

Hitler's Actions - The Road to War

- ① March 1936 - Hitler sends troops into the Rhineland (area that Treaty of Versailles stated to stay as demilitarized). Allies do nothing (France & Britain want to avoid war).
- ② March 1938 - Hitler sends troops into Austria; achieves Anschluss; allies do nothing.
↳ uniting AUS & GER
- ③ September 1938 - Hitler demands the "German part" of Czechoslovakia (called Sudetenland).
- Munich Agreement - Britain agrees to German takeover of Sudetenland in return for a written promise from Hitler that he will make no more territorial demands. This was a policy of **APPEASEMENT**.
- ④ March 1939 - Hitler sends troops to occupy the rest of Czechoslovakia; Allies do nothing.
- ⑤ August 23, 1939 - Hitler brokers the "Nazi-Soviet Non-Agression Pact" with the USSR; Hitler agrees not to attack the USSR and vice-versa.
- Why? ... Hitler wants to avoid an Eastern & Western front
Poland, if invaded would be split betw G and USSR
- ⑥ September 1, 1939 - Hitler invades Poland; Britain and France declare war on Germany on Sept. 3rd; Canada on Sept. 9th.

Key Fronts in WWII

- The Atlantic (September 1939 to May 1945)
- The Western Front and German Advance (May 1940 to September 1940)
- The Western Front (September 1940 to January 1945)
- The Mediterranean and Africa (April 1940 to March 1945)
- The Eastern Front (April 1941 to January 1945)
- The Pacific (April 1941 to July 1945)
- China and South East Asia (September 1941 to June 1945)

Hitler's Two Policies

- ① the building of a powerful and formidable military state → OUTCOME WWII
- ② the total, state sponsored elimination of the Jews of Europe → OUTCOME HOLOCAUST

Nazi Germany's Military Strategy

- ① Reclaim what the Treaty of Versailles took from Germany
 - ② March 1936 - German forces reoccupy Rhineland (diplomatic test of will to stop Hitler's military policy)
 - ③ March 1938 - Anschluss - annexation of Austria
 - ④ Sept. to Oct. 1938 - invasion/occupation of Sudetenland
 - ⑤ March 1939 - remaining parts of Czechoslovakia invaded and annexed[August 1939 - Nazi-Soviet non-aggression Pact (eastern Europe divided into spheres of influence)]
 - ⑥ September 1939 - invasion and occupation of Poland - sets off WWII
 - Poland fell in less than 1 month

② Blitzkrieg Europe

- ② "phony war" or Sitzkrieg - preparation
 - allies mobilized forces
 - Germany moved forces to staging areas for next invasion
 - ③ April 1940 - Denmark invaded
 - fell in 1 day
 - Hitler's second policy progresses
 - ④ April 1940 - Norway invaded - fell in 2 days
 - ⑤ May 1940 - Benelux / Low Countries invaded
 - Netherlands fell in 5 days
 - Belgium / Luxembourg fell in 18 days
 - ⑥ June 1940 - France invaded - fell in 6 weeks
- [Hitler master of Europe - Italy enters war and allies with Germany]

③ Major Battles

- a) May - June 1940 - Battle of Dunkirk
- b) July to October 1940 - Britain staves of invasion (Operation Sea Lion)
- c) April 1941 - Hitler felt strong enough to fight on another front - invaded Balkans (notably Yugoslavia) and Greece
- d) June 1941 - Operation Barbarossa
 - Hitler's downfall as Germany now had to fight on two major fronts
 - drawn out due to fiercely cold/harsh Russian winter unanticipated by Germany Army Leaders
- e) December 1941 - Japan launched a war against U.S. - causing WWII to become a true global war

*** Although hostilities lasted another 3 years, the Nazi Empire had been at its largest when Japan entered the war. This period was marked by a slow German decline as the Soviet armies pushed back the Nazis from the east and the British-American forces, after an invasion in Normandy, from the west.