

Causes of the Second World War

1. The Spanish Civil War: Slade

When: The Spanish Civil War was fought from 17 July 1936 to 1 April 1939.

Where: The Spanish Civil war took place all over Spain.

What: The country was split into two and a big war broke out between the Republicans and Nationalists.

Why: The war began after a pronunciamiento by a group of generals of the Spanish Republican Armed Forces, under the leadership of Jose Sanjurjo, against the elected government of the Second Spanish Republic, at the time under the leadership of President Manuel Azana.

Outcome: The Nationalists, led by General Francisco Franco ended up to prevailed, and Franco ruled Spain for the next 36 years, from 1939 until his death in 1975.

So-What:..

2. Japanese Aggression: Zoe

When:

Where:

What:

Why:

Outcome:

So-What:

3. Appeasement: Erik

When: 1935 through 1939 appeasement was used abundantly when dealing with Hitler and his aggressive foreign policy.

Where: Practiced by western democracies in the League of Nations after the First World War, however Chamberlain and Britain practiced Appeasement frequently against Germany in the 1930s.

What: Following the Paris Peace Talks and the foundation of the League of Nations it became unacceptable to use force to settle international quarrels. Appeasement became one passive strategies used in diplomacy alongside tariffs and embargos to resolve political disputes.

When Nazi Germany grew bold and began to throw its weight around, demanding territory, British Prime Minister Chamberlain stepped in to resolve the matter with Appeasement. The idea of appeasement was to satisfy the Germans enough that they would no longer need or want anymore territory.

Why: The British were desperate for peace because they did not want another World War, nor did they have enough financial or military assets to effectively fight Germany and her allies.

Outcome: Despite Chamberlain's good intentions, when Hitler was given an inch, he would take a mile. So despite the attempts to appease Hitler, military force was the only force Hitler would respect. And after the invasion of the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia, and finally Poland, the British sprang into action and declared war on Germany after a 48 hour ultimatum.

So-What: Appeasement fails when the person on the receiving end exploits the good intentions of others without any intention honouring an accord.

4. The Rhineland Crisis: Blake

When: German troops marched into the Rhineland on March 7 1936

Where: The Rhineland which was under German political control

What: German troop invaded the Rhineland against the treaty of Versailles and called France's bluff as they were forced to retreat

Why: They used it as a test to see if anyone would stand up to Germany which no one did

Outcome: Germany now had a slight step on France as the buffer zone between the two countries was now militarized by Germany

So-What: It gave Hitler confidence that he could now boss France and other countries around without them fighting back which gave him motivation

5. The Anschluss Annexation: Tristan

When: The first putsch was attempted in 1934, but it was stopped at the border by Mussolini's Italian forces. It was attempted again on March 11, 1938 and was successful.

Where: Austria.

What: Hitler wanted unification of Germany and Austria. Austrian Nazis pressured Austrian Chancellor, who went to the League of Nations for aid but received none. The Chancellor proposed a plebiscite for self determination, but Hitler invades before the vote is held.

Why: Hitler wanted general expansion in the name of imperialism. Austria seemed a natural start due to its cultural and ethnic ties with Germany, as well as its economic prosperity.

Outcome: Germany took Austria by force, declaring it a German nation. However, a plebiscite was held after the invasion that showed 99% in favour of Anschluss.

So-What: The event further established Germany as a bully throwing its weight around to get what it wants. Also shows that the other world powers were either unwilling or unable to oppose Germany, further setting the stage for the Second World War.

6. The Munich Crisis: Sydney

When: On September 30, 1938 Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Italy held a conference to discuss the future of the Sudetenland.

Where: Munich

What: During the talks, Hitler demanded the immediate cession of the Sudetenland to Germany and the evacuation of the Czechoslovaks by the end of the month. Czechoslovakia was not even invited to the talks. The Czechs were free to fight if they wished, but they had no support.

Why: The Sudetenland contained 3 million Germans who had been cut off from the rest of Germany after the creation of Czechoslovakia by the Treaty. Hitler also wanted to extend Germany's frontiers for military reasons; Czechoslovakian defenses were running through natural barriers as were the mountains located in Sudetenland.

Outcome: They gave the Sudetenland to Germany.

So-What: The morning after the talks in Germany, Hitler and Chamberlain signed a paper saying they promised never to go to war again. In 1938, Hitler tore up the Munich Agreement and occupied all of Western Czechoslovakia.

7. The End of Czechoslovakia: Pierre

When: In March 1939, short after the Munich Crisis (September 1938)

Where: Not only the Sudetenland but the whole Czechoslovakia.

What: Hitler break the Munich Peace Pact by invading the rest of Czechoslovakia from the Sudetenland.

Why: Hitler was taking all the opportunities he could from the League of Nations in order to restore the German empire and to control a greater area. He was hungry for power.

Outcome: This act broke the policy of appeasement adopted by Chamberlain. The threat of war if Poland came to be invaded as well.

So-What: Hitler, thinking that this act wouldn't change anything, as he already conquered Austria, Czechoslovakia and helped the general Franco by fooling the League, invaded Poland and Britain, this time, declared war on Germany