

# World War Looms

ive Reading:

1. Read the chapter summary.
2. As you read, underline/highlight important terms, people, & events.
3. Circle any words/ideas you don't understand.
4. Ask questions in margins about circled information.

**CHAPTER OVERVIEW** *An imperfect peace leads to the rise of dictators who brutally suppress opponents and innocent people at home and attack their neighbors. Soon the United States is drawn into worldwide war.*

## Dictators Threaten World Peace

**MAIN IDEA** *The rise of rulers with total power in Europe and Asia led to World War II.*

The Treaty of Versailles created problems that led to new dangers. Germans resented losing territory and being blamed for starting the war. New democratic governments in many nations were weak. Soon dictators seized power.

In the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin focused on creating a communist state, in which the state takes ownership of farms and factories away from individuals. He also made the nation a huge police state, in which anyone who criticized him or his policies was arrested and removed.

In Italy, Benito Mussolini came to power as head of a fascist movement. Fascism combines nationalism with a strong central government, though it avoids communism's direct control of farms and factories. Mussolini crushed all foes.

In Germany, Adolf Hitler hoped to unite all German-speaking people into a new German empire. Hitler believed that Germans—especially blond, blue-eyed “Aryans”—were a master race, fated to achieve power over all “inferior races.” Hitler also believed that Germany had to expand its territory to thrive. His political movement was called Nazism, which combined extreme nationalism with racism and expansionism. Once appointed chancellor, Hitler seized all power.

In Japan, military leaders believed that more land and resources were needed. In 1931, they launched an attack on a province of China. With success there, Japanese militarists gained control of Japan's government. The League of Nations' failure to stop Japan emboldened Hitler and Mussolini. Hitler rebuilt the German armed forces, breaking the Versailles treaty. Mussolini conquered Ethiopia, in Africa.

World nations responded weakly to these threats to peace. Most Americans wanted the U.S. to avoid foreign conflicts. In the Neutrality Acts,

Congress outlawed arms sales or loans to nations at war. In 1935, a civil war broke out in Spain between an elected government and a group of fascists. The U.S. government remained neutral. By 1937, Roosevelt was less willing to remain neutral to the dictators' growing power. When Japan invaded China that year, he continued to send arms and supplies to China.

## War in Europe

**MAIN IDEA** *Using the sudden mass attack called blitzkrieg, Germany invaded and quickly conquered many European countries.*

In Europe, Hitler continued plans to increase German power. In 1937, Germany annexed Austria. The next year, Hitler claimed that Germans living in an area of Czechoslovakia were being mistreated. Great Britain and France appeased Hitler by letting him take over this area. Hitler promised it would be his last land seizure.

The next year, Hitler claimed persecution of Germans in Poland. Many people thought he would never attack Poland for fear of the Soviet Union, on Poland's eastern border. Then Germany and the Soviet Union signed an agreement not to attack each other.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler launched World War II by attacking Poland. The Germans used tanks and planes in an attack called *blitzkrieg*, or “lightning war.” They overran Poland quickly. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. For the next few months, both sides prepared for war.

Meanwhile, Stalin seized some Baltic states and then occupied Finland. In the spring of 1940, Hitler attacked and captured Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. His forces overran France. Only Great Britain was left uninvaded. However, Hitler's air force bombed Britain frequently. The Royal Air Force, though, destroyed many German planes and won the Battle of Britain.