

UNIT 5, PART 3: WORLD WAR II, PART I

AGGRESSION, APPEASEMENT, AND WAR - Dictators Challenge World Peace

Japan - wanted an empire equal to western powers

- 1931 - Japan seized Manchuria (region of northern China rich in natural resources) - when League of Nations condemned the aggression, Japan withdrew from the organization - Japanese armies overran much of eastern China in 1937

Italy - 1935 - invaded Ethiopia - Haile Selassie (Ethiopia's king) asked for help - League of Nations voted sanctions (penalties) against Italy, but League had no power to enforce them - Italy conquered Ethiopia in 1936

Germany - Hitler challenged the Treaty of Versailles: 1. rearmed Germany 2. returned troops to the Rhineland - 1936

Reaction from Western Democracies - adopted a policy of appeasement: giving in to the demands of an aggressor in order to keep the peace

- reasons for appeasement: 1. democracies didn't want another war (many supported pacifism, or opposition to all war 2. Germany was seen as a defense against Soviet communism 3. Great Depression had sapped the energies of the western democracies
- U.S. - Neutrality Acts passed by U.S. Congress: forbade the sale of arms to any nation at war, outlawed loans to warring powers - U.S. policy was to avoid involvement in a European war

Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis: members agreed to 1. fight Soviet communism 2. not to interfere with each other's plans for expansion

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) - From Monarchy to Republic - King Alfonso XIII forced to leave after public unrest - republic set up a new, more liberal constitution - govt. took over some Church lands, ended Church control of education, redistributed some land to peasants, allowed women's suffrage, reduced size of the military

- conservatives rejected change (backed by the military)

Nationalists (conservatives) vs. Loyalists (liberals) - 1936

- Nationalists led by Francisco Franco who was supported by Mussolini & Hitler

- Loyalists - supported by communists, socialists, and supporters of democracy

A "Dress Rehearsal" - Guernica - 1937 - small Spanish town of no military value - bombed, machine-gunned by Germans testing their new aircraft - 1,600 innocent civilians killed

- 1939 - Nationalists won, Franco created a fascist state - he rolled back earlier reforms, jailed or killed enemies, used terror to promote order (he ruled until 1975)

German Aggression Continues - Austria Annexed - 1938 - *Anschluss* - union of Germany + Austria - Hitler forced Austrian chancellor to appoint Nazis to key govt. posts - when chancellor refused to give in to Hitler's other demands, German soldiers were sent into Austria to maintain order

The Czech Crisis - Hitler demanded the 3 million Germans living in the Sudetenland (region of western Czechoslovakia) be given autonomy (freedom) - he later said this region must be annexed by Germany

- The Munich Conference - Sept. 1938 - Britain and France chose appeasement, allowed Hitler to take the Sudetenland - Hitler promised that Germany had no further plans to expand his territory

- British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain told his nation he had helped to achieve "peace for our time" - reaction from British politician Winston Churchill: "They had to choose between war and dishonor. They chose dishonor; they will have war."

Europe Plunges Toward War - Czechoslovakia - entire nation conquered by Germany in March 1939 - democracies realized that appeasement had failed and now promised to protect Poland if Germany attacked

Nazi-Soviet Pact - Aug. 1939 - publicly, it bound Hitler and Stalin (Hitler's enemy) to peaceful relations - secretly, the two agreed to the following conditions: 1. not to fight if the other went to war 2. divide up Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe
- Hitler didn't want to fight USSR and western democracies at the same time when attacking Poland

Invasion of Poland - Hitler wanted Danzig and the Polish Corridor to be part of Germany again - if he attacked, war would be declared

- Sept. 1, 1939 - Germany invaded Poland
- Sept. 3, 1939 - Britain and France, honoring their commitment to Poland, declared war on Germany