

Unit 1- Key Issue 3

How was Hitler able to Invade Poland in 1939?

Hitler hated that Germany was split in two. The Polish Corridor caused this split and Hitler wanted this to change. Hitler wanted the land but he did not want to fight a war on two fronts. In the same year, Hitler had taken over all of Czechoslovakia and at this point, Britain and France told him that if he went into Poland they would declare war. It is known that Russia also wanted Polish territory and if Hitler had invaded Poland, both Britain and Russia would have declared war. To overcome this, Hitler signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact with Russia in August 1939 which meant that the two countries would not go to war with each other for ten years and that they would divide Poland between themselves. This gave Hitler the opportunity he needed, he did not believe that Britain and France would declare war and with backing from Russia he invaded Poland on September 1st. Britain told Hitler either to get out or war would be declared, on the 3rd September 1939 Britain declared War on Germany however they did not react immediately. This allowed Hitler to use Blitzkrieg to take over half of the country quickly, meeting Russia in the middle on 6th September.

How did Hitler break the Treaty of Versailles between 1933 + 1939?

In 1933, Germany attended a disarmament conference with the League of Nations. Hitler was unhappy that Germany was the only country made to disarm even though others had promised to do the same. He felt that as no other countries were lowering their weapon levels then he would do the same. He left the League of Nations and pulled his representatives out of the conference in anger at other countries. In the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's Army had been limited to 100,000 men. However in 1935, Hitler announced Conscription and by 1936 the Army had grown by 300,000. Hitler started to reopen factories to build weapons, vehicles and ammunition. He also started to increase the number of battle ships and submarines in the Navy. This was helped by the Anglo-German Agreement in 1935 which allowed Germany's navy to reach 35% of the size of the Royal Navy. This was an advantage as their Navy had only been 10% of the Royal Navy, which was unknown to Britain. The Luftwaffe was created and were quickly able to test new strategies and aircraft in the Spanish Civil War including Bombing Runs. This allowed the Luftwaffe to become as skilful as any other air force in the world. In 1936, Hitler broke another term of the Treaty of Versailles. He started to remilitarize the Rhineland and by the end of the year there were 14,000 soldiers and 22,000 police in the Rhineland.