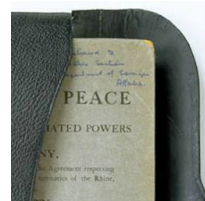


The Road to World War II



Failure of Versailles



- The peace settlement that ended WWI (**Versailles Treaty**) failed to provide a “just and secure peace” as promised
- Instead Germany grew more **resentful** of the treaty that they felt was too **harsh**

The Versailles Treaty (above on crutches) took a beating in the U.S. and abroad



Adolf Hitler



Hitler in WWI, far right

- WWI veteran
- joined a struggling political group called the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or **Nazi** Party.

- Hitler's skill in public speaking and ability to organize support allowed him to quickly become a **leader** in the Nazi Party
- In his book, Mein Kampf (**My Struggle**), he explained that he wanted to unite all German-speaking people in one grand Empire
- He wanted racial purity – “inferior” races such as Jews, Slavs and all non-whites were to form a work force for the “**master race**” – blond, blue-eyed “Aryans”

Hitler Gains Power

- By mid-1932, the Nazis had become the strongest political party in Germany
- In January of 1933, Hitler was appointed **Chancellor** (Prime Minister)
- Hitler quickly threw out Germany's government and replaced it with a **totalitarian** government
- Called himself “**Der Führer**” (the leader) and his rule of Germany the Third Reich
 - He promised to return Germany to its former glory



Germany Rearms



Hitler visits a factory and is enthusiastically greeted. Many Germans were grateful for jobs after the misery of the depression years.

Germany Remilitarizes the Rhineland March 1936



The Rhineland was a region of Germany that was '**demilitarized**', after the Treaty of Versailles.

Germany was not allowed to have troops in the region.

Nazi Germany Expands: Austria



Another element of Hitler's grand design was creating "Lebensraum," the German word for **living space**

Hitler believed that for Germany to thrive it needed more land

In March, 1938, German troops marched into **Austria** unopposed.

The arrival of German troops was met with great enthusiasm by the Austrians.

The majority of Austria's 6 million people were **in favor** of joining with Germany

A day later, Germany announced its union with Austria, which it called "**Anschluss**" (union).



Again, this went against the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which banned Germany from uniting with Austria.

Nazi Germany Expands: the Sudetenland



About 3 million German-speaking people lived in the western border regions of **Czechoslovakia**

In 1938 Hitler began to build up troops on the Czechoslovakian border and then ordered the occupation of this region, called the **Sudetenland**.

The rest of the world was pretty sure that Germany would soon take over the rest of Czechoslovakia.

The Munich Conference

September 1938

The leaders of Germany (**Adolf Hitler**), Great Britain (**Neville Chamberlain**), France (Edouard Daladier), and Italy (Benito Mussolini), met in Munich, Germany.



Hitler promised that taking the Sudetenland would be has “ **last** territorial demand”

Chamberlain and Daladier believed Hitler and signed the **Munich**

Agreement

that turned over the Sudetenland to Germany.

Chamberlain announced, “I have come back from Germany with peace with honor. I believe it is **peace in our time**.”

Critics called this a dangerous policy of **appeasement** – or giving up principles to pacify an aggressor.

Nazi Expansion Continues



Despite the Munich Agreement, on March 15, 1939 German troops invaded and occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia.

In August of 1939 Germany and the USSR signed a **non-aggression pact**, promising that neither country would attack the other in the event of war.

This paved the way for Germany to take Poland without fear of an attack from the USSR.

On September 3rd, 1939, Germany invaded **Poland**.

The Soviets received part of Poland (a promise made in the non-aggression pact).

Great Britain and France, allies of Poland, **declared war on Germany**.



World War II had officially begun.