembered this defeat
- War ended 1918 - many Italians expected to gain territories they had been promised
- Vittorio Orlando, Italian PM went to Paris Peace conf Jan 1919
  - He expected to receive territory from Treaty of London + under pressure from nationalists *also* requested port of Fiume + share of former German Colonies in Africa
  - Italy received most of what it wanted ... but nothing in Africa, no Fiume, and Northern Dalmatia excluded

- Nonetheless... Italy's long-term opponent AH had been defeated/didn't exist anymore

### Italian Nationalism and the 'mutilated victory'

- Italian nationalists angered at terms of Peace treaty → blamed liberal gov.
- Popular nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio described it as a **'mutilated victory'**
- Sep 12th 1919 - D'Annunzio led 2,000 armed men to city of Fiume + took control + ruled for 15 months (in defiance of liberal gov.)
  - Eventually forced to surrender in 1920 ... but seen as 'hero' to Italian Nationalists + inspired Mussolini

### Italian Fascism

- Even after becoming PM in 1922 - Mussolini never defined his fascist beliefs
- 1925 - Mussolini began drawing up a fascist doctrine
- Under leadership of philosopher Giovanni Gentile, 200+ intellectuals met in Bologna → created Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals (this explained fascist ideology)
  - ^ manifesto was ineffective
- 1933, revised ideas of fascism published ... mainly expressing what fascism was *against*, eg: liberalism, socialism, democracy, pacifism, 'class war', communism, etc.
  - They stood for action, the nation, authority and the state (vague ideas)
- In Italian Facism + German Naziism → 'Social Darwinism' = key idea
  - 'Belief in the necessity and value of forceful and violent struggle in order to ensure the survival of the state ... weaker groups did not deserve to survive'
  - All those who shared a common history/language/culture should live together in a 'greater' expanded nation

### Italian Fascism

- After WWI began, Mussolini set up his own newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*
  - In this newspaper, he campaigned against peace + hoped for a successful war to bring Italy new colonies
  - Paper financed by Italian companies, eg: Fiat and the Fr. gov
- 1919 - Mussolini set up *Fascio di Combattimento* (battle group) in Milan
- 1921 - Mussolini formed National Fascist Party (PNF)
- To widen appeal of fascism, Mussolini stressed fascism's commitment to strong gov, patriotism + imperial expansionism

### Romanita movement

- After Mussolini + Fascists gained power 1922 → aim = consolidate power in Italy
- Mussolini used aggressive foreign policy from the beginning to help in doing so
- Corfu incident 1923 - Italian general murdered on Greek soil
  - Mussolini demanded Greece pay 50 million lire as compensation
  - Greece refused to pay (they weren't responsible)
  - Mussolini ignored the League + ordered Italian marines to invade Corfu
  - Mussolini seen as national hero
- Mussolini tried to link fascists to earlier greatness of Ancient Rome → 'Romanita' movement
  - Writers/Artists tried to portray fascism as revival of Ancient Roman civilization
  - Mussolini referred to as 'Il Duce' 'The Leader'
  - Fascist symbol incorporated into national flag
  - Emphasis placed on need to establish 'second Roman empire'
  - Ideology implemented into School curriculum
  - Propaganda constantly stressed nationalism
- Concept of *Spazio vitale* linked to the idea of a 'new' Roman empire
  - Mussolini wanted to include the entire Mediterranean, North Africa, and South-eastern states in Europe (eg: Albania) into this empire
  - When WWII began, he added Greece, Romania, Bulgaria & Hungary to the list
  - This empire wd/ spread culture + civilization in the same way that Ancient Rome did
- W/ exception to Corfu incident ... Mussolini avoided aggressive foreign policy until 1933
  - Not strong enough militarily

- Br + Fr acting together to condemn Italy in 1923 showed the weakness of Italy

## German Nationalism before 1933

- Germany unified 1871
- Pre-1871, Germany = collection of separate states linked only by language
- Some German states were large, eg: Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria
- States divided by religion (Protestantism in the north, Catholics in the south)
- French rev + Napoleon's conquests of 'German' areas of the Holy Roman empire resulted in an early form of German Nationalism
- Johann Fichte wanted a united German nation in as early as 1807-08 (published a book: Addresses to the German Nation)
- Student movements inspired by nationalist/liberal ideas of early French revolution
- After Napoleon's defeat, great powers (Br, Ru, Aus, Prussia, and Fr) met at Congress of Vienna to redraw map of Europe
- Congress grouped the German states into a 'German Confederation' (Deutscher Bund) + gave them a Diet (Assembly/Bundestag) in which rulers of each state could meet
  - New German confed + Bundestag supervised by Austria
- Between 1815-1819 → nationalist/liberal student movements arose
  - Austrian gov. suppressed these by pressing German Bund to pass the Carlsbad Decrees
  - **Carlsbad Decrees:** established tighter controls on unis + tightened censorship. Nationalist/Liberal professors dismissed
  - Metternich, Austrian chancellor stated: 'A word spoken by Austria is an unbreakable law for Germany'
  - Repression of nationalism continued into 1830s
- Among early German nationalists, disagreements between what 'Germany' should be
  - Gross vs. Klein Deutschland
  - Some preferred liberal/democratic system, some wanted monarchy
- Unsuccessful revolutions 1848
- German nationalism not carried forward via revolution ... but via Zollverein
- 1834 - Zollverein created: free trade association/customs union between German states
  - Austria *not* a part of it
- Yet, not until 1859 was a Nationalist Association formed (Nationalverein)
  - Yet no obvious nationalist leaders
  - German nationalism = unorganized collection of patriotic groups
- Emergence of unified Germany was the result of Prussia using military + econ methods
  - Bismarck's 'blood and iron'
  - Bismarck wanted to end the German Bund ... since it was still dominated by Austria
  - Bismarck wanted a North German Confederation dominated by Prussia
  - Defeated Denmark militarily 1864, Austria 1866
  - North German confed created 1867 → Prussia dominated
  - Prussia's military victories diminished Austria's influence within Germany + undermined France as the major continental power
  - Franco-Prussian war 1870-71 → Prussia quickly won
- May 1871, creation of new German Empire announced at Versailles

## German Militarism and Imperialism before 1914

- Despite unification 1871 - Borders weren't secure
- Securing borders = key factor of foreign policy
- France still seen as threat
- Germany wanted to create large modern army + use diplomacy to protect itself
- 1880s - Germany wanted 'a place in the sun' by gaining overseas colonies to match Br + Fr
- German armed forces continued to dev. Independently from civilian gov
- Militaristic values widespread, war plans were constantly drawn up vs. France

- Image of 'Great power' in 19th cent included possession of empires → therefore Germany initially focused on imperialist expansion (esp. In Africa)
  - Yet until 1884, Bismarck uninterested in colonial expansion ... feared it wd/ jeopardize his web of alliance
  - But most Germans still pushed for expansion → colonial society formed
    - Bismarck gave them the 'ok' in 1884
    - Germany gained a few colonies in Africa/Pacific 1884-99
- Economic gains of colonial expansion rarely outweighed diplomatic costs
- 1889 → Bismarck decided against further expansion ... yet Kaiser Wilhelm II determined to continue expansion
  - Bismarck forced to resign 1890
  - Wilhelm II let Bismarck's web of alliance w/ Russia to collapse
  - Wilhelm II expanded navy → created tensions w/ Britain

### Impact of WWI and Peace Treaties 1914-1919

- Initially... a lot of nationalist support for war
- w/ failure of Schlieffen plan + long stalemate/war of attrition + USA joining → Germany forced to surrender in 1918 + signed armistice in November
- German gov assumed peace treaty wd/ be based on Wilson's 14 points
  - In reality, treaty was very harsh because of France + Britain's wishes
  - No German rep's present at Versailles
  - They were forced to agree to the harsh treaty because not signing it wd/ result in a military invasion which they couldn't handle
- Germany lost land to Poland, France, Belgium, Denmark, had its navy/army reduced, lost all colonies, and was forced to accept 'War Guilt Clause' → claiming Germany had total responsibility for starting war therefore had to pay reparations
- Germany not allowed to join League of Nations

### German Nationalism and the 'Diktat'

- Up to the signing of the armistice ... German people had been informed that *they* were winning the war
- Germans felt that w/ Versailles they had been 'stabbed in the back' by enemies and traitors at home
- Those who had signed armistice = 'November Criminals'
- Since no German's present at Versailles, it was seen as a 'dictated peace' or 'diktat'
- Post-war atmosphere led to increased nationalism + Nazism

### German Nazism

- German Nazism + Italian Fascism both developed from WWI
- Hitler had no interest in politics pre-1914 → but as war ended, became an extreme nationalist
- Hitler's aim was to overturn the Treaty of Versailles
- 1924 - four years after he had formed the Nazi party, he wrote his political views in 'Mein Kampf':
  - Hatred for democracy/liberalism/left-wing political parties
  - Outline idea of 'Lebensraum' → similar to Mussolini's 'spazio vitale'
- Unlike Italian fascism, Nazi ideology did not aim for a colonial empire
  - More focused on gaining Lebensraum + resources by expanding Eastward
  - Policy especially aimed towards USSR, since Nazi's wanted to destroy communism
- Nazi ideology resulted in aggressive + expansionist foreign policy
- Nazis wanted to increase birth rate so that their army could grow

### Nazism and German Nationalism post 1918

- In Bavaria, after short-lived socialist revolution 1918-19, extreme-right administration came to power
- Hitler soon joined German Workers' Party → extreme nationalist party formed in March 1919 by Anton Drexler
  - Hitler emerged as an effective speaker
  - 1920 persuaded party to change name to 'National Socialist German Workers' Party'
  - Got the party to accept a 25-point party programme (right-wing nationalist, corporatist, anti-semitic programme)
- After 1933, NSDAP called for the overturn of Versailles + for all German speakers to be united into a greater German Reich

- Nov 1923, Hitler attempted to imitate Mussolini's 'March on Rome' w/ 'March on Berlin'
  - Failed to get out of Munich first ... resulted in Beer Hall Putsch → Hitler Imprisoned

## 5.2 What was the impact of economic issues on the expansionist foreign policies in Italy and Germany?

- By 1933, Italy + Ger were experiencing numerous econ problems
  - Econ impacts of WWI + Great Depression
  - During 1930s, expansionist foreign policy seemed to offer a quick way obtaining extra resources in order to compensate for domestic econ. problems

### The Italian Economy 1900-1933

- Early 20th cent, significant econ. divisions existed in Italy:
  - South was poor/backwards relative to North
  - Not much land available in the South due to climate ... land that was available belonged to large estates (latifundia) owned by wealthy landowners
  - Most of population = poor
  - Even though North had more developed agriculture + more modern equipment/farming methods → productivity still low compared to other European countries
- Industry divided North/South
  - 1899 Fiat car company established
    - By 1913 - exporting 4000+ cars a year
  - Towns/Cities grew rapidly in North → large industrial working class emerged + powerful class of rich industrialists also emerged
  - No real investment in the South

### Economic impact of WWI

- In order to finance war, liberal gov borrowed lots of money from Br + US → national debt rose from 15 billion lire to 85 billion
- Gov printed more banknotes → resulted in inflation w/ prices increasing 400% between 1815-18
- Inflation destroyed middle class savings + reduced rent incomes of landowners + reduced real wages of workers by 25%
- Post WWI saw heavy unemployment → war industries closed causing 2.5 soldiers to be demobilised
- War deepened econ. divisions between North/South Italy
  - Industries linked to war production in the North (steel/chemicals/motor vehicles/rubber etc) thrived ... while the South's agriculture suffered since many peasants were conscripted into war
- To limit attraction of Socialism/Russian bolshevism → Gov promised land reform after war

### The Effects of Fascist Economic Policy 1922-31

- Mussolini had no understanding of economics, but realized a strong econ wd/ consolidate his regime + help push forth an aggressive expansionist foreign policy
- Mussolini believed Italy needed to be self-sufficient economically
  - This wd/ require overcoming poverty at home + obtaining colonies for raw materials
- Mussolini launched 'battles' to achieve econ. prosperity
  - 1924 - Battle to fight poverty
  - 1925 - 'Battle for Grain' - grow more wheat so Italy was less reliant on foreign imports
  - 1926 - 'Battle for Land' - increase available farming land
  - 1926 - 'Battle for Lira' - restore value of Lira
- None of the battles entirely successful
- Although Italy self-sufficient in wheat by 1939 ... still imported other materials
- Battles were intended to achieve autarchy ... but caused more problems than they solved

### Italy and the Great Depression

- 1931-37 worst years of depression

- Pre-depression, Mussolini favoured large companies + heavy industry
- During depression, Mussolini began favouring state intervention so he could introduce job-share schemes
- 1933 → unemployment at 2 million
- Gov used public money to prevent collapse of banks
- 1933 Institute of Industrial Reconstruction (IRI) set up
  - Took over unprofitable industries on behalf of state
  - By 1939 IRI was a massive state company (controlled most iron/steel/merchant shipping/telephone system/electrical industry)
- Effects of depression led Mussolini to adopting a protectionist policy to increase push towards fascist autarchy
- After 1935 after League-imposed Abyssinia sanctions → protectionist policy increased
- As Italy became more aggressive ... push for autarchy increased
- Moderate achievements, eg: by 1940 industrial production increased by 9%, industry overtook agriculture for the first time in Italian history, imports of raw materials dropped (more self-sufficient)
- Yet ... end result of fascism was not significant modernization/increased productivity
- Italy was slower in recovering from fascism than other European countries
- Econ weaknesses became even more apparent during WWII

### The German Economy 1900-1933

- Before 1914, many German states had industrialized quickly in the late 19th cent
  - Strong coal industry/large railway networks
  - Chemical & electrical industries
- Once Germany unified 1871, econ benefits of Zollverein increased, all internal tariffs abolished
- 1879 - Bismarck introduced external tariff system on imported goods
- Econ growth allowed Germany to build large modern army after 1890 + strong navy

### Economic Impact of WWI and the Treaty of Versailles

- WWI badly affected German econ
- Stalemate caused many industries to switch to war production
- National debt went up to 144,000 million marks
- Germany lost industrial customers to US + Japan
- Europe's export market collapsed + inflation rose
- By 1918, prices 500% higher than in 1914
- German industrial production dropped drastically after war
- Two front war = too straining for Germany → led to food shortages, econ problems, strikes, attempted revolution → led to signing of Versailles
- TOV deprived Germany of many industrial areas + imposed reparations (6.6 Billion pounds)
  - Resulted in Ruhr Crisis 1923
- Treaty *didn't* completely destroy German economy or Germany as a great power
  - Russia + AH collapsed, France weakened more by war than Germany
- Econ recovered under Gustav Stresemann
  - New currency (Rentenmark) introduced
  - Stresemann negotiated reduction in reparations
  - US agreed to make loan to Germany (Dawes plan 1924) → lent 800 million marks
- Econ boom = 'golden years'
  - Industrial output reached pre-war levels before 1924, exports rose 40%, foreign investment increased, infrastructure was modernised
- In such atmosphere (econ. prosperity) extremist groups found little support
  - Nazi party won 14 seats in 1924, only 12 seats in 1929 ('lean years')

### Germany and the Great Depression

- German econ recovery was dependent on US loans (1928 → 5 billion marks)

- German banking system based on short-term loans to German industries (couldn't be repaid if firms went bankrupt)
- Wall Street crash 1929, a month after Stresemann died
  - US demanded repayment of loans
  - German industry declined, banks collapsed
  - Germany couldn't pay for essential raw material + food imports
  - Unemployment increased from 1.4 million to 2.4 by end of 1929
  - Unemployment at 6 million+ by 1932
  - Econ crisis led to collapse of multiple coalition gov's
    - Gov relied on ruling by decree (article 48 of Weimar constitution)
- German econ crisis gave Nazi's political opportunity to take power
  - 1930, 12 → 107 seats
  - 1932 July, 230 seats (largest party in Reichstag)
- Nov 1932 election - Nazi seats declined from 230 to 196, KPD (communists) gained seats
- Von Papen offered Hitler a deal → Hitler could be chancellor of coalition gov
  - Von Papen assumed as vice-chancellor he could control him
  - Jan 30th 1933, Hitler appointed Chancellor
  - By March 1933 → created a purely Nazi state

### Effects of Nazi Economic Policy

- Worst effects of depression were over by 1933 (due to actions by coalition gov's)
- World trade began to recover early 1933
- Hitler not very interested in econ, his main aims:
  - Restart econ + solve unemployment via gov expenditure on public work schemes
  - Establish German autarky (econ self-sufficiency + isolation from intl. econ system)
  - Create Wehrwirtschaft ('war economy') → to prepare for total war
- As early as Feb 1933, Hitler spoke of 'military' economy to allow for territorial expansion
- Between 1922-35, unemployment dropped from 6 mil → 1.7 mil
  - Due to Nazi public work schemes, increased expenditure on armaments, introduction of conscription, establishment of German Labour Front
  - Decline of unemployment also the result of earlier Weimar gov schemes
- Hitler's econ/military policies created new problems for Ger.
- Schacht introduced to help w/ recovery
  - 1935, Germany achieved a trade surplus
  - industrial production up 50% compared to 1933
- Yet, cost of products increasing while gold reserves + foreign currency were declining
- 1936 - econ currency over balance payments
  - Schacht suggested reducing armament expenditure + increasing exports to fix this
  - Schacht's idea countered by Nazi's foreign policy aims which insisted on faster military growth
- 1936 - Göring's 4 year plan designed to make German econ + military prepared to fight war in 4 years
  - Schacht resigned 1937
- Hitler gave econ priority to military expansion, lots of state money spent on research/dev
- Although German industrial production increased 100% between 1933-38, Germany not self-sufficient (esp. w/ rubber + oil)
  - 30% of raw materials were imported
  - 20% of food imported
- Despite military spending increasing, re-armament didn't meet Hitler's expectations
  - In 1939, Germany *not* in position to fight major long-lasting war
  - War still prevented German econ from collapsing
  - High costs of rearmament had created problems w/ exports, gold reserves, foreign currency earnings, labour shortages in non-armament industries

- Two options: abandon rearmament, or carry out a few quick 'lightning wars' to gain resources (hence Göring stressed need for Blitzkriegs)
- Hitler's economic policies had made war almost inevitable if Nazis wanted to retain popular support

## 5.3 How did conditions in Europe in the 1930s contribute to the collapse of collective security?

### Weaknesses of the League

- League of Nations established January 1920, aim = prevent aggression/war
  - Aimed to guarantee the territory of states via collective security
  - Aimed to prevent conflicts
  - Aimed to settle disputes peacefully
  - Aimed to act as an agency for disarmament
- Objectives based off Woodrow Wilson's 14 points
- League seen as a 'European Club'/'Victors Club'
- **Weakness #1 of the League: Non-Membership**
  - Germany not allowed to join until 1926
  - Fear of communism meant USSR couldn't join
    - USSR condemned League as capitalist club dominated by imperialist powers
  - US, (Major econ. power) did not join → sanctions less effective
- **Weakness #2 of the League: Aggression and Collective Security**
  - Main purpose of League from USA pov = guarantee territorial integrity + political independence of all members vs. external aggression
    - Br. attempted to drop this idea - didn't want to be 'policemen of the world'
  - Ability for League to act collectively undermined by decision by main powers to establish **a conference of ambassadors** w/ Br, Fr, It + Jap
    - Set up to supervise peace treaties of 1919/20
    - Resulted in confusions w/ League (many decisions made independently from League)
    - Most diplomatic meetings/agreements post 1919 = direct diplomacy between states, rather than via League
    - France insisted that enforcement of treaties should be undertaken by conf. of ambassadors
  - Member states were suppose to submit all disputes to the Council
    - Council was dominated by Britain + Fr, who had dif. views on what the role of the League should be
      - Since all decisions had to be unanimous → League ineffective
  - Members states hesitant to apply econ. sanctions or trade boycotts, in case USA or USSR (non-member states) took over the trade
  - If sanctions failed, military sanctions could be recommended using troops of member states
    - France wanted the League to have its owned armed forces, Br + others opposed
    - 1923 - Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance proposed by France (aimed to give League powers to take rapid military action vs. aggression) blocked by Br.
- **Weakness #3 of the League: Disarmament**
  - Existence of Communist Russia + Power Vacuum in central Europe meant that many nations afraid to disarm
  - France didn't want to disarm as League had no real military power
  - Preparatory Disarmament Commission not set up at Geneva until 1926
- **Weakness #4 of the League: Increasing Failure to take Action**
  - League *did* have successes in the 1920s... but disputes didn't involve major states
  - Problems emerged in 1930s w/ depression + rise of nationalistic regimes
  - League failed to stop Japan/Italian aggression
  - League failed to take action vs. Nazi infringements vs. peace treaties

- By 1935, League = irrelevant
- Spanish Civil War 1936 → Br + Fr formed ineffective non-intervention committee
  - Even after merchant ships attacked, Br + Fr took no action

## The Great Depression

- Germany, Italy, France and Britain all suffered
- Great depression developed after 1929 wall street crash
- Many countries affected still coping w/ effects of WWI (lost markets, war debts, overproduction, unemployment, & problems w/ reparations)
- US resorted to protectionist tariffs to safeguard its own econ → other countries followed
- By 1931, Tariff rates in Europe had doubled
- World trade declined dramatically
- Withdrawal of US loans caused financial crises in European countries (eg: Germany)
- 1933 - League of Nations organised World Economic Conference in London
  - US didn't take part → demonstrated that European countries were on their own
- Difficult for European countries to take joint diplomatic action in 1930s → each country trying to solve *their own* econ. problems
- Political result = some countries began moving to the right
  - Eg: Germany
  - Fascist/semi-fascist movements emerged in France → put pressure on their gov

## The Great Depression in Britain

- Increase in unemployment (1931 rose 25%)
- Labour gov. Initially attempted to deal w/ problems via work schemes + increasing unemployment benefits → these ended due to banking crisis summer 1931
- Gov + Bank of England agreed to Loans from US (as long as Br agreed to cut gov. expenditure)
  - Accepting of these conditions led to revolt within labour partly
  - Coalition w/ Conservative + Liberal parties formed
- New national gov cut unemployment benefits, took Br. off the Gold Standard (practice of linking country's currency to its gold deposits), and placed high tariffs on foreign imports in 1932
- Unemployment decreased in 1932... but remained relatively high throughout 1930s
  - As a result → gov continued to cut public expenditure
- Br gov's post 1929 didn't want to get involved in intl. Conflicts → more concerned w/ dealing of domestic issues + protecting the British empire
  - Japan's growth = threat to British empire

## The Great Depression in France

- France = less industrialised than Britain, so depression only hit hard in 1931-32
  - (when it did hit, more severe/long-term)
- Depression led to coalition gov's → much more unstable than National gov in Br.
  - 1933 - France saw 5 dif. Coalition gov's (parties couldn't agree on what actions should be taken to deal w/ econ crisis)
- Industrial production returned to 1929 levels in 1938
- Financial crisis 1936-37 → wealthy investors sent money abroad (Leon Blum PM resigned)
- Unemployment in 1930s split the country along left/right lines
  - Deep political divisions made it difficult for France to follow single foreign policy

## European Divisions

- Many gov's. reluctant to increase expenditure on armaments during time of econ crisis
- Reluctance to apply econ sanctions → fear that other countries would step in + take over important markets
- During 1930s - clear that Fr + Br (most powerful members of League) had dif. priorities
  - Br dealing w/ rising nationalism within its empire (Egypt + India)
    - Br wanted political/econ stability in Europe so it could concentrate its efforts on protecting its empire

- Br gov's believed best way to ensure Germany agreed to TOV was by agreeing to minor revision of terms
  - Fr disagreed: believed any revision as increasing Germany's strength
- Post-Locarno 1925, France still concerned about security → opposed to disarmament
  - Since Br. refused to promise military assistance in the event of German aggression → France *seriously* did not want to disarm
  - France's fears increased between 1926-29 → Stresemann stressed Germany's aim of revising TOV
- Since Br didn't want to sign military pacts w/ France, France turned to East → CZ + Poland
  - These states *not* in favour of Germany increasing in strength
  - (1921, CZ + Romania + Yugoslavia had formed 'little entente')
- Unlike France, Br *in favour* of revisions in East
  - Br felt a stronger Germany wd/ help prevent the spread of Communism
  - Fr felt that alliances w/ successor states wd/ 'provide some sort of check on Germany'
    - Mutual assistance treaties between France & Poland (1921), CZ (1924), Romania (1926), + Yugoslavia (1927)
- During 1930s, more crises → Fr sought to strengthen itself by allying w/ USSR
  - USSR joined league 1934
  - Fr negotiated mutual assistance pact (included promise to protect CZ against German aggression)
- Br disapproved of Fr links w/ USSR
- Two major members of League, Br + Fr, pursued dif. Policies

## The Collapse of Collective Security

- Econ/Political crises led to diplomatic shifts → led to end of collective security
- British gov increasingly adopted appeasement towards Nazi Germany + Fascist Italy → made the outbreak of war more likely
- Key aspect of League had been attempting to uphold 1919/20 peace treaties
- Br prepared to work w/ France to ensure that borders retained from post WWI
- Italy (despite disappointments re: WWI gains) also willing to work w/ Br + Fr
  - Even in 1934, Italy joined Br + Fr to block Nazi's attempt to achieve Anschluss w/ Austria
  - Italy, France + Britain had formed **Stresa Front 1935**
- Germany saw League as 'club of victors' whose goal was to enforce TOV
- 1935 - League half-heartedly opposed Italy's invasion of Abyssinia → Hitler exploited this
  - Hitler offered support to Mussolini → Italy shifted towards Germany
- Italy's shift from Stresa front to Germany deepened diplomatic divided between Br + Fr
  - Br angry at France's treaty w/ USSR 1934
  - Fr angry at Br's anglo-German naval treaty 1935 + refusal to oppose occupation of Rhineland in March 1936
  - ^ KEY FACTORS which caused collapse of collective security
- 1927, new British PM Neville Chamberlain, increased policy of appeasement
  - Aimed to avoid another war by negotiating w/ Nazi Germany on peaceful changes to parts of TOV which Hitler objected
  - Fr. gov's less sympathetic to this^ approach, yet felt it necessary to retain friendly relations w/ Britain
- At same time, Germany + Italy moved closer together + w/ Japan
  - This increased pressure on Br + Fr since both had colonies in Asia
  - By 1939, most combatants of WWII already joined via alliances

## Ch 6. Germany's and Italy's Actions

### Timeline

**1924 - Feb:** Pact of Rome between Italy and Yugoslavia

**1932 - Feb:** World Disarmament conference begins

**1933 - Jan:** Hitler appointed chancellor of Germany, **Oct:** Germany leaves disarmament conference and League of Nations, **Nov:** Germany begins re-armament

**1934 - Jan:** World Disarmament conference ends in failure; Nazi Germany makes Pact with Poland, **Jul:** Hitler attempts Anschluss with Austria, **Sep:** Soviet Union joins League of Nations

**1935 - March:** Hitler announces German rearmament and reintroduces conscription, **April:** Stresa front formed, **Oct:** Italy invades Abyssinia

**1936 - March:** German reoccupation of Rhineland, **July:** Germany and Italy's Intervention in Spanish Civil War, **Oct:** Rome-Berlin Axis, **Nov:** Comintern Pact (Germany and Japan)

**1937 - Oct:** Italy signs Anti-Comintern Pact (Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis), **Dec:** Italy leaves the League of Nations

**1938 - March:** Anschluss between Germany and Austria, **September:** Munich Conference

**1939 -** Hitler invades rest of Czechoslovakia, **April:** Italy annexed Abyssinia, **May:** Pact of Steel (Germany and Italy), **August:** Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression (Molotov-Ribbentrop) Pact

## Overview

- After Corfu Incident 1923, Fascist Italy pursued a peaceful foreign policy + was (for a time) prepared to cooperate w/ Br + Fr
- Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in Germany (Jan 1933) changed European diplomacy → He was determined to challenge the terms of the Treaty of Versailles
- Once Hitler's internal position secured by 1934, Hitler began an increasingly aggressive foreign policy which ultimately led to outbreak of WWII
- Initially, Hitler turned his attention to Austria in July 1934, when he attempted to effect an Anschluss (union) w/ Austria → action was forbidden by peace treaties, and despite shared fascist ideology, Mussolini took steps to block this
- April 1935, Mussolini - unsure about Hitler's intentions - joined Br + Fr in Stresa Front which intended to contain Nazi Germany's ambitions
- After Italy's Invasion of Abyssinia in October 1935 → Fascist Italy began moving away from Br + Fr and towards Germany → Stresa Front collapsed
- Hitler then moved quickly to improve relations w/ Fascist Italy + at the same time in March 1936, Hitler took advantage of Abyssinian crisis to re-occupy Rhineland (this was against TOV, but neither Br. nor France opposed)
- After re-occupation of Rhineland, Hitler's foreign policy became increasingly expansionist. During Spanish Civil War, Ger + It intervened on the side of right-wing nationalist rebels. In October, Hitler + Mussolini signed Rome-Berlin axis.
- Further German expansion took place in 1938 - first Anschluss w/ Austria (no opposition from Italy this time), and then in Sep 1938, Munich Conference gave Hitler the Czech Sudetenland
- Spring 1939, Nazi Germany invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, while Fascist Italy occupied Albania. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy moved closer together in May w/ the Pact of Steel
- Finally after signing a nonaggression pact w/ USSR in August 1939, Hitler turned his expansionist aims on Poland

## 6.1 How did Germany Challenge the Post-War Settlements, 1933-38?

- Before 1933, although some gov's in Weimar Germany had tried to 'alter' some terms of 1919-20 peace, this had always been done via peaceful diplomatic negotiations
- Rise of Hitler/Nazis had negative impact on international affairs
- Hitler most concerned w/ establishing internal control until 1934
  - Once he had consolidated his domestic power base, he soon moved to a more aggressive foreign policy

### The World Disarmament Conference, 1932

- Although Crisis in Manchuria led to instability in Asia ... not *extremely* significant to events in Europe
- World Disarmament conf. organised by League in Geneva
- Aim = secure agreed limits on army, naval, + air force weapons
- Attended initially by 61 nations + 5 non-members (incl. USA + USSR)
- Fr. again unsuccessfully attempted to get the League an army
- Br. proposal to limit offensive weapons (eg: tanks, bombs, subs, chemical weapons) obtained 41-vote majority, but Ger + USSR refused to agree
- Germany insisted on 'equality of treatment' → argued that all nations should disarm to level of Germany set by TOV ... OR Germany should be allowed to re-arm up to levels of Fr/Br
- Ger. never actually complied to TOV disarmament restrictions: had begun limited re-armament via treaties of Rapallo + Berlin (Both treaties between Ger + USSR)

- Rapallo - 1922
  - In return for technical aid, USSR allowed Weimar Germany to obtain weapons it was banned from having by TOV (even before Hitler came to power ... Ger. secretly developing banned weapons)
- Berlin - 1926
  - Between Stresemann + USSR
- As early as 1932, BEFORE Hitler had become chancellor, German delegates walked out of world disarmament conf. + said they wouldn't return until they were granted 'equality of treatment'
- Conference continued w/ out them

### Hitler's Early Foreign Policy 1933-35

- Initially... Hitler's foreign policy = cautious + 'revisionist' ... very continuous from foreign policy of previous statesmen (including Stresemann)
- Thus ... despite aggressive rhetoric from *Mein Kampf* + Nazi election propaganda in 1920s... German policy did not at first undergo any dramatic changes in 1933
- Continuity w/ 'Weimar Diplomacy' in early years of Nazi regime due to...
  - German econ suffering from Great Depression
  - Hitler's political position not yet fully secure
  - Germany's armed forces too weak
- When Hitler became Chancellor Jan 1933 → he allowed previous Foreign Min, Constantin von Neurath, to remain
  - Helped reassure Germany's neighbours that no dramatic changes wd/ occur under Hitler's Foreign policy
- Hitler's main aim in 1933 = establish Nazi control over Germany
  - Tried to maintain good relations w/ Br + Italy (yet still wanted to isolate + weaken France)
- As early as Feb 1933, Hitler told German army officers of his intention to expand Germany's military strength
  - Wanted Germany to be the most powerful nation in Europe by 1938
  - After this was achieved ... Germany wd/ seek Lebensraum in East (at the expense of the USSR)

### Withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference & the League 1933

- At German Disarmament conf, Hitler stressed German desire for Peace + repeated earlier request for 'equality of treatment'
- Br supported idea of both Ger + Fr. having an army of 200,000 + urged France to agree
  - France insisted that Germany guarantee TOV limitations (at least for the next 4 years)
- In response: in October 1933, Hitler announced Germany's withdrawal from World Disarmament conf.
- In the same month → Germany withdrew from League
- World Disarmament conf. continued until Jan 1934, but ended in failure
- France's refusal to compromise was seen as unreasonable
- Hitler won sympathy from British politicians for his 'reasonable' approach

### Pact with Poland 1934

- France further isolated in Jan 1934 → Hitler signed 10 year non-aggression pact w/ Poland
- Eased European concerns over Germany's intentions
- Prevented France from forming closer ties w/ Poland
- Poland now under German influence
- Br 'welcomed the development' but France was suspicious ... began pursuing its security independent of Britain
- Pact angered officials in German foreign ministry + Nazi activists
  - Yet Hitler gained international respect... appeared as a 'reasonable statesman'
- France's position undermined

### First attempt at Anschluss with Austria, 1934

- Hitler's first aggressive expansionist foreign policy action = attempt in July 1934 to bring about Anschluss w/ Austria
- This attempt resulted in murder of Austrian PM
- Attempt alienated Germany from British statesmen who had previously supported his desire to revise TOV
- Despite Mussolini's common fascist beliefs, Mussolini opposed this union → moved 400,000 Italian troops to the Italian border w/ Austria in order to deter a German invasion

- Hitler backed down ... German army not ready for military conflict
- ^ Humiliating for Hitler ... yet *Anschluss* remained a foreign policy aim

### Rearmament and Conscriptioin

- Hitler further alienated Br + Italy March 1935 → announced that despite TOV... Germany had an air force (Luftwaffe) + that Germany was no longer bound by TOV
- Hitler announced that conscription wd/ be reintroduced + began open German rearmament
- Response = Stresa front between It, Fr, and Br in April 1935
  - Aim = oppose further German actions in Europe
  - NOT conducted via League... but outside (undermined collective security)
- Hitler took steps to weaken Stresa Front:
  - Gave speeches about how Germany wanted peace + rearmament
    - Br impressed by these statements ... Fr was unconvinced
- Hitler was able to widen the gap between Fr and Br policies ^
- As a result: **May 1935, France negotiated mutual assistance pact w/ USSR** → included joint promise to protect CZ from German aggression
- Br disapproved of Fr links w/ comm USSR + objected France's hardlined stance vs. Germany
- As a result: **June 1935, Br signed Anglo-German Naval Treaty** to limit Hitler's planned naval expansion
  - Made France even more isolated
  - Helpd undermine Stresa Front → France + Italy not consulted regarding Naval Treaty

### Growing German Expansionism, 1936-38

- Italy's decision to invade Abyssinia Oct 1935 produced more serious strains between Stresa Front
  - Hitler took advantage of tensions → went ahead w/ plans 'for unilateral revision of TOV'

### Re-occupation of the Rhineland, 1936

- In response to invasion of Abyssinia Oct 1935, Br + Fr reluctantly applied limited econ sanctions
- Hitler told Mussolini he supported his invasion
- Stresa front collapsed January 1936
- Mussolini told Hitler he had no objections of the Austrian Anschluss now
- Mussolini hinted that he wouldn't support the League if Hitler decided to re-occupy the Rhineland
- Hitler moved quickly to re-occupy Rhineland to take advantage of Abyssinian crisis
- **March 7th 1936 - Hitler ordered troops to enter the Rhineland** → an action forbidden by Treaty of Locarno & TOV (was supposed to remain a demilitarised zone)
- Hitler occupied Rhineland *even* though the army wasn't strong enough to fight war
  - German foreign ministry + army's high command were opposed → 'too risky'
  - Hitler agreed that German troops wd/ withdraw at first sign of resistance from allies
- Only 22,000 troops sent
- Hitler calculated there wd/ be NO resistance from Br + Fr ... he was correct
- Br persuaded Fr to take no action
- Success weakened Hitler's critics + 'strengthened his resolve to take increasingly more aggressive expansionist actions in the immediate future'

### Re-occupation of the Rhineland, 1936

- After Rhineland, Hitler continued efforts to build alliance w/ Mussolini
- July 1936, Civil War broke out in Spain between democratically elected popular front + nationalists backed by army
- Within one month, Hitler + Mussolini decided to help nationalists w/ troops & weapons
- Hitler saw the war as opportunity to test German military equip + Blitzkrieg tactics (this combined tank units + planes in action)
  - Luftwaffe gained valuable experience from Condor Legion's bombing missions on civilian populations
  - Anti-tank + anti-aircraft guns used/tested
- In return, Franco provided Hitler w/ raw materials which aided German rearmament
- Hitler saw joint Italian-German intervention in the Spanish Civil War as a way to create closer ties w/ Mussolini

- Joint military co-op resulted in **Oct 1936 Rome-Berlin Axis**
  - Confirmed Italy's departure from Fr + Br
- **Nov 1936, Hitler signed Anti-Comintern Pact w/ Japan**
  - Directed vs. USSR (Hitler's long-term target for lebensraum)
  - October 1937, Fascist Italy joined anti-comintern pact
  - This led to **Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis**
    - (During WWII 'axis powers')

### Göring's Four-Year Plan, 1936-40

- Despite successful re-occupation of Rhineland... Germany still faced political/econ problems
  - Domestic problems needed to be overcome before war could be fought
- Traditional elites in foreign ministry + army wanted to pursue a conservative way for creating a stronger Germany
- Germany experienced new econ crisis 1936
  - Showed German econ not yet stable enough to wage war
- Response to econ crisis = Four-year plan under Göring → designed to get Germany ready (economically + militarily) to fight a war
- Leading Nazis still divided on which diplomatic course to follow:
  - Some wanted to reach understanding w/ Britain
  - Foreign minister, von Ribbentrop, wanted Germany to join forces w/ Italy + Japan
  - ^ Hitler preferred Br option (as his long-term aim was to destroy USSR)
    - Yet because Br showed little sign of having a relationship w/ Germany, Hitler moved towards Italy + Japan

### The Hossbach Memorandum, 1937

- By the end of 1936, Nazi Germany had succeeded in 'tearing up' most of TOV
  - No military consequences
- As a result: Hitler felt able to address long-term aim of Lebensraum in the East
- Hitler disappointed that Anglo-German alliance didn't seem likely ... yet Germany's position still strong
- By 1937, econ crisis of 1936 = over
- Göring's 4-year plan was producing positive results
- Nov 5th 1937, Hitler called meeting w/ Neurath von Blomberg (war minister) + 3 commanders in chief of the armed forces
- Historians divided on significance of meeting/accuracy of what was said
- Colonel Hossbach was present → made a summary of the meeting
  - Hitler told attendees to get Germany ready for conquests in Eastern Europe ... to be completed by 1943-45 while Germany was militarily superior to Britain
  - Hossbach memorandum included plans to seize Austria + CZ (even if it provoked war w/ Britain + Fr)
- Later in November → Schacht - econ minister who opposed rapid re-armament - resigned
- Hitler further encouraged to pursue expansionist ambitions in Nov 1937 → Lord Halifax said that Neville Chamberlain's gov wd/ support legitimate revisions of Germany's borders w/ Austria + CZ (provided it was done peacefully)

### Hitler's increasing control of Foreign policy

- Despite debates over Hossbach, Hitler's foreign policy became more adventurous post-1937
- Jan 1938 - moderate war minister von Blomberg + commander in Chief of army von Fritsch - were both dismissed
- Hitler = supreme commander of all armed forces
- Leading positions filled w/ convinced Nazi's who supported German expansion
- Ribbentrop later replaced Neurath as Foreign Minister
- Hitler's position = secured → now he could conduct *Anschluss* w/ Austria

### Anschluss with Austria, March 1938

- Despite failure in 1934 ... Anschluss remained Hitler's objective
- July 1936 - Hitler had persuaded the Austrian gov. to agree to accept German supervision over its foreign policy
  - In return... Germany agreed to guarantee Austria's sovereignty
- 1936 - Hitler used the Austrian Nazi Party to create a crisis in Austria
- In Feb 1938 - Austrian chancellor called a referendum on Austrian independence

- Looked as if vote might reject union w/ Germany
  - Hitler insisted that new Austrian gov be formed - dominated by Austrian Nazi's
- New coalition gov requested German troops to enter Austria ... to help deal w/ disorder (that was orchestrated by them)
- 12th March 1938 - German troops crossed into Austria + *Anschluss* achieved
  - BREACH of TOV
- France denounced this action ... but didn't threaten a military response
  - Technically had no gov atm due to elections
- Br. maintained policy of appeasement
- Hitler... once again successful in pursuing an expansionist foreign policy 'without a shot being fired'

## 6.3 How did Germany expand, 1939-39?

- Hitler encouraged by success of Anschluss 1938
- Now turned to CZ
  - First step: focusing on the 3.5 million German speakers living in the Sudetenland (border region in Czechoslovakia)

### Crisis over Czechoslovakia, 1938

- Anschluss breached TOV ... but strengthened Germany's ability to threaten CZ
- President Edvard Benes facing increasing problems from Germans in the Sudetenland
- Hitler used pro-Nazi Sudeten German party to stir up violence
  - ^ excuse for military action
- May 1938 - Cz gov claimed that Hitler was planning to invade
- Germany convinced that Br + Fr wdnt/ risk war over CZ ... now were set on invading *all* of CZ (Hitler denied this was his aim)
- Chamberlain sent Lord Runciman to mediate between CZ gov + Sudetens
- Runciman concluded that Sudeten Germans = oppressed minority + should be allowed to become part of Germany → threat of war increased
  - (CZ had defense treaty w/ France since 1924 + Fr + USSR had signed an undertaking to protect CZ independence in May 1935)
- CZ had small but efficient army → prepared to resist
- Hitler's military advisers warned Hitler that 4 year plan hadn't made Germany ready for a European war
- Sep 1938 - Chamberlain decided to negotiate w/ Hitler in person
  - Sep 15th met in Berchtesgaden
  - Sep 22nd met at Bad Godesberg
  - Each time, Hitler increased his demands → Mussolini mediated the meetings, tried to moderate Hitler's stance
- Fr not directly involved ... but Br + Fr informed CZ gov that Sudetenland should go to Ger. or risk war
  - USSR not consulted

### The Munich Agreement, 1938

- Chamberlain + Hitler's third meeting on 29th Sep → Munich
- Br + Fr + Ger + It agreed on 30th Sep that Sudetenland should be handed over to Germany
  - USSR + CZ NOT PRESENT
  - Basis of argument - self-determination had been denied to German speakers 1919
- CZ gov forced to comply - didn't receive any offers to help (despite numerous treaties it was in)
- October 10th - Sudetenland became part of Germany
  - Sudetenland contained all CZ border defences + skoda armament works, also had lots of agriculture + industry
  - CZ weaker, Ger stronger
- Hitler made vague promises in return to leave the rest of CZ alone
- Hitler + Chamberlain signed a doc saying that they would NEVER GO TO WAR → 'peace of our time' pledge
- Later in October, Poland + Hungary also seized land from CZ

### Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1939

- Hitler's foreign policy now centered on destroying the rest of CZ

- Within weeks, Germany's army mobilized to invade the rest of CZ
  - Slovaks bullied into declaring independence
  - Poland + Hungary encouraged to make their own territorial demands
- Hitler convinced because of appeasement, he could continue w/ policy of gaining lebensraum
  - calculated that Br more concerned re communism than Hitler's ambitions in CZ
- Stalin thought his attempts to build an anti-Nazi alliance w/ Br + Fr were now doomed to fail
- Feb 1939, Br + Fr signed military alliance
  - Yet... European diplomacy still 'undecided'
- March 15th - Hitler ordered the invasion of the rest of CZ → achieved w/ out any opp from Br + Fr
  - DESPITE the fact it was a breach of the Munich agreement
- French PM Deladier put France on 'war footing' ... but took no actual action
- Hitler now focused on Memel port in Lithuania (also had German speakers)
- Memel became free port zone (effectively under Nazi control)
- Hitler now planned on invading Poland ... but his plans were halted
  - Fr + Br signed a pact w/ Poland guaranteeing its independence
- To counter this, Hitler strengthened his military alliance w/ Italy → May 1939 Pact of Steel
- Hitler also decided to pursue negotiations w/ USSR so Br + Fr wouldn't have an ally in the East
  - Br only 'half heartedly' begun to consider a pact w/ USSR in July/August
- Germany begun by starting trade talks w/ USSR July 1939

## The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact

- USSR had been offering Br + Fr an anti-Nazi alliance for a long time
  - Chamberlain = anti-communist → opposed offer (thought it would provoke Germany)
- USSR Red Army could only get to Germany by crossing Polish territory ... Poland also opposed ... didn't want Russian troops to be in their territory
- By 1938, Poland = most disliked successor state
- Since 1926, Poland had authoritarian gov → pro-German + anti-semitic + had revisionist foreign policy directed at CZ
- Br rejected alliance w/ USSR for a second time May 1939
  - But by Mid 1939 - Br public urged gov to form an alliance
  - Chamberlain reluctantly opened negotiations (but at a low level)
- Since Munich 1938, Stalin suspect of Br + Fr → thought they would support Germany in conquering further territory in the East
- Br's slow responses to USSR + Br 'low level' negotiations in summer of 1939 confirmed Stalin's suspect
- Stalin turned to Germany → responded to German requests for negotiation of a non-aggression pact
- Hitler had set a date for the invasion of Poland → a pact w/ USSR wd/ be necessary
  - Calculated that w/ no Soviet ally ... Br + Fr wouldn't honour pledges to Poland
- Stalin saw pact as means to prepare for war + gain time ... (knew that German invasion was still inevitable)
- **Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of Nonaggression August 23rd 1939**
  - Included secret clauses for splitting Poland + Soviets taking over Baltic states
- R. Henig → important factor in interwar diplomacy was fear of spread of communism (early Bolshevik propoganda made it seem like their goal was a worldwide workers revolution)
  - Revolutionary internationalism declined under Stalin ... he attempted to find allies in the 1930s
  - Nonetheless... capitalist countries still feared communism (esp. w/ depression)
- 'Although by the late 1930s it was clear that only joint action by Britain, France and the Soviet Union could check Hitler's determination to expand Germany's frontiers, the preceding ideological warfare of the previous 20 years had created considerable mutual distrust between these potential allies'

## 6.2 What the Main Aspects of Italy's Foreign Policy, 1935-39?

- Before 1935, Mussolini wanted to make Italy a great power, based from the Mediterranean w/ a large African empire → to fulfill 'spazio vitale'
- Mussolini's actions done deliberately to re-create the empire of Ancient Rome

- 1922-35 → mostly peaceful foreign policy
- 1935-39 → aggressive foreign policy/closer allied to Nazi Germany
- 1940-45 → Italy joined World War II

### **Fascist Diplomacy, 1922-35**

- Initially in 1922, Mussolini not in position to achieve aims by force
  - New state Yugoslavia blocked Italy's ambitions along Adriatic
  - Br + Fr controlled strategically important locations in Med/Africa/Mid. East

### **Emerging Expansionist Aims, 1922-33**

- Corfu Incident 1923 demonstrated relative weakness of Italy
  - August 1923 - Italian general murdered on Greek Soil while making maps of a disputed area for the conference of ambassadors
  - Mussolini demanded full apology + 50 million lire compensation
  - Greece refused (they weren't responsible) → Mussolini sent troops to invade Corfu
- League condemned Mussolini
- forced Mussolini to withdraw from conference of ambassadors
- ^ as a result ... Mussolini stuck to peaceful diplomacy
- 1924 - Persuaded Yugoslavia to sign pact of Rome → accepted Italian occupation of Fiume
- May 1925 - Signed Locarno pact
- 1926 - talks w/ Br + Fr → parts of Kenya + Egypt given to Italian colonies of Somaliland + Libya
- Mussolini ALSO using non-diplomatic methods to increase Italy's influence
  - Gave financial backing to Albanian chieftain who seized power over Albania + became king in 1929
    - Italy - Albania treaty of friendship soon followed
  - Mussolini supported extreme nationalist groups in Germany, Bulgaria, Austria, Yugoslavia
- 1928 - signed Kellogg-Briand pact (outlawed War)
  - (even though he disliked that France had formed a little entente 1927 w/ Romania, Yugoslavia, CZ → this blocked future Italian expansion in the area)
- 1929 → onwards Mussolini's Foreign Policy began changing
  - Called from 1919-20 peace treaties to be revised
  - Plotted w/ Hungary to overthrow King of Yugoslavia
  - At an intl. Peace conf in London → demanded Italy's navy should be equal to Br + Fr (denied)
- 1931-34 period = turning point in Italian foreign policy
  - 1931 - Mussolini noted ineffectiveness of League over Manchuria
  - 1933 - Italy sent arms to Right wing military group in Austria + Croat terrorist group based in Hungary
    - Disturbed Br + Fr → Fr + Little Entente strengthened ties

### **Nazi Germany and the Stresa Front, 1933-35**

- 1933 - Hitler Chancellor of Germany
- Despite both being fascists ... Mussolini didn't trust Hitler's plans for expansion
- Mussolini concerned about Alto-Adige region in N. Italy → contained German speakers
- Mussolini saw Austria as an Italian sphere of Influence
- Proposed 4 power pact w/ Italy, Germany, Fr + Br
- Sep 1933 - Non-aggression pact w/ USSR
- 1934 - attempted to establish closer ties w/ Austria + Hungary
- When Hitler attempted Anschluss w/ Austria 1934 → Mussolini placed Italian troops on border
- 1935 - Italy + Fr formed an accord after Germany attacked disarmament clause of TOV + introduced conscription
- Stresa Front formed 1935 w/ Br + Fr to block German expansion
  - Mussolini also joined in a pact w/ Br + Fr as he thought they wd/ support him in expanding into Abyssinia

### **Invasion of Abyssinia**

- Italy's first expansionist war was intended to recreate modern version of old Roman empire

- Began October 3rd 1935 → 500,000 Italian troops invaded Abyssinia
  - Abyssinia = one of two African colonies who had independence
- Stresa front already undermined due to Anglo-German naval treaty
- Mussolini had been planning invasion since 1932
  - Wanted more colonies than just Eritrea + Somaliland
- Pretext for Abyssinia = Abyssinian-Italian Somaliland 'border' conflict - Dec 1934
  - Italy had previously built a fort at the Wal-Wal oasis which lay *within* Abyssinian territory (breach of Italo-Ethiopian treaty of 1928)
  - Skirmish ensued → 100+ Italians killed, 50 Ethiopian troops killed
- Despite being involved in League → Mussolini went ahead w/ Plans for full invasion of Abyssinia in 1935
  - He had built up forces in Eritrea + Somaliland after skirmish
- Invasion began October 3rd
  - Early successes by Italy → Italy had tanks/bombers/poison gas vs. Abyssinians who had spears
  - Italian invasion slowed down due to determined resistance by Abyssinian forces + poor communication between Italian units
  - One-sided war → in the end, 400,000 Abyssinians killed
- Mussolini calculated that Br + Fr wouldn't seriously object (he was correct)
- Hoare-Laval Pact drawn up December 1935 → offered ⅓ of Abyssinia to Italy
  - Deal collapsed due to hostile Br + Fr public opinion
- League imposed sanctions (Germany ignored, sanctions EXCLUDED vital war supplies, Br didn't close Suez canal to Italian ships)
  - Sanctions had little effect
- By May 1936, Italian forces had captured the capital Addis Ababa
- Abyssinia merged w/ other Italian colonies to form Italian East Africa
- Conquest brought little benefit to Italy
  - Abyssinia had poor land, not much raw materials
- Invasion alienated Italy from Br + Fr → Italy increasingly dependent on Nazi Germany
- By January 1936 - Mussolini let Hitler know that he didn't object Anschluss anymore
  - Mussolini hinted that he wouldn't object to German reoccupation of Rhineland
- March 6th 1936, Mussolini withdrew from League

### Spanish Civil War

- Shift to Nazi side confirmed w/ start of Spanish Civil War July 1936
- Mussolini agreed to join Hitler to help Franco overthrow democratically elected popular front
- Franco supported by Pope + Catholic church → made it easy to gain public support from Italians
  - Portrayed as a 'crusade' vs. communism
- Italy sent 70,000 troops (Mussolini made more of a commitment to help Right wing forces than Hitler did)
- Overall cost of intervention = 10 billion lire
  - 600 planes
  - 1000 tanks
  - 90 warships
  - 6,000 soldiers killed
- Similar to Abyssinia ... military intervention brought little benefit to Mussolini (asides from gaining islands of Mallorca + Menorca)
- Intervention had negative impact on Italy's military capacity

### Alliance w/ Nazi Germany

- Mussolini noted Br + Fr reluctance to get involved in war during Spanish Civil War
- Mussolini's intervention in Spain led to collapse of Stresa Front
- Hitler exploited this rift → Rome-Berlin Axis signed October 1936
  - Mussolini + Hitler confirmed their joint opposition to communism
  - Agreed to divide Europe into spheres of influence
    - Italy wd/ get Med + Balkans

- Germany + Italy moved closer when Italy joined Germany + Japan's anti-comintern pact in Dec 1937 (originally formed in Nov 1936)

### Italy and the Road to War, 1938-39

- March 1938 → new fascist alliance enabled Hitler to carry out Anschluss w/ Austria (defiance of TOV)
- YET despite moving closer to Nazis, Mussolini signed pact of friendship w/ Br + throughout 1938 resisted pressure from Hitler to sign military alliance
- Sep 1938, Mussolini tried to act as a peacemaker at Munich conf between Br + Fr + Ger ... but also ordered navy to prepare for war vs. Br in the Med
- Munich conf. Convinced Mussolini that Br + Fr would never take action to prevent German expansion
  - Belief confirmed when Hitler was easily able to takeover rest of CZ in March 1939 (following occupation of Sudetenland) 1938

### Invasion of Albania, April 1939

- April 1939, Mussolini decided to annex Albania + turn it into a protectorate
- When Italy switched sides in war → it moved to occupy South Albania
  - Yet Italy forced to withdraw 1920 - due to strong Albanian resistance
- Italian nationalists saw Albania as strategically important
  - wd/ give access to the Adriatic sea
  - wd/ extend Italian influence to the Balkans
- Once appointed PM → Mussolini pursued interests in Albania
  - Econ penetration beginning 1925
  - 1926/27 Italy + Albania treaties established defensive alliance
  - Albanian gov increasingly subsidized by Italian loans
  - Albanian army trained by Italian instructors
- 1931 - King Zog refused to renew 1926 treaty w/ Italy → instead signed trade agreements w/ Yugoslavia + Greece
  - Annoyed Mussolini
- After Hitler invaded CZ, without warning Hitler, Mussolini took action in Abyssinia
- March 25th - Italy issued ultimatum to Albanian gov → offering money in exchange for Italian occupation
  - Albania refused → Invasion began April 7th 1939
  - By April 12th, King was disposed + Albania declared an Italian possession
- Italy's force in Albania soon reached 100,000 troops, 600 aircraft + naval units
- Yet... Italian military instructors had disabled many artillery pieces → Albanian resistance did not start in a bad position
- Italy's inability to conquer even the small states ... would occur over and over again during WWII

### The Pact of Steel, May 1939

- May 1939, Mussolini + Hitler finally signed a formal military alliance → 'Pact of Steel'
- Italy now committed to fighting on Germany's side if war broke out
- Mussolini warned Hitler that Italy needed 3 years of peace before they could fight (needed time to recover from Abyssinia + Spanish Civil War)
- When WWII broke out Sep. 1939, Italy did NOT join .... Until May 1940

## Ch 7. International Responses to German and Italian Expansionism

### Timeline

**1925** - Locarno Treaty

**1928** - Kellogg Briand Pact

**1933 - Oct:** Germany leaves Disarmament Conference and League of Nations

**1934 - Jul:** Hitler attempts Anschluss w/ Austria, **Sept:** USSR joins League of Nations

**1935 - March:** Hitler reintroduces conscription, **April:** Stresa Front, **Oct:** Italy invades Abyssinia, **Nov:** League of Nations applies sanctions against Italy

**1936 - March:** German re-occupation of the Rhineland, **July:** Intervention in Spanish Civil War, **October:** Rome-Berlin Axis, **Nov:** Comintern Pact (Germany + Japan)

**1937 - May:** Neville Chamberlain becomes British PM, **Oct:** Italy signs anti-comintern pact (Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis), **Dec:** Italy leaves the League of Nations

**1938 - March:** Anschluss w/ Austria, **Sept:** Munich Conference

**1939 - March:** German invasion of rest of CZ, Lithuania forced to give up Memel to Nazi Germany, **April:** Italian annexation of Albania, **May:** Pact of Steel

## Overview

- During the 1920s, there were promising devts. upholding peace treaties of 1919-20, + maintaining peace in Europe (eg: Locarno treaty + Kellogg Briand Pact)
- Significantly, however, most diplomatic agreements made in 1920s were done outside of League
- By 1933, impact of Great Depression caused League to become increasingly irrelevant
- The two main powers → Br + Fr → couldn't agree on how to react to increasingly violent violations of TOV
- For Britain, policy of appeasement became the main diplomatic approach to Italy, then later in the 30s to Germany as well
- Despite several attempts to agree peacefully to revisions of the peace treaties, both It + Ger resorted to increasingly aggressive actions after 1935
  - Each time, Br + Fr took no real action - despite having made prior commitments to countries such as CZ
- W/ Br + Fr apparently decided never to oppose their expansionist foreign policy, and the USSR excluded from most discussion, Germany + Italy felt confident in continuing their policies after 1936
- Thus, by mid-1939, neither Ger nor Italy believed that Br + Fr wd/ honour their pledges to uphold Polish independence

## 7.1 What was the international response to German aggression 1933-38?

- Diplomatic situation in Europe would decline once Hitler came to power and the Weimar Republic collapsed
- The League of Nations - esp Br + Fr - had already experienced failure in 1931 w/ Manchuria
- Further crises in 1931-39 - due to increasingly aggressive expansionist actions of Germany + Italy - wd/ place large stress on the League → it would eventually collapse and cease to act as an effective diplomatic force
- Failure of collective security led to WWII

### Collective Security 1933-36

- When the League of Nations was set up after WWI, main aims = uphold peace settlements of 1919-20 + avoid future wars of aggression by maintaining 'collective security'
- Article 11 of League's Covenant attempted to give member/non-member states a sense of security by promising to take collective action to preserve peace + intl order
- Locarno treaty 1925 - guaranteed peace in Western Europe
- Kellogg Briand Pact 1928 - outlawed war
- Germany permitted to League 1926
- However ... League had no army (couldn't use it as threat towards aggressive states)
  - It was clear that this was a weakness after Manchuria
- Despite diplomatic successes in 1920s, impact of Great Depression meant League was faced w/ increasingly expansionist actions by its members
- During depression → Br + Fr increasingly followed self-interests (this undermined the League + made it hard to present a coherent, consistent and effective response to expansionism)

### Attempted Anschluss and the Stresa Front, 1934-35

- First serious crisis occurred July 1934 w/ Nazi Germany's attempted Anschluss w/ Austria
- At this stage, League was able to take action → mainly because Italy was opposed
  - If Germany successful, Italy wd/ have a powerful Germany on its borders

- Despite shared fascist ideology (Italy + Germany), Mussolini hoped that by siding w/ Br + Fr he might be able to revise aspects of the peace settlements
- In Aug 1933, Mussolini met w/ Engelbert Dollfuss, Austrian Chancellor → they discussed Italian military support if Germany attacked them
- In March 1934, Mussolini + Hungary concluded Rome Protocols (agreement for joint discussion/consultation of significant concerns)
- Hitler visited Italy June 1934 - was unsuccessful in winning Mussolini over on his aims
- Mussolini's initial reaction to Hitler coming to power = cautious
  - (evidence = opposition to Anschluss)
- When Hitler concentrated on rearmament → Mussolini decided to move closer to Br + Fr
- January 1935, Rome Agreements saw Fr + It agree on aspects of European security
- In April 1935, Br + Fr + Italy met in Stresa to discuss problem of German rearmament + its attempted Anschluss
  - Results = confirmation of Locarno treaty + Austrian independence, and condemnation of German aggression
  - They formed the Stresa Front → they agreed to oppose 'by all means' any attempts at unilateral breaches of the peace settlements and any actions threatening the peace of Europe
- In 1934-35, Joint action by It/Fr/Br prevented aggression by maintaining collective security
- YET ... many weaknesses still (done outside of League, Mussolini expected to gain tangible benefits out of their alliance)
  - Stresa front secretly approved his plan to invade Abyssinia (they weren't fully for it)
  - The reaction to this event domestically/within the League --> would help undermine the unity which had blocked Hitler's expansionism in 1934

### Re-Armement

- When Hitler publicly announced his intention to re-arm beyond limits of TOV → Br + Fr (and as a result, the League) took NO ACTION
- Britain's main response = conclude Anglo-German Naval treaty (this had provided Germany to increase the size of its Navy beyond TOV, provided it was never 35% the size of the Br. navy)
- Intl response = inaction
- This encouraged Hitler to pose greater challenges as he knew there wd/ be no consequences

### Re-occupation of the Rhineland, 1936

- By the time of Rhineland 1936, diplomatic situation had changed greatly
- There had been no COMBINED attempt to stop German rearmament (Br individually ended their naval agreement ... w/ out discussing w/ Fr + It)
  - This action undermined the Stresa front
  - Crisis over Abyssinia also led to the end of the Stresa Front
- Since Br + Fr failed to formally approve Italy's actions, yet Hitler outright supported them, Mussolini began moving closer to Italy
- Hitler took advantage of crisis over Abyssinian war to re-occupy Rhineland (violation of TOV)
- Despite having lost Italy as an ally, Br + Fr still took no action to prevent Hitler's actions
- France *wanted* to oppose this move, but Br said they wouldn't support Fr. military action
- Failure of League + its members to enforce the peace settlements undermined the League + sent a message to Hitler that he wouldn't ever face serious opposition attempting to expand
- Br's refusal to support France's decisions created tension ... undermined collective security
  - Drove Mussolini + Hitler even closer together

### Behind the Scenes

- Although Br did little *publicly* to oppose German challenges to peace settlements ... 'behind the scenes' things changed
- Early 1936 - Eden argued that Br needed to buy time (important aspect of Br foreign policy)
- Plan = reach agreements but understand that Hitler was still a threat → re-arm in the meantime
- 1938-39 military expenditure increased
- However, Chamberlain came to power 1937 ... he had genuine sympathy for Germany regarding harsh TOV → Chamberlain especially keen on avoiding war

## Collapse of Collective Security 1936-38

- Although WWII didn't begin until Sept. 1939, clear by 1937 that League of nations + any form of collective security = dead

## Intervention and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39

- Two main countries of League (Br + Fr) proposed that no one intervene
- Sep 1936 - non-intervention committee met in London to draw up pact → signed by Br, Fr, Ger, It, USSR, US
- Non-intervention committee blocked purchase of war materials by Republicans, while nationalists found it easy to purchase materials from USA/Br (countries that *had* signed pact)
  - 1938 July → Franco bought 30% of material from British companies (Br. gov didn't try and prevent this)
  - US oil firms supplied oil to rebel forces in Spain (w/ out Roosevelt's knowledge)
  - ^ noted by Hitler - he realized that there wd/ be no serious opp to his expansion in Europe
- Spanish Civil War important to Germany
  - in return for mil. assistance, Franco supplied Ger w raw materials (aided German rearmament)
  - Hitler tested out military tactics (Luftwaffe's condor legion practice aerial bombings, importance of antitank and anti-aircraft guns established)
  - Most important benefit to Nazi Germany = conviction that appeasement policies wd/ continue
  - Involvement in war brought Hitler + Mussolini closer (Rome-Berlin axis Oct 1936, following month, Hitler signed anti-comintern w/ Japan designed to confront USSR)
- Policy of 'non intervention' failed + exposed weakness of Br/Fr
- Non-intervention postponed WWII
- France left w/ another hostile fascist neighbour to its South
- USSR had intervened to help Republicans, in hopes that it would result in an anti-fascist alliance w/ Br + Fr → this failed
  - IN FACT, it made Russia believe that Br + Fr WOULDNT expose German expansion
  - Although as late as 1939, Stalin pushed for an anti-fascist alliance, he began to consider deals w/ Nazis to buy time
- 'Spanish civil war failed to calm the intl. situation and instead confirmed the growing ideological divisions in Europe between left and right, and democracies and dictatorships'
- (note: while spanish civil war contributed to growing crisis, tensions over Abyssinia, Austria, Rhineland, etc had a more DIRECT impact on outbreak of war)

## Anschluss w/ Austria, 1938

- After events 1935-36, Hitler gained Italy as an ally
- Encouraged by events in Spain + now that Mussolini was an ally, Hitler decided he could carry out 'his next unilateral revision of the peace settlements' w/ out military opp.
  - His calculations = correct

## The Sudetenland Crisis, 1938

- Sudetenland the clear next target (3.5 mil. German speakers)
- May 1938 → Hitler said he was prepared to go to war w/ CZ
- CZ pres - Benes, called Br + Fr to help → France was committed (by the treaties it had signed w/ CZ in 1924) to help them
  - Br made no such treaties, not prepared to help
  - France felt unable to act alone (EXAMPLE of how two KEY members of league failed to pursue a joint policy to prevent aggression)
- CZ crisis so grave ... war seemed imminent
- Br + Fr finally forced to consider ways to prevent expansion to avoid war
- **Political Developments in Br. at this time played a crucial role**
  - May 1937, Chamberlain (Conservative) became PM
  - Chamberlain HIGHLY committed to appeasement → came to power at a time where there was a decline in peaceful international co-op (Jap, Abyssinia, Spain, etc)
  - League = defunct by 1937
  - Chamberlain believed appeasement wd/ calm international relations + bring about lasting peace
  - Thus... instead of joint events to prevent aggression, Chamberlain held several meetings w/ Hitler

- Sep 1938 - Chamberlain flew 3 times to meet w/ Hitler
- At first, his aims seemed moderate, but then Hitler increased demands
- Mussolini suggested a four-power conference
  - Held in Munich Sep 1938 - Br/Fr/It/Germany (Czechs not present to discuss the fate of their country)
- Br + Fr told CZ that they WOULD'N'T come to their aid if they tried to resist Germany + that they should just accept it and hand over Sudetenland
  - Germany's claims = legitimate
- Munich conf also paved the road for Nazi-Soviet pact

## 7.2 What was the international response to Italian aggression 1935-36?

- While Italy faced some opp from the League ... it was not *serious* opp
- Inadequate attempts to limit Fascist Italy's expansionist aims → drove Mussolini to a closer relationship w/ Hitler

### Italy's Invasion of Abyssinia

- Invasion Oct 3rd = first unprovoked attack by European power since WWI
- (NOT unexpected ... Italian nationalists had been waiting to avenge its defeat by Abyssinian forces at Adowa in 1896 + had long-term plans for empire expansion)
- Ethiopia + Italy both members of League... Italy member of council
- France + Br reluctant to take actions vs. Italy
- Br publically supported the League ... but secretly considered offering Italy territory elsewhere
  - W/ aggressive foreign policies being pursued by Ger + Jap... Br began thinking of using appeasement/rearmament to maintain security
  - Italian invasion = 'most inconvenient dilemma'
  - At League meeting Sep 1935, Samuel Hoare: gave support to League, but also spoke of 'wobble-room within the measure of Britain's capacity'
- Br's stance intended to keep Italy within the Stresa front
- Italy carried out invasion anyway
- Fr reluctant to provoke fight w/ Mussolini → also wanted Italy to stay in the Stresa Front to resist future German threats
- Before Oct 1935 - the League (basically Fr + Br) had set up commission to investigate Wal-Wal border conflict of 1934
- Jan 1935 - Haile Selassie, appealed to League for arbitration, but League's arbitration committee decided neither side to blame
- Mussolini mobilized Italian forces despite increasing tensions
- Br + Fr tried to settle problem by offering Italy land from its neighbouring colonies
  - Mussolini rejected (clear that he was ready to launch full-scale invasion)
- Br imposed arms embargo on both sides
  - This hit Abyssinia harder than it hit Italy → Br. withdrew its warships from Med (this gave Mussolini clear route to Africa)
- Once invasion began... League declared Mussolini had breached Article 12 of covenant
  - 18th October - League decided on Econ sanctions
  - Took 1 month+ for members to agree ... sanctions were already limited
- Br also refused to close the Suez canal to Italian supply ships
- ^ Despite being the strongest sanctions the League had ever imposed ... they were still limited in nature ... demonstrated weakness of League
- Many non-League members continued to trade w/ Italy → US EVEN INCREASED exports (eg: oil)
- Br + Fr wanted to find a solution to satisfy Mussolini + didn't want him to leave Stresa Front
  - Hoare + Laval secretly drew up a pact → Hoare-Laval Pact Dec 1935
  - Italy wd/ get half of Abyssinia
  - ^Details of plan leaked to public → led to outrage in Br + Fr → forced to drop plan
  - 'Behind the scenes actions' of Br + Fr undermined League

- Aggression was being rewarded... not PUNISHED
- After Hoare-Laval dropped... League took tougher line
  - March 1936 → sale of oil + petrol to Italy banned (not in effect until May)
  - By May... Italian conquest virtually complete
- Hitler's reoccupation of Rhineland in March made Fr even more reluctant to further antagonise Mussolini
- Nonetheless... Br + Fr actions alienated Mussolini + destroyed Stresa front
- Sanctions ended July 1936

### Italy, Spain, and the Rome-Berlin Axis

- Ineffectiveness of League during Abyssinia crisis convinced Mussolini to leave Stresa Front + move towards Nazi Germany
- Summer of 1936 → Mussolini joined Spanish civil war w/ Hitler
- Rome-Berlin axis Oct 1936

## 7.3 What was the international response to German and Italian aggression in 1939?

- Between 1936 and 38, reactions of Br + Fr to German/Italian aggression + expansion resulted in League being undermined
- Br increasingly followed appeasement
- Though appeasement begun in 1935... it is particularly associated w/ Chamberlain (1937 PM)
- By 1937/38 → League = effectively defunct
- By 1939 - many saw war as inevitable (yet still possible to argue that it could have been avoided w/ a dif foreign policy)

### The Final Steps

- Czechoslovakia
  - 6 Months after Munich conf... Hitler broke promises + invaded rest of CZ
  - Br + Fr took no action to stop this ... but 'France was put on a war footing'
- Albania
  - Mussolini took advantage of Germany's unopposed success in CZ → invaded Albania
  - Br + Fr took no direct action vs. Italy
- The League and the USSR
  - 1991 archives show that military alliance w/ Br + Fr = Stalin's favoured option
  - Litvinov → Soviet commissar for Foreign affairs followed this policy
  - Stalin soon began to follow advice from Molotov (he advised him that Br + Fr wd/ never join the USSR)
  - As Br + Fr continued to follow appeasement (esp. After Munich) ... Stalin saw temporary agreement w/ Hitler as Ideal
    - This wd/ postpone war w/ Germany
  - Litvinov replaced by Molotov
- The US and the League
  - Just like in WWI, US followed policy of isolationism/neutrality in response to Germany/Italy's aggressive actions
  - Policy continued through early 1930s under Roosevelt
  - US ambassador London 1938, Joseph Kennedy, supported Br appeasement of Germany + also opposed to alliance w/ USSR
  - Kennedy supported views of US hardliners eg: George Kennan + Riga Axiomists
  - Kennedy's views opposed to Joseph Davies, US ambassador in Moscow 1937-38 → believed USSR genuinely interested in cooperation to stabilise Europe vs. Nazi aggression
  - US policy meant Br + Fr wd/ be a lone in the event of war w/ Germany (Hitler also convinced that US wdn't intervene)
  - Eventually... Roosevelt realized that Ger. was more expansionist than USSR
    - Gave diplomatic recognition to USSR in 1933
    - By the time US foreign policy changed in late 30s however ... USSR had turned away from hoping to ally w/ West

### Why Appeasement?

- Appeasement often seen as leading cause of WWII
- Now... policy of appeasement criticized for encouraging Hitler
- Contemporaries saw it as most pragmatic way to avoid war
- Churchill however... had advocated for a grand-fascist alliance
  - However, only capable power of resisting Nazi Germany = USSR
  - Many Western politicians rejected Stalin as an ally (due to 'Great purges' + communist ideology)
- Reviving collective security role of League seemed unrealistic (given non-membership of Germany, Italy, Japan, USA)
- Chamberlain informed by Br military advisors that Br. NOT PREPARED for war in 1937 (couldn't give military support to France)
  - Br Navy also not strong enough to protect colonies in the East
  - + Majority of Br. public opposed to rearmament + saw *some* of Germany's TOV revisions as legitimate
- ^ everyone wanted to avoid another WWI → so... Br. cabinet members mostly supported Chamberlain + appeasement
- Nov 1937 - Lord Halifax sent to Germany to meet Nazi officials + told them that Br. supported Germany legitimate claims in Europe... provided they were negotiated peacefully
  - Foreign Sec Eden objected to this... resigned later

## The Debate about Appeasement

- Orthodox view 1940
  - Condemned Chamberlain as 'guilty man'
  - Appeasement seen incompetent diplomacy + poor military planning
  - J Wheeler-Bennett saw appeasement as morally bankrupt + politically ineffective
  - Memoirs of Churchill + Eden supported this view
- Revisionist views emerged in 1960s
  - Chamberlain understood Br's econ + military weaknesses
  - He tried to maintain peace while preparing for war
  - Br + Fr couldn't realistically win a war in 1937-39
  - Revisionists focus on structural problems facing Br in late 30s → threat posed by Japanese expansion in Asia, Mussolini + Hitler increasingly aggressive, strength of public opinion vs. re-armament
- Post Revisionists
  - Blame revisionists for failing to see that other viable options at the time existed
  - Intelligence reports had warned Chamberlain of Hitler's intention to dominate Europe
  - Chamberlain failed to consider a grand-alliance until it was too late
- Overy points out that when circumstances changed... Chamberlain dropped appeasement (because the possibility of allies had opened)
- At the time... appeasement seemed good for many
  - Chamberlain even won the peace prize in 1938
  - After Kristallnacht (violence vs. Jews in Germany) ... in Feb 1939, Br promised to supp. France
  - They began military planning
  - By late 30s... Br's policy had changed → they finally had a dif. response to German expansion

# German and Italian expansion

## 2.1 Impact of Fascism on Italian Foreign Policy 1870-1933

### Challenges following Italian unification and Liberal Italy

- Unification of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 of a number of independent states
  - Despite unification, there was great division and a lack of national identity
- 1870-1932: Liberal Italy
  - Italy under a liberal democratic monarchy-citizens choose leaders in open and free elections while having individual rights protected by law
- Governmental separation between church and state and anti-clerical policies in Italy caused a rift with the Roman Catholic church and led many Italy to distrust the government
- Underrepresented working class
  - Only wealthy elites could vote leaving working class Italians out of the political process
  - General Strike in 1914 to protest conditions
    - Some politicians pushed for a ban of trade unions and the Socialist Party (PSI)
- Nationalist growth
  - Prior to 1914, a strong nationalist movement grew that glorified war and supported Italy's push towards empire to become a Great Power of Europe
    - Italian Nationalist Association founded in 1910 to support these ideas
    - A small Empire
      - Eritrea 1885
      - Italian Somililand 1889
      - Defeated in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) at the Battle of Adowa
    - 1912, Italy seized Libya following a brief war with the Ottoman Empire
- Impact of WWI
  - Despite being a member of the Triple Alliance since 1882, Italy remained neutral at the outset of WWI with Italian politicians divided as to what to do.
    - A strong push from nationalists encouraged Italy to join the Entente powers in hopes of conquering Italian speaking regions from Austria-Hungary
    - April 1915, with support from the king Victor Emmanuel III-Italy signed the Treaty of London with Britain, France and Russia and joined the war
      - Trentino and South Tyrol
      - Trieste
      - Aegean Coastland
    - Political division remained with the powerful socialist party in opposition to what they called an 'imperialist war'
      - Socialist Party member Benito Mussolini originally opposed invention buy ultimately argued in favor of joining the war
        - Ousted from the party
  - WWI for Italy
    - War against Germany and Austria in Northern Italy
      - Trench warfare with horribly costly combat
    - The War further divided Italy politically with some resenting the government's management of the war while others resented the socialist anti-war stance
    - Total War in Italy led to greater industrial production and growing trade unionists, socialists and greater push to end the war.
- Fascism

### No specific founder but a collection of ideological stances that grew in many nations

- Promotion of nationalism
  - The nation state as a unifying force and superior to others
  - The removal of foreign influence
- Strong leader or dictator in a One-party government
  - Totalitarian state
  - Citizens are subservient to the state
- War
  - War revitalizes society
  - Creation of empire
- Anti-communism
- Anti-Internationalist

- Post-WWI
  - Post-War political challenges continued in Italy with the ruling liberals losing control of the state
  - No one party gained a majority of the seats in the government and there was frequent turnover of the political system
  - Frustration with the outcome of the Treaty of St. Germain and Italy's failure to obtain all the territory they originally hoped for.
    - Prime Minister Orlando was forced to resign
    - Popular anger grew following the devastating war where over 600,000 Italians were killed
- Growth of the Fascist movement
  - Anger over the war settlement
  - Economic crisis leading to high unemployment
  - US restrictions on immigration leading to the inability of poor Italians to emigrate to US
  - Bolshevik revolution leading to widespread fears of the communist spread
  - Many conservatives supported fascists as they could prevent the spread of Communism
  - Support from the Catholic Church as Pope Pius XI saw the Fascists and Mussolini as an opportunity to improve the church's position within the state.
- March on Rome, October 1922
  - Weak coalition governments in 1922 could not suppress political and street violence
  - Socialists and communists called for a general strike in August bringing wider middle-class support to the fascists who promised law and order
  - 24 October 1922, thousands of Fascists paramilitary Blackshirts began a march to Rome to seize the government
  - The king, rather than declaring martial law, sided with Mussolini and Mussolini was offered the office of Prime Minister despite the Fascist party's relatively small numbers in the government.

## 2.2 The Impact of Nazism on German Foreign Policy 1918-1933

- Despite terrible losses in the war, German armies had never been pushed back into Germany during the war
  - Military leadership was convinced that the war could not be won
  - Earlier surrender under the terms of Wilson's 14 points was preferable to an outright defeat which was predicted for the Spring of 1919
    - The nation was teetering on the brink: strikes, political unrest, sailor's mutiny, food shortage
    - Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated
    - A new socialist German government agreed to the Armistice
  - This came as a shock to many Germans who believed they were winning the war
    - Stab in the back theory: socialists in the new government stopped the war as Germany was close to winning

## Treaty of Versailles

- A compromise of punishments levied on the new German republic that failed to satisfy any of the signatories
  - Establishment of a League of Nations (without German membership)
  - Occupied Rhineland demilitarized
  - Saar region's production would go to France for 15 years
  - Alsace-Lorraine returned to France
  - No Anschluß
  - Eastern lands, including Polish Corridor given to new Poland
  - Loss of colonies
  - Army of only 100K
  - Navy limited to 6 battleships and 0 submarines
  - No Air Force
  - War Guilt Clause
  - Reparations

## Hitler and his foreign policy

- Austria-born German soldier Adolf Hitler believed the Treaty to be a Diktat-a treaty merely forced upon Germany with no consultation
- Referred to the socialist government that signed the treaty as November Criminals
- Disgust with the results of the war politicized Adolf Hitler
- Sent to investigate the German Worker's Party for left-wing radical subversion, Hitler actually joined the party and soon became a vocal leader
  - Renamed the National Socialist Workers Party
  - Swastika as its symbol
  - Organization of paramilitary storm troopers
- Foreign Policy Goals
  - Pan Germanism/Gross Deutschland/Greater Germany
    - Unification of all German speaking peoples
    - Austria
    - Czechoslovakia and Poland

- Racial "purity" of Greater Germany
  - Relying on the work of Northern Europe social Darwinists, Hitler supported the view of a hierarchy of races with his Aryan race at the top
- Lebensraum/Living space for German people
  - Eastern Europe
  - Required the driving out of 'inferior/untermenschen' in Eastern Europe: Slavs, Jews, Russians, Poles, Ukraine
    - Germany must be 'protected' from the 'inferior blood' of the Jewish race
- Natural Enemies of the German State
  - Russia: Large Jewish minority and a communist nation
  - France: Common ideological roots with Italian fascism
- Possible Allies
  - Britain: Radically similar and Hitler was found of the British Empire
  - Italy: Common ideological roots with Italian fascism

### Growth of Nazi support

- Struggles within the Weimar Republic
  - Attempts by leftist groups to overthrow the government including the 1919 communist Spartacist revolt
  - Frequent assassinations
    - 1919-1922 over 350 political assassinations in Germany
  - January 1923: Ruhr Crisis
    - France and Belgium invaded the industrial Ruhr region of Germany as reparations payments were missed
    - Weimar government ordered 'passive resistance' and strikes while continuing to pay the workers
      - Only possible through printing of marks leading to a hyperinflation crisis
      - Savings and pensions were virtually wiped out
- November 1932 Munich (Beer Hall) Putsch
  - Attempt by Hitler to take over the government
    - Impressed by Mussolini's March on Rome
    - Hopes to win over Bavaria and march into Berlin
    - 600 Nazi Stormtroopers moved in hopes of taking government buildings and gathering popular support
      - Failure: Police opened fire, 16 Stormtroopers died, Hitler was arrested
  - Trial publicity actually led to increased Nazi support
    - Found guilty but he received the lightest sentence possible: 5 years, though he would serve less than a year
      - While in Prison, he compiled his philosophy and plans into Mein Kampf (my struggle)
    - After prison, Hitler again lead the Nazi party but would work to rise to power through legal channels

### German Recovery

- Mid-late 1920s saw economic growth and political stabilization in Germany leading to declining Nazi support
  - Under Chancellor and Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, hyperinflation was halted with new loan plans worked out with the US
  - Stresemann was an internationalist-nationalist (is that a thing?) working to restore Germany's position and to revise the Treaty of Versailles
    - Only through working with Britain and France (Rapprochement) could Germany achieve its goals
      - Locarno Treaty 1925
      - Germany joined the League in 1926
      - Kellogg-Briand Pact

### Great Depression

- Weimar Republic loans from the US made Germany reliant on US economic stability which the onset of the depression threatened
  - US called in its loans
  - German unemployment grew
  - Government austerity plans led to wage cuts and job losses
- Hitler portrayed the Nazi party as able to provide food and jobs amidst the crisis
- Hitler's aims became more attractive to more desperate and radicalized Germans

### Dictatorship

- Elections in 1930 led to tremendous Nazi growth (12 to 107 seats)
- Presidential elections in 1932 gave Hitler over 30% of the vote
  - His strong showing led to his appointment as Chancellor of Germany
- Reichstag Fire on Feb 27, 1933 and Nazis blamed it on a communist plot
  - Freedoms of Press, speech and association were curtailed
  - Nazis won 43.9% of the next vote

- Enabling Act signed in 1933 gave Hitler's cabinet legislative powers without Reichstag consent
  - Barring communists from sitting to vote guaranteed Hitler 2/3 support he needed to amend the constitution
- State parliaments abolished
- Trade unions closed
- Socialists and Communists banned
- On the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, Hitler Purged opponents and disloyal SA troopers
- With the President's death in 1934, Hitler merged the offices into one: proclaiming himself der Führer

## 2.3 Italian Expansion, 1933-1940

### Factors leading to Italian expansionism

- Fascism
  - Glorification of war
  - Imperial expansion
  - Anti-Internationalism
- Economic Crisis
  - The Great Depression (1929)
  - Loss of outside investors (USA, mainly)
  - Crashing grain prices hurting Italian farmers
  - Growing unemployment
  - The Italian government responds by taking a greater role in managing the Italian economy
    - The Italian government will ultimately control over 20% of capital resources
    - Wages will be cut further
    - Public work programs and ban on emigration
  - Mussolini would attempt to distract the public from their economic woes by fostering the fascist 'revolutionary spirit'
    - Drive towards Autarky (economic self-sufficiency) and foreign war further harmed the Italian economy
- Nationalist views
  - Earlier humiliations
    - Versailles settlement
- International situation

### Mussolini's foreign policy

- Four Power Pact signed in July 1933 with Britain, France and Germany
  - Smaller nations should have less say than the great powers
  - Ultimately did little, but it did give Italians the impression that they were one of the four great powers of Europe
- Support of Austria
  - Mussolini supported an independent Austria and was in opposition to anschluss with Germany
  - July 1934, Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss was murdered by Austrian Nazis leading Mussolini to mobilize troops on his northern border.
    - Hitler ultimately did not intervene in the Austrian political crisis
- Response to German rearmament
  - Stresa Conference in April 1935 between Italy, France and Britain establishing the Stresa Front looking to maintain the status quo in Europe and preventing Germany from further violations of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Invasion of Abyssinia, 1935-36
  - Reasons
    - Expand his Empire in Africa
    - Gain support for his regime with successful military conquests
    - Avenge the defeat of Italy in the 1890s
    - Gain colonial troops for future military actions
    - Export markets for Italian goods
    - Despite German rearmament, the Stresa front offered safety should Germany grow aggressive
    - Demonstrate Italian strength to Europe (and Germany especially)
  - The invasion
    - December 1934, Italian forces clashed with Abyssinians in the disputed Wal Wal oasis resulting in 30 Italians dead
      - Mussolini demanded an apology and compensation
      - Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie requested a League of Nations investigation which Mussolini refused, instead calling for a conquest of Abyssinia.
        - 500,000 Italian soldiers invade Abyssinia launching a full invasion on 3 October
    - League of Nations condemned Italian Aggression and placed economic sanctions on Italy

- Italy took Addis Ababa on 5 May 1936 and on 9 May it formally annexed Abyssinia.
  - Results
    - Relatively few Italian losses (1,000 casualties)
    - Increased tensions with Great Britain who saw their Mediterranean fleet threatened and Italy was not yet prepared to compete with the British Navy
    - Costly war exacerbated Italian economic problems
    - Guerilla combat with Abyssinians would continue for years
    - League of Nations again rendered impotent in the face of aggressor nations
    - End of the Stresa Front and closer relations with Germany
      - Italy agreed that it no longer objected to Austria becoming a German satellite (while still independent)
      - Agreed to German rearmament of the Rhineland
        - Locarno obligations are out of the window
- Spanish Civil War
  - When Civil War broke out in Spain in 1936, Mussolini saw it as another opportunity to flex his military might and expand Italian influence
    - Support of Fascist Francisco Franco against the socialist government and its communist supporters
    - Hopes to gain naval base concessions on the Mediterranean
    - 70,000 Italian troops joined the war
      - More than any other nation sent
  - Results
    - High economic costs
    - Depletion of arms leaving Italy weaker moving forward
    - Increased tensions with Britain and France
    - Italy pushed even closer with Germany
      - 25 Oct 1936 signing of the Rome-Berlin Axis
- Forming of the Axis and a push to WWII
  - Joining of the Anti-Comintern Pact in Nov 1937 with Germany and Japan
    - Directed against the Communist International
  - Dec 1937, Italy left the League of Nations
  - Support of German Anschluss in 1938
    - This cost Mussolini some popularity in Italy
  - Support of German occupation of Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia in the Munich Agreement
  - Invasion of Albania
    - Following Hitler's violation of the Munich Agreement, he ordered his army to invade Albania (which was already a satellite) as Albanian King Zog was pushing for greater independence from Italy.
      - Hopes of dominating the Adriatic
      - Albanian resistance was weak and ultimately futile and the King fled to Greece
      - Albanian parliament voted on 12 April to unite with Italy and a new fascist government was established.
  - Signing of the Pact of Steel between Germany and Italy 22 May 1939
    - Declaration of trust and cooperation between the two nations
    - Union of military and economic policies
  - German invasion of Poland 1 Sep 1939
    - Italy informed Germany it was not ready for a general War; Italy remained a non-belligerent
  - Joining the War in June 1940
    - Avoid further embarrassment for not joining the war earlier
    - Did not want to be seen as anything less than a great power
    - Avoid a Europe dominated by Germany
    - Territorial gains through war
    - Economic reasons
      - Germany was Italy's greatest trading partner and that relationship was in Jeopardy
  - WWII
    - Mussolini pushed the war into the Mediterranean and North Africa
      - Invaded Egypt from Libya
      - Greece from Albania
      - Each were ultimate failures and Italy required German assistance drawing German forces further South than originally intended.

## 2.4 German Expansion, 1933-1938

### Changing diplomatic alignments after 1933

- Britain
  - Preoccupied with their own economic crisis
  - Far East concerns with Japan
  - Many in Britain considered the Treaty of Versailles to be unfair and supported a German redress of grievances
  - Right-wing politicians in Britain were afraid of Stalinist USSR and saw anti- communist Germany as a buffer to Soviet expansion
- France
  - Concerned about a German threat but unable to act on its own (see Ruhr Crisis)
  - Also dealing with depression-related Economic problems
  - Fostered an alliance with "Little Entente"-Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia to Germany's Eastern
- US
  - In the midst of the Depression, the US focused on internal issues remaining isolationist with regard to foreign policy
- Other factors leading to German aggression
  - Economic problems encouraged nations to look inward rather than focus energy and expense on collective security
  - WWI still fresh in peoples' minds
  - Britain and France were demilitarizing in the face of expenses and the promise of collective security/Kellogg-Briand
  - League of Nations appearing weak following Japanese actions in Manchuria
  - Treaty of Versailles was already being challenged
    - Occupation of the Rhineland ended in 1929
    - Reparation payments largely canceled after 1932

### Hitler's Actions 1933-38

- Withdrawal from the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1933
  - The League of Nations called for national armaments to be reduced to only defensive levels.
  - An international conference was organized in 1932 to implement this policy
    - Held in Geneva to begin in 1933
  - France was unwilling to disarm with a growing Nazi threat on its border
  - Britain was ready to make concessions to Germany
  - Germany requested that other nations reduce to Germany's levels
    - When France refused, Hitler pulled out of the Conference and the
    - League of Nations
      - Accused both of being French ploys to keep Germany weak
- Non-Aggression Pact with Poland
  - Poland, concerned with the apparent weakness of the LoN and Germany's rearmament entered a 10 year non-aggression pact with Germany in January 1934.
    - This temporarily secured Hitler's Eastern border
    - Weakened France's Eastern European security
    - Appeared to others that this was a bold act of statesmanship by Hitler, thus encouraging other nations that Hitler could be worked with.
      - Hitler approved bilateral agreements such as this as they could be more easily broken
        - "All our agreements with Poland have a temporary significance"
- Mussolini and Austria
  - Mussolini opposed Hitler's hopes of Anschluß with Austria
  - Hitler offered support to the Austrian Nazi Party
    - Intimidation and terrorism in Austria led to the assassination of Engelbert Dollfuss
    - Austrian Nazis hoped to topple the government and unite with Germany
  - Mussolini mobilized 100,000 troops to its northern border forcing Hitler to back down and disavow support for the Austrian nazis offering assurances to Mussolini that Austria would not be annexed.
- The Saar Plebiscite-January 1935
  - Under French control since 1919, the people could vote as to which nation to ultimately be a part of.
    - Over 90% chose Germany
    - A boon to Hitler and German propaganda
- Rearmament
  - Germany had long violated the Treaty of Versailles with regards to its military; though Hitler would greatly increase the pace of rearmament
    - Justified after Britain and France refused to disarm AND to stop the threat of the USSR in the East
  - By 1935, the Army would increase from 7 to 21 divisions
  - Conscription was introduced growing the army to 36 divisions
  - Hermann Göring revealed the existence and extent of the German Luftwaffe at 2,500 planes.
- Remilitarization of the Rhineland, 7 March 1936
  - With the world distracted by economic woes and the Abyssinian crisis, Hitler felt he could remilitarize the Rhineland region of Germany
  - Justified his actions following the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Treaty of 1936 that threatened encirclement of Germany
  - Opposed by many of his General Staff as they felt a military response from France and/or Britain would be devastating, Hitler proceeded

- No opposition occurred
- The Spanish Civil War
  - Hitler and Mussolini grew closer in their mutual support of Spanish fascists in the Spanish Civil War
    - Germany did not send ground troops, but the Luftwaffe and Germany Navy (Kriegsmarine) were important aspects to the Nationalist victory
      - The Condor Legion of German Bombers targeted civilian centers including Guernica
  - Rationale for Germany
    - Friendly government in Spain to trade with and offer bases for German Submarines
    - Test his new air force
    - Suppress communist expansion in Europe
- New diplomatic alignment
  - The Rome-Berlin Axis-October 1936
    - Established areas of mutual interest between the two nations
  - Anti-Comintern Pact 1936
    - Oppose international communism
    - Mutual defense should the USSR attack
- The Hossbach Memorandum
  - Notes from a meeting on 5 November 1937 between Hitler his top Generals and war ministers.
    - Acquisition of lebensraum and preservation of the German racial community to be acquired through force
  - Some Generals felt this was too aggressive a plan and Germany was not prepared for such actions
    - February 1938, Hitler made himself Supreme Commander of the German Army and sacked those generals that opposed him

## 2.5 German Expansion, 1938-1940

### Anschluß

- Germany in a far stronger position with respect to Austria in 1938 than they were in 1934
- 1936: Austro-German Agreement
  - Germany reaffirms Austrian independence
  - Neither nation would interfere in the other's internal affairs
  - Austria would conduct foreign policy consistent with being a 'German State'
  - Austrian Nazis given a prominent role in the government
- In 1938, political violence perpetrated by Austrian Nazis leads Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg to request a meeting with Hitler
  - Following hours of attacks, Schuschnigg agrees to Hitler's demands
    - Release of pro-Nazi agitators from Austrian prisons
    - Lifting a ban on the Nazi Party
    - Appointment of Nazis into the government
    - Assimilation of the German/Austrian economies
  - Failure to meet these demands would result in a German Invasion
- Schuschnigg called for a plebiscite on Austrian independence
  - Public support could offer him justification to break from his agreement with Hitler
- Hitler circumvented the vote with a mobilization of the army
- With no opposition from Italy, Britain or France, Schuschnigg resigned and Hitler marched into Austria on 12 March 1938
- The Plebiscite would be held in April with 99% supporting Anschluß.

### The Sudetenland Crisis

- Following Anschluß, Hitler turned his attention to Czechoslovakia
  - Slavic untermenschen in Hitler's view
  - Many Czechs had resisted Austrian rule in the Empire
  - Czechoslovakia was a growing economic and military power
  - Many ethnic Germans in the nation
  - Strong Supporter of the League of Nations and ally to France and Russia
- Sudetenland
  - Mountainous, resource rich region of Czechoslovakia given to the new country after WWI to create a strong frontier (border) and economic prosperity
    - 3.5 Million Sudeten Germans who resented the new Czech government and their minority status
    - The Great Depression exacerbated their grievances.
  - Sudeten German leader Konrad Heinlein and his Sudeten German Party was supported by Nazi Germany
    - In April 1938, Heinlein demanded political autonomy for the Sudetenland region.
  - May Crisis, 1938

- 20 May, rumors of German mobilization of their Army at the Czech border led to Czech military preparations. Britain and France warned against German action.
  - Rumors were unfounded and Hitler had to inform Britain and France as such. This was embarrassing to Hitler.
- Sudeten Germans escalated their resistance to the Czech government.
- 5 September, Czech President agreed to Sudeten demands but Hitler told Heinlein to reject the offer while German propaganda displayed supposed Anti-German Czech behavior.
- Escalating violence led the Czech government to declare martial law in the region.
- British PM Neville Chamberlain, hoping to avoid a general war, met with Hitler three times to try to make a deal over the Sudetenland
  - Bergelesgarden, 15 September 1938
    - Majority Sudeten German lands to be transferred to Germany. French and Czechs ultimately agreed to this.
  - Godesberg, 22 September 1938
    - Despite the agreement, Hitler was furious as his pretext for war was lost.
    - Now Hitler demanded that other Ethnic minorities in Czechoslovakia gain concessions and that Germany should be allowed to militarily occupy all of the Sudetenland
    - Czechs rejected these terms and France said they'd support Czechoslovakia.
  - Munich, 29 September 1938
    - Hitler agreed to another conference as it seemed that war was inevitable and his Generals did not believe Germany was prepared for war.
    - Czechoslovakia and USSR Not invited
    - The Munich Pact
      - German Occupation of Sudetenland on October 1
      - International commission to determine new borders with Plebiscites in disputed territories
      - Czechs could leave and Germans could join the Sudetenland region
      - Poland would gain territory
      - Hungary would gain territory
      - 4 Powers would guarantee independence of the rest of Czechoslovakia
    - Czechoslovakia and USSR Not invited
    - If they resisted, they would get no aid from Britain and France.
    - Chamberlain and Hitler also signed the Anglo-German
    - Declaration: international disputes solved through consultation
    - "Peace in our time"
    - As early as 21 October, Hitler called for "the liquidation of the remainder of the Czech state"

#### Liquidation of Czechoslovakia

- Tremendous losses for Czechoslovakia
  - 70% of heavy industry
  - 1/3 of population
  - Loss of natural defenses and Sudetenland fortifications
- Hitler encouraged Slovakian independence
  - As the Czech President moved troops to quell Slovak disturbances, some Slovaks proclaimed independence and asked Germany for protection.
- 15 March 1939, German troops occupied the remainder of Czechoslovakia
  - British policy towards Germany changes: assurances by Nazi leadership can not be relied on.

#### German Expansion into Poland

- Poland was a new state following the Treaty of Versailles made up partly by German territory with the Polish Corridor bisecting the German state and the city of Danzig as an international 'free city' run by the League
- After the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Germany proposed that Danzig should be returned to Germany along with direct German rail links to East Prussia
- Poland refused
- In March 1939, Germany asked Lithuania to hand the port city of Memel with its sizable
- German population to Germany
  - Unable to resist Germany, the Lithuanians conceded.
- Seeing the inevitability of Poland being invaded by Germany, on 30 March, Britain and France offered a guarantee of security to Poland
- Two days later, Germany ended the 1934 Non-Aggression Pact with Poland
- Operation White-the German invasion of Poland was planned.
- Pact of Steel-22 May 1939
  - Germany and Italy, both seeing Britain and France as a possible impediment to their expansion signed the agreement to come to each others' aid if hostilities broke out
- Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact-24 August 1939

- Both Germany and Britain and France courted the USSR in the Summer of 1939.
- Mutual distrust between the USSR and Britain and France prevented any agreement while Stalin was able to work out an agreement with Germany
  - Neutrality should the other party be at war
  - Dividing Northern and Eastern Europe into Soviet and German spheres of influence with Poland divided between the two powers
- Benefits to Hitler
  - Avoid a two Front conflict
  - Clear the way to Poland
  - Resources from USSR
- Benefits to Stalin
  - Keep the USSR out of a wider European War-important with the Japanese problem in the East
  - Hopes that Germany and the West would weaken each other in a war, leaving the USSR a sole power
  - Territory gains & Trade with Germany
- 25 August 1939, Poland and Britain signed a full military alliance
- Mussolini, not ready for war, attempted to organize a conference to resolve the crisis, but Hitler was not willing to wait.
- 31 August: Germany claimed a wireless station near the Polish border was attacked by Poles
  - Actually German SS soldiers dressed in Polish uniforms with murdered bodies of criminals in Polish uniforms left behind; this became the immediate Casus Belli
- 1 September: German troops invaded Poland while the Luftwaffe bombed the capital at
- Warsaw.

## 2.6 The international Response to Italian Aggression

### British Appeasement Policy

- Appeasement: Policy of making concessions in order to avoid greater conflict
- Rationale
  - Public Opinion: Expansion of the franchise in Britain led to more consideration of public opinion that was opposed to war and supportive of collective security
    - The Spanish Civil War and its bombing of urban areas strengthened resolve to avoid wider conflict
  - Demands of Hitler seemed justifiable to some
    - Some felt the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh; belief grew that the war was caused by ALL powers and not Germany exclusively
  - No clear anti-appeasement movement and appeasers transcended party Affiliations
  - Economic pressures during the Great Depression making military spending difficult
  - British global commitments took resources and attention from continental issues.
  - Neville Chamberlain's influence
    - Anti-War with little faith in the League of Nations, France, the US, or USSR
    - Believed Hitler could be worked with alone and that Britain should take the lead in negotiations.
- France would reluctantly support British views as they were unable to effectively deal with a German threat on their own

### Weakness of the League of Nations

- Lacked the economic resources and credibility of the USA
- League of Nations Council was the power base of the League: Britain, France, Italy, Japan and Germany (1926); the latter three wanted a revision of the Treaty of Versailles
- No USSR until 1934
- Weakness in the face of aggression
- Countries driven by their own self-interest rather than League principles

### US desires to remain isolationist yet freely trade globally.

- Public was deeply against involvement in foreign wars
- Passage of neutrality acts beginning in 1935

### German rearmament

- Sympathy in GB to rework some tenants of the Treaty of Versailles but ultimately concern over the growing German threat led to the development of the Stresa Front
  - Nearly immediately weakened by two events
    - Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Treaty
      - Both Italy and Britain were suspicious of entering into an agreement with a communist nation
    - Anglo-German Naval Agreement

- Britain wanting to avoid a costly naval arms race allowed Hitler to grow his navy to 35% of the British Navy with an equal number of submarines.
- Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia

### International Response to Abyssinia

- The Stresa Front had already attempted to establish a united front to maintain the status quo with regard to Germany and the Treaty of Versailles
  - Mussolini believed that Britain and France would not object to action in Africa
- Public outrage and condemnation from the League of Nations resulted
- Attempts to negotiate a solution to the Abyssinian crisis failed as Mussolini pressed towards war.
- Following the Italian invasion, the League imposed limited sanctions against Italy
  - Not all members followed through (Austria, Hungary and Germany)
  - Britain still hoped to keep the the Stresa Front alive
  - Suez Canal not closed
  - USA increased exports to Italy
- The Hoare-Laval Pact
  - British and French plan to give much of Abyssinia to Italy, ultimately proving the League of Nations a sham only driven by individual nations' self interest.
- At the same time, Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland, diverting French attention back to the Continent.

### German Rearmament and Remilitarization of the Rhineland

- No opposition from Britain or France

### The Spanish Civil War

- Neither Britain nor France wanted to see an escalation of the Spanish Civil War into a wider general war so each committed to Non-Intervention along with 14 other nations of Europe
  - USSR, Italy and Germany would also sign the Non-Intervention Pact, but they, of course would violate it.
  - Britain favored the Nationalists as opposed to the Communist supported Republicans so Franco would receive loans and trade from Britain

### Reaction to Anschluss

- British and French protests, but no action
  - Italy supported Anschluss
  - The League was weak after the Abyssinian affair
  - Brits felt the union was inevitable unless force was used...which wasn't an option.

### Reaction to Czechoslovakia

- Britain and France each looked to avoid Hitler's taking of Czechoslovakia but only through Negotiation
- The Munich Pact
- After violating the Munich Pact, opinions in Britain shifted and a firmer stance against
- Hitler followed.

### Invasion of Albania; April 1939

- Again, Condemnation and Proved to Chamberlain that agreements with dictators could not be trusted
- Greek borders were guaranteed by Britain.

### Invasion of Poland

- As final attempts at diplomacy with Germany failed and Germany invaded Poland on September 1.
- September 3, Britain issued an ultimatum to Germany to withdraw. Germany failed to reply and Britain declared war on the same day.

## 2.7 International Response to German Aggression 1933-1940

### Reaction to German rearmament

- In 1933, Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference and the League
  - Britain worked hard to bring Germany back
    - Proposed an increased from 100k to 200k for the German army (France reduction to the same)
    - Allowance for a German air force to ½ of France's
- In 1935, Germany introduced conscription and acknowledged the existence of an air force
  - Ended British/French attempt to bring Germany back into the League

- Germany now catching up militarily
- Britain and France Worried
  - Rearmament meant a strengthened German demand for revisions
    - If not resolved peacefully, Germany could rely on force

#### Reaction to attempted Anschluss in 1934

- Stresa Front formed by Britain, France and Italy to uphold Locarno commitments and Austrian independence
- Collective action limited by three factors
  - Important to keep Russia on their side
    - Britain and Italy both weary of using a communist government to contain Germany
    - Britain opposed France's idea to encircle Germany, potential to incite Germany
  - 1935 Anglo-German Naval Treaty
    - Limited German naval growth to 35% of British fleet, however tripling its size
    - Offended France and Italy and violated Versailles
  - 1935 Invasion of Abyssinia
    - Italy acted in its own self-interest
    - Hitler saw that Britain and France did not respond

#### Reaction to remilitarization of the Rhineland

- In 1936, Hitler marched into the Rhineland which violated the Versailles Treaty and the Locarno Treaties
  - Faced no opposition from Britain/France
- France
  - Divided because of forthcoming elections
    - Neither the left or right would propose war
  - General Staff of the French army exaggerated the number of German forces
    - Estimated them at 265,000, really on 30,000
    - No popular support for war, couldn't risk it
  - Thus looked to Britain for a response
- Britain
  - Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin made it clear they, too were unwilling to go to war of the Rhineland
    - Military commitments already overstretched
  - Did not see Hitler's actions as threatening
    - "Only going in their own backyard"
    - Easier to settle with Hitler rather than confront him
- Often seen as the last chance to stop Hitler without war
  - Political and public opinion favored peace and negotiations with Germany

#### Reaction to the Spanish Civil War

- The Non-Intervention Committee
  - June 1936, Popular Party was elected
    - Similar views to the Republican government in Spain
  - Wanted to aid but feared opposition and knew Britain was unlikely to support this
  - NIC was an idea that would keep all European countries out of the conflict
- Britain agreed but for different reasons
  - Believed the Nationalists would win and didn't want an in Franco
    - Also did not want to upset Mussolini
    - Viewed the Republican government as communist (received aid from the Soviets)
- 16 countries signed the Non-Intervention Pact
  - Germany, Italy and the USSR all ignored it
- Britain's policy of non-intervention favored the nationalists
  - Prevented aid to Republicans
  - Allowed the Nationalists to use the Gibraltar as a communications base
  - British companies allowed to trade with the Nationalists in December 1936
  - Franco was able to get credit from British banks
- Failure of non-intervention further discredited the policy of appeasement

#### Reaction to Anschluss

- Treaty of Versailles specifically forbade the union of Germany and Austria
  - Hitler invaded an independent state and was in a stronger position to attack Czechoslovakia

- British and France protests to Berlin
- Why was the response limited?
  - France's Popular Party dissolved itself, no government at the time, relied on Britain for support
  - Italy was dependent on Germany, refused to help
  - League discredited after Abyssinia
    - Weren't even asked to discuss Anschluss
  - Britain felt Anschluss was inevitable
    - Without willingness to use force, they couldn't stop it

### Reaction to aggression in Czechoslovakia

- France's reaction
  - Had two treaties with Czechoslovakia
    - Knew they were in no position to keep these treaty obligations and stated that Czechoslovakia could not be defended
  - PM Daladier openly following Britain's lead to avoid conflict
- Britain's reaction
  - PM Chamberlain saw Czechoslovakia as an artificial creation and was unsustainable
  - He was sympathetic with the Sudeten Germans and believe he could a peaceful handover of Sudetenland to Germany

### Britain's reaction

- Following Hitler's speech in September 1938, Chamberlain decided to fly and meet with Hitler in Germany.
  - Not common for leaders to meet one-on-one and he had never flown before
- Sept 12 - Hitler demanded all areas that of Czechoslovakia had over a 50% German population, supervised by a int'l commission
  - Chamberlain agreed and got approval from British and French governments
  - Told the Czechs that if they did not agree, they had to deal with Germany on their own
- Sept 22 - Hitler now said the previously proposals didn't go far enough
  - Sought claims of Hungary and Poland to Czech territory met and he wanted to occupy the Sudetenland by Oct 1
  - Chamberlain's colleagues rejected the proposals, France said it would now honor commitments to the Czechs and Czechs said the proposal was unacceptable
  - Countries began preparing for war
- Sept 29 - It is agreed to give Hitler the Sudetenland
  - Czechs and Soviets were not invited

### The end of appeasement

- Hitler's takeover of the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 caused great shock and outrage in Britain
  - Clearly, Hitler's aims were not limited
    - Broke a signed agreement, invasion couldn't be justified
  - Chamberlain forced to take a firm stance
- Chamberlain now forced to take a firmer stance
  - Delivers a speech openly stating that testing Britain's strength would be a mistake

### Response to Hitler's demands in Poland

- Due to Hitler's taking over Memel and demands in Danzig, Britain and France guarantee Poland aid in the event of an unprovoked attack
  - Controversial - Poland was rightist and acknowledged Japanese and Polish expansion, more difficult to defend than Czechoslovakia
  - Regardless, it was a direct warning to Hitler
- Guarantees given to Greece and Romania in response to Mussolini's actions in Albania
  - Mutual assistance with Turkey in the Mediterranean
- Britain/France stepped up military preparations
  - Britain doubled its territorial army and announced conscription
  - Air defense and radar was near completion
  - Rearmament program scheduled to peak in 1939-40, roughly equal terms to Germany

### Negotiations with the Soviet Union

- Britain and France saw help from the Soviets as a key to assisting Poland
  - France had a history of cooperating with the Soviets
- Britain more reluctant, ignored Soviet advances during the Austrian/Sudeten crises
  - Chamberlain had a "profound distrust of Russia"
  - More practical reasons:
    - Soviet army weak after Stalin's purges

- Alliance could alienate other E. European countries
- Encircling Germany could incite war
- Stalin distrusted in Poland, might push them towards Germany
- Reluctantly, negotiations began
  - Britain and France wanted the Soviets to join in on guarantees to Poland
  - Soviets proposed a mutual assurance treaty
    - Didn't want to be left fighting Germany alone in the East
  - Soviets also demanded the right to intervene in neighboring countries threatened by fascist forces
    - Rejected outright by the British/French who saw this as an excuse to interfere with/take over countries

#### Reaction to the invasion of Poland

- Hitler failed to respond to Chamberlain's ultimatum and war was declared on Sept 3
    - Phoney War meant that Poland was given no relief initially
    - Failed Allied attempts in Finland, Denmark and Norway
      - Chamberlain resigned after the Norway campaign failed
    - Winston Churchill headed a coalition government
      - France was defeated in 1940 and Britain now stood alone
      - Hitler offered a "peace offensive" but Churchill was determined to fight on
    - Britain stood alone and attempted to find allies but the US was continuing its isolationist policies
- Situation looked grim until Hitler turned his attention toward invading the Soviet Union