

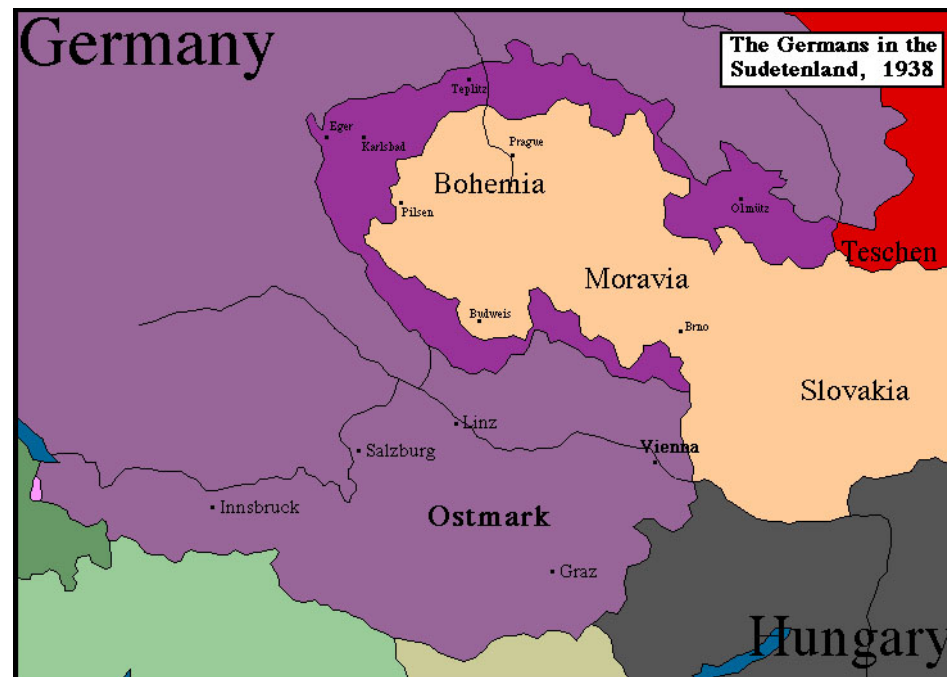
World War II: It Begins

The Austrian Anschluss

- In 1937 Hitler called for the unification of the German people (Hitler wants more land)
- First place: Austria
- Hitler announces the “union” of Austria and Germany

Hitler's Demands

- Hitler next demands the Sudetenland, an area of Czechoslovakia with a large Germany-speaking population



The Munich Agreement

- European leaders start worrying
- Representatives of Britain, France, Italy, and Germany agreed to meet in Munich to decide Czechoslovakia's fate (the Munich Conference)
- **Appeasement:** agreed to Hitler's demands
 - Concessions in exchange for peace
- Why?
- Hitler has few demands – give him what he wants and we can avoid war

British Prime Minister: Neville Chamberlain

- Neville Chamberlain:
 - Returning home, he promised “a peace with honor, a peace in our time”
- Churchill, very upset:
 - “Britain and France had to choose between war and dishonor. They chose dishonor. They will have war.”

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

- Non-aggression pact: August 1939
- Germany and Russia promised never to attack each other
- Another pact (secret) to divide Poland between them

The German Offensive Begins

- Did appeasement work?
 - In March 1939, Hitler takes over the rest of Czechoslovakia
- Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.
- Two days later Britain and France declared war.



David Low's accurate depiction of the results of appeasement: Using the "spineless leaders of democracy" as stepping stones, a nose-thumbing Hitler marches towards his ultimate goal. [Source: *Lachen*, p. 280.]

A. Blitzkrieg in Poland

- *Blitzkrieg* – lightning war
- Tanks, artillery, and soldiers, moving by truck instead of on foot, rapidly struck deep into enemy territory before the enemy could react.
- German troops took Poland in less than a month.
- This was used to also take Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France.

The Phony War

- For several months afterward, war was at a standstill along the Maginot Line along the French Border.
- Called the “phony war” because no one fought for several months.
- Suddenly, on April 9, 1940, Hitler launched a surprise invasion of Denmark and Norway
- He next turned to Belgium and the Netherlands, which he overtook by the end of May

The Fall of France

- Germans came through Belgium to attack France
- British and French troops barely escape
- Italy joins on the side of Germany and invades France from the South
- France was quickly overtaken

The Battle of Britain

- Hitler tried to use the *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) to destroy Britain's ability to resist.
- 1,000 planes a day bombed Britain.
- RAF pilots flew as many as six and seven missions a day.
- "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."