

Appeasement

The British PM, Chamberlain met Hitler on 3 occasions to try and avoid war. He was instrumental in allowing Hitler to have the Sudetenland in 1938 as he followed a policy of appeasement—giving in to an enemy to avoid conflict. Winston Churchill criticised this policy. However, this policy was over when Hitler invaded Poland in 1939 and Britain declared war on Germany on 3rd Sept, 1939.



INTRODUCTION

The Great War had a huge impact on both Britain and the world. The poppy became a symbol of life and hope amongst the fighting on the Western Front and in 1919 some poppies were collected and sold to raise money for war widows. They were soon to be produced artificially and sold all over Britain. In November 1919 there was the first period of silence to remember the fallen, which we still commemorate to this day.

Unfortunately, just over 20 years later the world was at war again. What happened between the wars that led to a second catastrophic world war?

Attempts to keep the peace after the Great War

In January, 1919 the leaders of France (Clemenceau). Britain (Lloyd George) and the USA (Wilson) met in Paris to discuss the future of the world and what to do with Germany. What they decided was set out in a document called the “Treaty of Versailles”. Germany were forced to sign this document to say that they agreed to the punishment. Some of the key parts of the Treaty are listed here:



TREATY OF VERSAILLES

- It's all your fault (War Guilt)
- Pay £6.6 billion in Reparations
- Lose land and colonies
- Reduce your armed forces

The steps to the Second World War

In the 1930s Hitler took several steps that led to WW2. He re-armed Germany, re-militarised the Rhineland, joined up with Austria, took over an area of land called the Sudetenland (part of Czechoslovakia) and then invaded Czechoslovakia itself. All of this was against the Treaty of Versailles, but the League of Nations was powerless to stop him and other countries were keen to avoid war.

Life in Nazi Germany

Hitler ruled Germany as a dictatorship and controlled people through absolute fear. He used the Gestapo, SS and the threat of concentration camps to achieve this. A huge emphasis was put on the young people in Nazi Germany and schools had to teach the Nazi beliefs and children were expected to attend the Hitler Youth. The Nazis felt that superior races (Germans) had the right to dominate “inferior” races such as Jews, gypsies. They also persecuted people who were homosexual or mentally or physically disabled.



Rise of Hitler and the Nazis

Meanwhile...in Braunau, Austria in 1889 Adolf Hitler was born. Having lost both his mother and father early in his life he was living on the streets of Vienna in 1907 and then moved to Munich, Germany in 1913. He joined the German army and received the Iron Cross. After the war he joined a political party known as the DAP. Before long he made speeches for them and then became their leader, re-branding the party with the swastika and a new name, the NSDAP (or Nazis). He attempted to take over Germany by force in 1923 and was sent to prison. Eventually, thanks largely to the Depression and the promises the Nazis made he was elected Chancellor of Germany in 1933

League of Nations

In an attempt to stop future wars a League of Nations was set up. The idea behind this was that countries would meet up with each other to settle disputes peacefully rather than going to war. 40 countries joined in the beginning and it was seen as a positive step and it solved some problems in the 1920s. However, it failed to solve bigger challenges in the 1930s.