

# From the Nazi Takeover to World War II

---

## Table of Contents

You know the role of women in the Nazi state.....	3
You know the Nazis' youth policy .....	3
You can describe the Nazis' economic policy and its changes.....	3
You know how the Nazis used violence (V) and seduction (S) to win the support of the German masses .....	4
You know who tried to resist the Nazi regime and how .....	5
You know the goals of Hitler's foreign policy and the major steps from 1933 to 1939.....	5
You can describe the foreign policies of other European powers facing the Nazi policy between 1933 and 1939 .....	8
You understand and can explain how the Nazis managed to consolidate their power in 1933/34.....	8
You can explain the failure of resistance .....	9
You can explain why the Nazis changed their economic policy and who benefitted from this policy .....	9
You can explain the mutual impacts of the foreign policies of the USSR, Germany, France and Britain on each other .....	9
You can explain whether Nazi domestic policy also served Nazi foreign policies.....	9
You can explain the changes in Nazi foreign policy .....	9
You can interpret the debate about an economic crisis in 1939 as a reason for war .....	10
You can assess the Nazi economic policy .....	10
You can assess the question who was really in control of the Third Reich.....	10
You can evaluate different views whether Hitler had planned the outbreak of the war .....	10
You can evaluate criticism and justification of the appeasement policy .....	10
You can assess the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 1939.....	11
You can assess the (in)evitability of the outbreak of WW II .....	11

## Info

There is no claim for completeness. All warranties are disclaimed.

[Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/).



## Study Part

*D = Germany, I = Italy, JP = Japan, F = France, GB = Great Britain, US(A) = United States of America, USSR = Soviet Union, CZ = Czechoslovakia*

*Dates are written in American mm/dd/(yy)yy or mm/(yy)yy format.*

*Use Google – the internet is FULL of stuff about Nazis & WWII!*

### *Factual Knowledge*

#### You know the role of women in the Nazi state

- Awards to women (e.g. if they gave birth to many children)
- Fast reproduction – more soldiers
- To fight against unemployment, women were dismissed and made to produce babies
- Racial promotion of Aryan women
- Creating a feeling of community & bringing into line
- If a woman didn't find a man, she could volunteer to have a baby from an Aryan SS officer

#### You know the Nazis' youth policy

- Establishment of youth organizations such as the "Hitler-Jugend", which was split up by sex and age and organized strictly hierarchically
- One wasn't obligated by law to join but huge social pressure
- Certain [religious] groups couldn't be members
- Other youth organizations were prohibited (sports clubs were still allowed, though)
- Many pull factors: adventure make friends, travel, parental pride, physical activity, power & career, outdoor activity as soldier training, training of typical female activities (the last two being a preparation for war)

#### You can describe the Nazis' economic policy and its changes<sup>1</sup>

- On 2nd May, 1933, Adolf Hitler ordered the Sturm Abteilung (SA) to arrest Germany's trade union leaders. Robert Ley formed the Labor Front (DAF), the only union organization allowed in the Third Reich.
- A pay freeze was introduced in 1933 and this was enforced by the Labor Front. Wages were now decided by the Labor Front and compulsory deductions made for income tax, and for its Strength through Joy program. The Labor Front issued work-books that recorded the worker's employment record and no one could be employed without one.
- **The government banned the introduction of some labor-saving machinery.**
- **Employers had to get government permission before reducing their labor force.**
- The Nazi government gave work contracts to those companies that relied on manual labor rather than machines. This was especially true of the government's massive autobahn program.
- **The Nazis concentrated on rearming. Thousands of Germans worked in factories producing weapons.**

---

<sup>1</sup> Partly based on <http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/redschi/historydocs/Germany%201919-1939%20GCSE/Nazi%20Economic%20Policy%201933.doc>

- **Conscription into the German armed forces helped to reduce the numbers of unemployed.**
- Hitler also encouraged the mass production of radios. In this case he was not only concerned with reducing unemployment, but saw them as a means of supplying a steady stream of Nazi propaganda to the German people.
- Women in certain professions such as doctors and civil servants were dismissed, while other married women were paid a lump sum of 1000 marks to stay at home.
- In the summer of 1935 Adolf Hitler announced the introduction of Labor Service (RAD). Under this measure all men aged between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five had work for the government for six months. Later women were also included in the scheme and they did work such as teaching and domestic service.

*BUT*

- **By 1939, Germany still imported 33% of its required raw materials**
- From 1933 to 1939, the Nazi government always spent more than it earned so that by 1939, government debt stood at over 40 billion Reichsmarks.
- Annual food consumption in 1937 had fallen for wheat bread, meat, bacon, milk, eggs, fish vegetables, sugar, tropical fruit and beer compared to the 1927 figures. The only increase was in rye bread, cheese and potatoes.
- Real earnings in 1938 were all but the same as the 1928 figure. (Real earnings are wages adjusted to allow for inflation).

### You know how the Nazis used violence (V) and seduction (S) to win the support of the German masses

*For more details on a specific mean, please refer to your notes from the respective presentation*

- Gestapo
  - › V: very violent
  - › S: based on intelligence from citizens
- Euthanasia
  - › V: murder
  - › S: recommended to parents who had “abnormal” kids
- Degenerate Art
  - › V: suppression
  - › S: public exhibitions
- Volkswagen & Volksempfänger
  - › VW S: affordable for everyone
  - › VE S: affordable for everyone
  - › VE V: non non-propaganda stations
- CC Dachau
  - › V: people were afraid
- KdF – Strength through Joy
  - › S: people were pleased (vacation)
- Olympic Games
  - › S: subtle propaganda (and creating a very good image to the rest of the world)

## You know who tried to resist the Nazi regime and how

### Attacking parties

- Religious groups
  - › Moral reasons
  - › → Were put into CC
- Military
  - › General von Stauffenberg
  - › Trying to assassinate Hitler
  - › Traditionalists; wanted “traditional warfare”
  - › → killed
- Youth & student groups
  - › Revals
  - › Alternative to HJ
  - › Pacifists
  - › → arrested
- traditional elite
  - › Old-fashioned, against (Hitler’s) democracy
  - › Didn’t consider Hitler as a proper leader (Hitler’s family background)
  - › → arrested & killed
- Left parties
  - › Different political views
  - › Dissolved
  - › Guerilla actions
  - › Exile
  - › → CC

### Protective layers

- Collaborators
- Indifferent masses (HUGE), would’ve been needed for popular uprising, but difficult to motivate

## You know the goals of Hitler’s foreign policy and the major steps from 1933 to 1939

The aims of Hitler’s Foreign Policy were:

- To reverse the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.
- To make Germany a great world power again.
- To unite all German speaking people.
- To rearm Germany and restore all its lost territories.
- To conquer an Empire in the East to give Germany Lebensraum (living space).

The aims of Hitler’s Foreign Policy were based on the ideas of:

- The Master Race (The Nazi racist idea that Germans as an Aryan people were a “master race” destined to rule “subhuman” peoples like Slavs.)
- Pan-German Nationalism (The belief that all German speaking peoples should be united in one Greater Germany.)

- Militarism (The use of military force to solve a countries problems is better than peaceful negotiations.)
- Social Darwinism (The theory that in the world it was natural for stronger countries to conquer and rule weaker countries.)<sup>2</sup>

Hitler's foreign policy from 1933-1939 was based on two aspects: expansionism and arm race. Since he took over the presidency after the death of the president, he made it his goal to annex to the Reich every territory where there were Germans living to create his 'breathing room'.

He began by ordering the re-militarization of Rhineland, which was a DMZ<sup>3</sup> as of 1919, as established by the Treaty of Versailles. France during this time period had a huge panic to war and thus, was completely subordinated to Great Britain's appeasement policy. Because of this France just asked Hitler not do it but Hitler did it anyway. As I mentioned before, due to their appeasement policy, Great Britain didn't do anything to stop him, thinking 'if we give him what he wants, then maybe he'll relax', which he didn't rather, the international tensions created by his expansionism gave him an excuse to start a rearmament policy, which was forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles, his goal to destroy it was one of the reasons Germany voted for the Nazis in the 1933 elections, and Great Britain didn't do anything to stop him, again because of their policy.

Then there was the failed coup by the Austrian Nazi party, which was fueled and supported by Hitler, which began with the assassination of the Austrian Prime Minister. This was before Mussolini and Hitler became close friends, and as Austria was both one of Hitler's greatest aspirations (remember that Hitler dreamed of annexing Austria into the Reich, given the fact that he was Austrian) and one of Mussolini's expansion areas. Because of this, Mussolini sent his troops to the Italian-Austrian border threatening to invade if the Nazis tried to take over. Hitler didn't have a large force back then and he didn't want to risk a conflict with Italy either, so he claimed he didn't know anything about it.

Also, the Sudetenland annexation. Hitler, using the principles of nationalities, demanded to Czechoslovakia to give up this region. Mussolini intervened and suggested the celebration of a conference in Munich. The outcome was favorable for Hitler's intentions and he annexed the region. After every neighbor of Czechoslovakia's took territories from it after this, Hitler took what was left of Czechoslovakia for himself, and began plans for the annexation of Poland. In Munich, Great Britain saw the truth behind Hitler's intentions and threatened to go to war if he went after Poland, same as France. Two days after Hitler invaded Poland, breaking the non-aggression pact he signed with them in 1934, Great Britain and France declared war, beginning WWII.

Due to Great Britain's appeasement policy, Stalin thought the West was conspiring against him and in his paranoia, the USSR signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany, that had secret clauses that stated that the USSR and Germany would divide Polish territories in case of war. Of course, due to his hatred for communism and Stalin, Hitler broke the pact and invaded the USSR.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph based on [http://www.allertongrange.org/docs/Hitlers\\_Foreign\\_Policy\\_1933\\_-\\_1939.doc](http://www.allertongrange.org/docs/Hitlers_Foreign_Policy_1933_-_1939.doc)

<sup>3</sup> Demilitarized zone

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph based <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20101210134106AAzsgl>, shortened  
Version 1.0b from 3/12/2013

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Cause/ intention/ justification</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Violation Versailles</b>
<b>Withdrawal from the League of Nations</b>	October 19, 1933	France didn't agree on the disarmament	League of Nations failed	No
<b>Non-aggression pact with Poland</b>	1934	No more armed conflict for ten years → signal for no wars	Poland isn't able to support France → destroy anti-German alliances	No
<b>Plebiscite in the Saar</b>	January 13, 1935	End of the reign of the League of Nations	Saarland back under German reign, Prestige boost for Hitler; propaganda & psychological effect on similar territories	No (part of it)
<b>Conscription / rearmament</b>	1933-1939	Lebensraum, Lost pride of Germany, "Help" underdeveloped countries	Carl von Ossietzky won a Nobel Prize for the disclosure of the rearmament policy in 1935, triggered rearmament policy of the UK	Yes
<b>Anglo-German naval agreement</b>	June 18, 1935	attempt for better relations between GB and Germany, Germany thought of it as anti-France and anti-Soviet Union	regulate the Kriegsmarine's size to a fixed total tonnage to be 35% of the Royal Navy; larger than limited in the Treaty of Versailles	Yes, but GB's consent
<b>Rhineland occupation</b>	March 7, 1936	provocation, "it belongs to Germany" (Hitler)	GB & France took no counter-action	Yes, no reaction
<b>Axis Rhome-Berlin &amp; Anti-Comintern Pact</b>	October 29, 1936	anti-communist	Axis Powers formed; German breaks out of isolation	No
<b>Austria's "Anschluss"</b>	March 12, 1938	increased pro-Nazi movements in Austria; Hitler Schuschnigg decided upon (was bullied/threatened by Hitler)	Austria is a part of Germany	Yes

## You can describe the foreign policies of other European powers facing the Nazi policy between 1933 and 1939

- GB & F: appeasement policy<sup>5</sup>
  - › Munich Conference: decided about future of Sudetenland without CZ being present
  - › Securing peace at CZ's expense
  - › F: memory of WWI still present
  - › GB & F: preoccupied with imperial policy
- USA
  - › Long-time isolation (briefly interrupted in WWI & 1929); continued until 1941 when the US were attacked by Japan at Pearl Harbor
  - › Didn't play a role in outbreak of WWII
  - › Rearmament because of pacific region conflicts (more afraid of JP than of D)
- USSR
  - › High potential, but not as developed as US
  - › Some positions as US
  - › Isolated but not as their own choice (communism from 1917 on); until German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 8/1939

## Understanding

## You understand and can explain how the Nazis managed to consolidate their power in 1933/34

- Enabling Act
  - › The German word Ermächtigungsgesetz usually refers to the enabling act of March 23, 1933, officially Gesetz zur Behebung der Not von Volk und Reich ("Law to Remedy the Distress of the People and the State"). It became a cornerstone of Adolf Hitler's seizure of power. Unlike, for example, the Wilhelm Marx enabling act of December 1923, Hitler's act
    - was limited to four years, not several months
    - enabled government not only to create decrees, but even laws and treaties with other countries
    - these laws could deviate from the constitution
    - there were no thematic limits
  - › neither any house committee nor the Reichsrat (the common organ of the German regional states) had the right to control, or to abolish these laws
- 5/2/33 ending trade unions, replaced by DA; membership compulsory, no right to negotiate → fake
- 2-7/33 all political parties abolished
- 7/14/33 Germany is officially a 1-party state
- Until 1/34 parliaments in the Länder dissolved and centralization of power in Berlin
- 1933 12% of public service people replaced → unfinished revolution

---

<sup>5</sup> „Appeasement is a diplomatic policy aimed at avoiding war by making concessions to an aggressor.”  
(Wikipedia)



### You can explain the failure of resistance

There was no success as no cooperation was done – although having the same goals.

### You can explain why the Nazis changed their economic policy and who benefitted from this policy

- **1933 – 1936**  
satisfy workers & employers to gain public support; increased difficulty for foreign powers to interfere; investing in infrastructure and reduce unemployment rate & make propaganda
- **1936 – 1939**  
“Four Year Plann”<sup>6</sup>
  - › To increase agricultural production.
  - › Retrain key sectors of the work force.
  - › Government regulation of imports and exports.
  - › To achieve self-sufficiency in the production of raw materials.
  - › Being a left idea, a right party ought not to touch the economy

### You can explain the mutual impacts of the foreign policies of the USSR, Germany, France and Britain on each other

*Please also see related aims.*

- F & GB mutually “confirmed” each other by continuing their appeasement policy, which in turn gave Germany the impression they could do whatever they wanted with no intervention
- D tried to please GB/F and USSR both at the same time
- GB & F used D as an anti-communist buffer against the USSR
- *see also:* Munich Conference vs. German-Soviet non-aggression pact

### You can explain whether Nazi domestic policy also served Nazi foreign policies

Very often, those two policies served each other on various occasions, such that the economic policy 1033 served as a preparation for war while the Olympics against soothed foreign powers and the propaganda about “Grossdeutsches Reich” was a signal for the will to expand in 1939.

### You can explain the changes in Nazi foreign policy<sup>7</sup>

From 1933–1938, Konstantin von Neurath, a conservative career diplomat, served as German foreign minister. During his tenure, Germany followed a revisionist policy aimed at overcoming the restrictions imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and seizing the diplomatic initiative from Britain and France. Germany withdrew from the League of Nations; began rapid rearmament; signed a nonaggression pact with Poland; reacquired the Saar territory through a plebiscite; militarily assisted the supporters of Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War; and remilitarized the Rhineland.

From 1938–1945, Joachim von Ribbentrop, a Nazi party member and former ambassador to Great Britain, served as the foreign minister. During these years, Germany strengthened its ties to Fascist Italy and to Japan by signing the Anti-Comintern Pact, which aimed to combat

---

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/four\\_year\\_plan.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/four_year_plan.htm)

<sup>7</sup> Based on <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005203>

international communism, the Pact of Steel (with Italy), and the wartime Three-Power Agreement (with Italy and Japan).

In 1938, Germany acquired new territories using the threat of war. In February, Hitler pressured Austrian chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg into signing the German-Austrian agreement (Berchtesgaden Diktat), which brought Nazis into the Austrian cabinet. The next month, Germany carried out the Anschluss, the annexation of Austria. Hitler then began demanding a solution to the Sudeten crisis, a conflict over the Sudetenland (a region of Czechoslovakia settled largely by ethnic Germans). On September 30, 1938, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain (an advocate of appeasement), French premier Edouard Daladier, Italian prime minister Benito Mussolini, and Hitler signed the Munich agreement, which ceded the Sudetenland to Germany. In March 1939, Germany occupied and dismembered the rump Czechoslovak state.

In August 1939, Ribbentrop signed the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact. A temporary deviation from Germany's normally anti-Communist foreign policy, this agreement allowed Hitler the freedom to attack Poland on September 1, 1939, without fear of Soviet intervention. Britain and France, Poland's allies, declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. Hitler's aggressive foreign policy resulted in the outbreak of World War II.

### *Interpretation*

#### **You can interpret the debate about an economic crisis in 1939 as a reason for war**

- Hitler somehow had to be able to get more resources and this would justify a war.

#### **You can assess the Nazi economic policy**

*See respective learning aim in the "Factual Knowledge" section*

#### **You can assess the question who was really in control of the Third Reich**

Hitler himself was not totally a political leader, it was more of him being interpreted by his ministers. Hitler didn't know everything nor did he have everything under control. However, chaos also had its benefits; no ministers, emotions as guides and easier to handle than law & order.

#### **You can evaluate different views whether Hitler had planned the outbreak of the war<sup>8</sup>**

- A chance to realize "Lebensraum Ost"
- Gain resources/raw materials
- "revenge" for Versailles
- Sooner or later, the USSR would attack, so attack West fast to prevent two-front-war, as also Stalin knew, Hitler would attack at some time

#### **You can evaluate criticism and justification of the appeasement policy**

- Morally unacceptable
- Serious contribution to the outbreak of WWII

---

<sup>8</sup> See also

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_was\\_the\\_most\\_important\\_reason\\_to\\_the\\_outbreak\\_of\\_world\\_war\\_2](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_was_the_most_important_reason_to_the_outbreak_of_world_war_2)

### You can assess the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 1939

- Signed a few days before the outbreak of WWII
- Between an anti-fascist and an anti-communist state
- Public part:
  - › No aggression against each other
  - › Cooperation → exchange of intel
  - › No support for 3<sup>rd</sup> party if either of them was attacked
  - › Diplomacy
- Secret part
  - › Could be used as an excuse to start war → war guilt question
  - › Hinting at a war
  - › 3<sup>rd</sup> parties/states were decided upon illegally
- Reasons
  - › D: wanted to prevent a two-front war, so if they attacked in the west, no attack from the east would come; contradicts "Lebensraum Ost"
  - › Share territories (Poland & Baltics) as these states weren't strong and both sides wanted part of them
  - › USSR: afraid of two-front war with D&JP as a D-I-JP pact existed; JP started already in 1936 war; → D couldn't fulfill both pacts at the same time
  - › USSR could win time (attack from D) and could use D as an anti-communist buffer from the west
  - › Hitler had an ally (no others)
  - › USSR felt excluded as wasn't invited to Munich

### You can assess the (in)evitability of the outbreak of WW II

If you think some people can be made guilty for its outbreak, then it would've been evitable, if you think it was "the course of history", it would've been inevitable.