

# How did World War 2 break out following the agreement at the Munich Conference?

Revision hint – before you revise this topic, check that you understand the Sudeten Crisis through to the Munich Conference. If you do not, this last piece of revision will not make much sense.

ICELAND

0 200 400 miles

	Axis-aligned
	Allies-aligned
	Neutral

Before revising this topic, look carefully at where Germany, Poland and USSR are. Make sure that you understand where they are positioned.



# Germany after the Munich Conference

- Germany had taken the Sudetenland, after Britain and France agreed to it.
- Closer than ever to Italy – in 1939 they turned the Rome-Berlin Axis into the **Pact of Steel**, a stronger relationship.
- Hitler no longer believed that Britain and France would ever stop him.

# How did the USSR react to Munich Conference?

- What did Britain and France need USSR's help for?
  - If a war broke out, B&F wanted USSR on their side because USSR was powerful and also closer to the areas of Eastern Europe that Hitler was threatening.
- How did USSR feel about Britain and France?
  - Did not trust them. In the past 20 years, USSR had been excluded from the Paris Peace Conference, removed from the League of Nations and Stalin was convinced that B&F were secretly encouraging Hitler to threaten him in the east rather than attack west.

# Collapse of Czechoslovakia

- After Hitler had taken the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia had lost 70% of industry and their defensive mountains.
- Other countries started to pick on what was left on Czechoslovakia. In October 1938, Poland took an area called Teschen from the Czechs, and in November the Hungarians took land from them.
- In 1939, the Slovak people (half of Czechoslovakia) rebelled and demanded freedom.
- In March 1939, the Czech president Hacha gave up and handed the country to Hitler.
- Britain and France had promised to protect Czechoslovakia but they did nothing to help them when Hitler took it.

# Why was Hitler's takeover of Czechoslovakia important?

Chamberlain ended Appeasement – Hitler had gone too far.

Britain introduced conscription and started to get ready for war.

Hitler threatened Poland and Lithuania. Lithuania gave him an area called Memel.

Britain promised to protect Poland, Romania and Greece from Germany.

Hitler ended the non-aggression pact with Poland and the Anglo-German Naval agreement.

# Nazi Soviet Pact

- Why was the pact surprising?
  - USSR was Communist, Germany was Fascist.
  - Both sides HATED the other side.
  - Hitler had claimed in *Mein Kampf* that the Slavic (Russian) people were subhuman and that he would take *Lebensraum* (living space) from the USSR.
  - Hitler had agreed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Italy and Japan in 1937, in which he had agreed to oppose Communism.
- What did they agree?
  - Publically they agreed that they would not go to war with each other.
  - Privately they agreed to share out Poland by dividing it between them.
  - Although they never made public the decision to share Poland, it was widely seen as likely.



This cartoon is from September 1939 just after the Nazi-Soviet Pact was agreed.

It was printed in a British newspaper and was intended to show the relationship between the two sides.

Obviously as a British cartoon, it was intended to criticise the relationship, which the British government saw as threatening – they wanted the USSR to join them against Hitler.

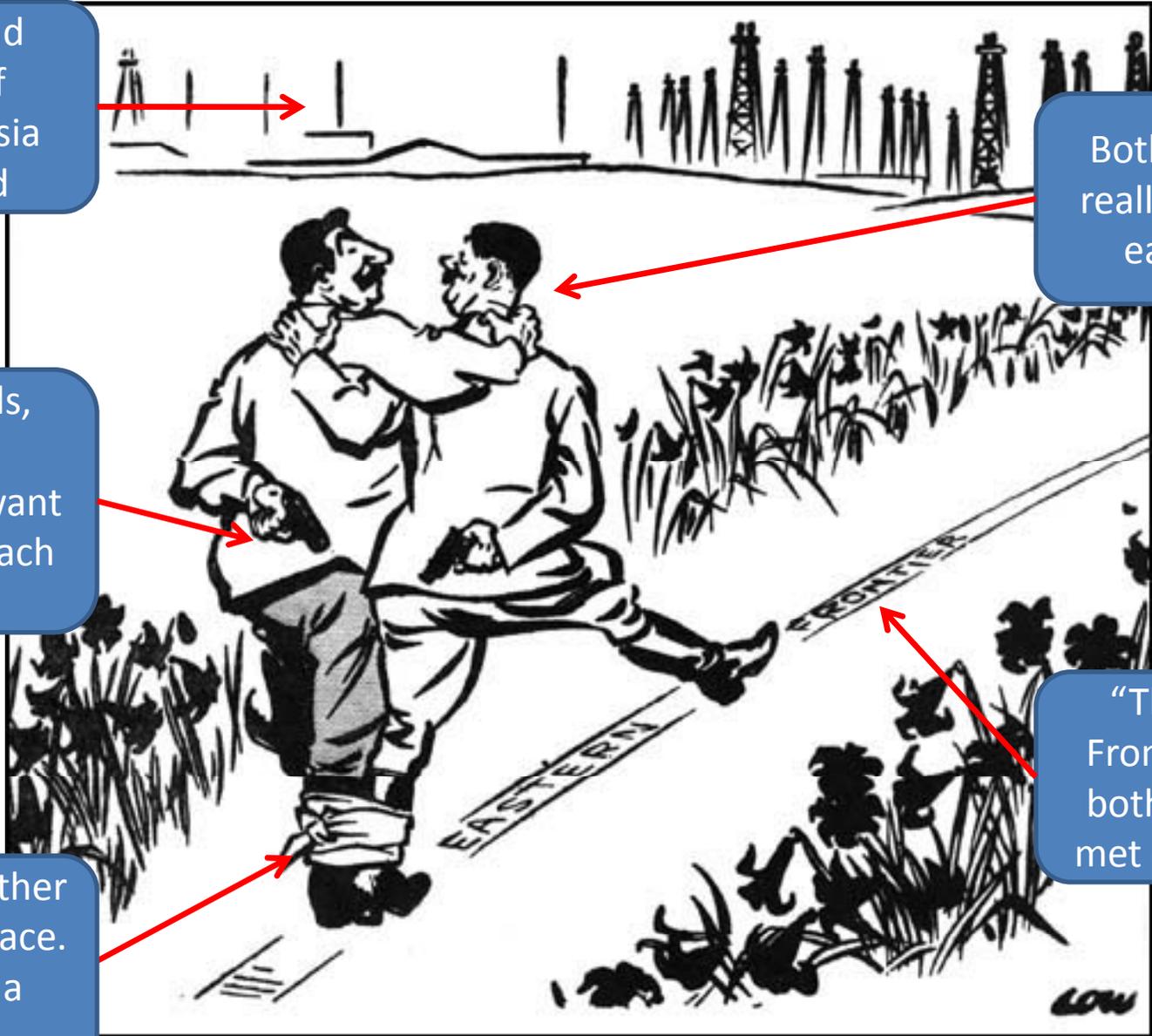
Oil fields and industry of western Russia and Poland

Secret pistols, both sides distrust and want to threaten each other.

Legs tied together like 3-legged race. Working as a team.

Both men look really friendly to each other.

"The Eastern Frontier" which both sides have met on in Poland



# How did war break out?

- Hitler demanded Poland in April 1939. He expected Britain & France to let him.
- Poland refused to give in. They were confident that Britain would defend them because of the British guarantee.
- Britain warned Hitler that they would protect Poland. Czechoslovakia had been the last straw.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Sept Germany invaded Poland.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> September Britain declared war on Germany. Hitler was surprised.
- Germany captured Poland in only 4 weeks, but Britain carried on the war.
- World War 2 had broken out. This is where the AQA course ends.