

percentage of the vote than any of the other parties. In January 1933, the German President, Paul von Hindenburg, invited Hitler to become Chancellor of Germany and head a coalition government, that is, a government made up of different political parties.

Source 6

German artist Hermann Otto Hoyer's c.1937 painting *In the beginning was the Word* (the opening words of St John's Gospel in the Bible), depicting Hitler addressing war veterans, members of the SA and other supporters in the 1920s



Hitler and the Nazi party, 1933–38

As chancellor, Hitler acted quickly to decrease the power of his coalition partners. He encouraged fear of communism and imprisoned thousands of his Communist and other political opponents. By August 1934, Germany was a one-party state and Hitler its dictator to whom the Germany army swore an oath of personal loyalty. He used his power to reverse key decisions and limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles.

Source 7

Photograph by Hitler's personal photographer, Hugo Jaeger, showing Hitler saluting German troops in Adolf Hitler Platz, 1 September 1938



Source question

What impression of Hitler is created in sources 6 and 7?

The League of Nations, appeasement and the growth of right-wing power

The 1930s brought financial hardship, an increase in the power of right-wing parties and the weakening of democratic forces. Hitler sought to revive German power. Italy's **fascist** leader, Mussolini, dreamed of recreating the glories of the ancient Roman Empire. Japan's military-dominated government was determined to create an empire in Asia. All three nations embarked on actions that made another war more likely, especially when the League of Nations proved too weak to prevent them.

The League of Nations came into being in 1920 with the intention of promoting international cooperation and maintaining peace through **collective security**. While the League had some success in the 1920s, it failed to take effective action to control the aggression that Germany, Italy and Japan unleashed in the 1930s. The United States pursued a policy of **isolationism** and never joined the League. France and Great Britain followed a policy of **appeasement** and self-interest that encouraged Germany, Italy and Japan to believe that they could pursue aggression without penalty. Germany and Japan both left the League in 1933 and Italy left in 1937.

Italy and the origins of World War II

In December 1934, Italy laid claim to part of Abyssinia in east Africa. Haile Selassie, the Abyssinian emperor, asked the League of Nations for help. While the League was working on a settlement of the dispute, Mussolini prepared his army for invasion. In September 1935 the League proposed that Abyssinia settle the issue by giving some of its land to Italy. The following month, Italian troops invaded Abyssinia.

Italy was clearly at fault. The League imposed a series of trade bans. League members were not to sell arms, rubber, tin or metals to Italy. They could not lend money to Italy nor could they import goods from Italy. Oil sales to Italy continued.

Britain and France gave only half-hearted support to the bans. They feared the negative impact of the bans on their economies and secretly planned a deal that would allow Italy to take two-thirds of Abyssinia. In May 1936, Italy took control of all of Abyssinia and in November joined Germany in an agreement known as the Rome–Berlin Axis. In April 1939, in another expansionist move, Italy invaded Albania.

Germany and the origins of World War II

Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations in 1933 and set about overturning key restrictions on Germany's power imposed by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. In 1935, he announced the introduction of re-armament and conscription to the army. In 1936, he sent German troops into the Rhineland and introduced a four-year plan to get the German economy ready for war. In 1938, his troops took over Austria. He was well on the way to achieving his goals of uniting all Germans and creating more living space (*lebensraum*) for them.

Britain believed that some of Germany's claims were justified and was economically and militarily unprepared to risk war with Germany. Her response was to try and appease Germany. Germany's actions in the Rhineland in 1936 were a direct threat to French security, yet France did nothing to stop them. France would not act without British support and was weakened by tensions between left- and right-wing forces within France.

Appeasement and 'peace in our time'

The most significant example of appeasement happened after Hitler's May 1938 claim to German-inhabited parts of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. With France and Britain both promising to protect Czechoslovakia against Hitler's aggression, Europeans expected war. Instead, in September 1938, France and Britain proposed that Germany should be allowed these areas. Hitler then demanded *all* of the Sudetenland.

fascist: used to describe someone who follows the political ideology that the individual should serve the state, which should be governed by a strong leader embodying the national will. Mussolini led this movement in Italy from 1919 until his execution in 1945.

collective security: the idea that League member nations would act together against any nation that threatened any other member

isolationism: the term used to describe the US foreign policy of withdrawing from involvement in international (and especially European) affairs except in defence of its own interests

appeasement: the policy that Britain and France pursued towards Germany from the mid 1930s until 1939. Their intention was to give in to some of Hitler's demands in the hope of avoiding war.