

To what extent was German diplomacy to blame for the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939?

Taking over Austria and Sudetenland; allowing for Czechoslovakia to be broken up

In assessing the role of German diplomacy in the outbreak of the second world war, it is interesting to contextualise it with the nation's foreign policy as well as economic situation. As such, we must consider the two vastly distinct governments of the inter-war years: the Weimar republic (1918-33) and the Nazi regime(1933-39). The former is characterised by the crippling debt caused by war reparations, unemployment, American investment through the Young and Dawes plans, and eventual decline with the Great Depression; whilst the latter consisted of a boom in the German motor industry as well as the economy in general, almost extinction of unemployment and rearmament. The focus lies largely on the Nazi regime, which according to some historians, this period of economic prosperity had its foundations on the war industry, which meant that Germany would soon lack civilian goods and an output for all the guns, artillery, etc being produced, being further exacerbated by its trade deficit, suggesting a very close link between their foreign policy and the country's economic needs.

Nazi foreign policy was heavily reliant on what historian William Craig called *diplomatic smokescreen*, which coupled with the English appeasement policy, allowed for multiple conquests within Europe that were met with no opposition. The remilitarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936, Anschluss in March 1938, and occupation of Sudetenland as well as portions of Czechoslovakia between October 1938 and March 1939, are examples of military actions which had been prefaced despite directly contradicting the post-war treaties, resulted in very little action from France or the United Kingdom – showing the Führer his phoney diplomatic means were highly effective.

the occupation of Sudetenland, under the guise of pan-Germanism, came right after

Soviet-Nazi pact and outbreak of the war

Diplomacy is important insofar as it reflects Germany's economic needs (Raw material, heavily industrialised area of Rhineland and Sudetenland) and policies (Lebensraum, unification with Austria, Pan-Germanism(Sudetenland, Austria, Saar and others))