

## Guide to Reading

## Connection

In the previous chapter, you learned about President Roosevelt's efforts to end the Great Depression. In this section, you will discover how events in Europe and Asia pushed the nation to adopt a policy of neutrality.

## Main Idea

- Strong dictatorial rulers took control of the governments of Italy, the USSR, Japan, and Germany. (p. 537)
- Despite Roosevelt's emphasis on internationalism, most Americans felt that they did not want to be involved in another war in Europe. (p. 539)

## Content Vocabulary

fascism, internationalism

## Academic Vocabulary

impose, investigate, civil

## People and Terms to Identify

Benito Mussolini, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Manchuria, Neutrality Act of 1935

## Reading Objectives

- **Describe** how postwar conditions contributed to the rise of antidemocratic governments in Europe.

- **Explain** why many Americans supported a policy of isolationism in the 1930s.

## Reading Strategy

**Taking Notes** As you read about the events in Europe and Asia after World War I, use the major headings of the section to create an outline similar to the one below.

America and the World  
I. The Rise of Dictators  
A.  
B.  
C.  
D.  
II.

## Preview of Events

1922

1922

Fascist Party takes power in Italy; USSR established

1927

1931

Japan takes control of Manchuria

1933

Hitler takes power in Germany

1932

1935

Congress passes first Neutrality Act

1937

1937

Japan attacks China

The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

**11.7.1** Examine the origins of American involvement in the war, with an emphasis on the events that precipitated the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**11.7.4** Analyze Roosevelt's foreign policy during World War II (e.g., Four Freedoms speech).

## The Big Idea

**Societies change over time.** While the United States was battling the Great Depression, European nations saw the rise of dictatorships. Italy's Benito Mussolini based his leadership on the ideas of fascism and anti-communism; Joseph Stalin cemented Communist rule in Russia; and in Germany, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party based their rule on nationalism. In Japan, militarists gained control of the government and pursued a policy of expansion in Asia. Discouraged Americans responded to these developments by supporting isolationism. Congress began to legislate neutrality, hoping to keep the United States out of any future wars.

## The Rise of Dictators

**Main Idea** Strong dictatorial rulers took control of the governments of Italy, the USSR, Japan, and Germany.

**Reading Connection** How do you think your life would change if you lived in a country ruled by a dictator? Read on to learn about repressive governments that arose during the 1920s and 1930s.

When World War I ended in 1918, the future of democracy in Europe seemed bright. President Woodrow Wilson announced, “Everything for which America fought has been accomplished.” Wilson hoped that the United States could “aid in the establishment of just democracy throughout the world.” Instead, the treaty that ended the war, along with the economic depression that followed, contributed to the rise of antidemocratic governments in both Europe and Asia.

### ★ An American Story ★

In August 1934, American journalist Dorothy Thompson received an urgent call from the porter at her Berlin hotel. A member of Germany’s secret state police wanted to talk to her. Thompson had been reporting on Adolf Hitler’s rise to power, and she had written various anti-Nazi articles for the American press. In one she described the beautiful singing she had heard at a Hitler youth camp, where thousands of boys ages 10 to 16 marched and sang. The boys’ lovely voices echoing across the hills stirred Thompson, but the words on an enormous banner hanging across one hillside chilled her:

“It was so prominent that every child could see it many times a day. It was white, and there was a swastika painted on it, and besides that only seven words, seven immense black words: YOU WERE BORN TO DIE FOR GERMANY.”

When Thompson met with the police, they ordered her to leave Germany immediately. “I, fortunately, am an American,” Thompson observed, “so I was merely sent to Paris. Worse things can happen to one.”

—quoted in *The Women Who Wrote the War*

It was less than 20 years since Woodrow Wilson expressed his optimism about the world that the

dictatorial German government expelled Dorothy Thompson. The antidemocratic governments of Europe and Asia were already strong.

**Mussolini and Fascism in Italy** One of Europe’s first major dictatorships arose in Italy. There, a former schoolmaster and journalist named **Benito Mussolini** returned from World War I convinced that his country needed a strong leader.

In 1919 Mussolini founded Italy’s Fascist Party. **Fascism** was a kind of aggressive nationalism. Fascists believed that the nation was more important than the individual. They argued that individualism made countries weak and that a strong government led by a dictator was needed to **impose** order on society. Fascists believed a nation became great by expanding its territory and building up its military.

Fascism was also strongly anticommunist. After the Communist revolution in Russia, many Europeans feared that Communists, allied with labor unions, were trying to bring down their governments. Mussolini exploited these fears by portraying fascism as a barrier to Communism. Fascism began to stand for the protection of private property and of the middle class. Mussolini also offered the working class full employment and social security. He stressed national prestige, pledging to return Italy to the glories of the Roman Empire.

Backed by the Fascist militia known as the Blackshirts, Mussolini threatened to march on Rome in 1922, claiming he was coming to defend Italy against a Communist revolution. Liberal members of the Italian parliament insisted that the king declare martial law. When he refused, the cabinet resigned. Conservative advisers then persuaded the king to appoint Mussolini as the premier.

“I, fortunately,  
am an  
American . . .”

—Dorothy Thompson



Once in office, Mussolini worked quickly to destroy democracy and set up a dictatorship. Weary of strikes and riots, many Italians welcomed Mussolini's leadership. With the support of industrialists, landowners, and the Roman Catholic Church, Mussolini—who took the title of *Il Duce*, or “The Leader”—embarked on an ambitious program of bringing order to Italy.

**Stalin Takes Over the USSR** The Communists were a much larger force in Russia than in Italy. After the Russian Revolution began in 1917, the Bolshevik Party, led by **Vladimir Lenin**, established Communist governments throughout the Russian empire. In 1922 they renamed these territories the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). They then proceeded to establish control over these territories. To do this, the Communists instituted one-party rule, suppressed individual liberties, and punished opponents. After Lenin died in 1924, a power struggle began. By 1926, **Joseph Stalin** had become the new Soviet dictator. In 1927 Stalin began a massive effort to industrialize his country. Tolerating no opposition to his rule, the effort brought about the deaths of 8 to 10 million peasants who resisted the Communist policies.

## Hitler and Nazism in Germany **Adolf Hitler**

was a fervent anticommunist and an admirer of Mussolini. Hitler had fought for Germany in World War I. Germany's surrender and the subsequent Versailles Treaty left him and many other Germans with a smoldering hatred for the victorious Allies and for the German government that had accepted the peace terms.

The political and economic chaos in postwar Germany led to the rise of new political parties. One of these was the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or the Nazi Party. The party did not represent the working class, as its name suggested, but was nationalistic and anticommunist. Adolf Hitler was one of the party's first recruits.

In November 1923, the Nazis tried to seize power by marching on city hall in Munich, Germany. Hitler intended to seize power locally and then march on Berlin, the German capital, but the plan failed and Hitler was arrested.

While in prison, Hitler wrote his autobiography, titled *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”). In the book, Hitler called for the unification of all Germans under one government. He claimed that Germans, particularly blond, blue-eyed Germans, belonged to a “master race” called Aryans. He argued that Germans needed more *lebensraum*, or living space, and called for Germany to expand east into Poland and Russia. According to Hitler, the Slavic people of Eastern Europe belonged to an inferior race, which Germans should enslave. Hitler's prejudice was strongest, however, toward Jews. He believed that Jews were responsible for many of the world's problems, especially for Germany's defeat in World War I.

After his release from prison, Hitler changed his tactics. Instead of trying to seize power violently, he focused on getting Nazis elected to the Reichstag, the lower house of the German parliament. When the Great Depression struck Germany, many desperate Germans began to vote for radical parties, including the Nazis and Communists. By 1932 the Nazis were the largest party in the Reichstag.

Many traditional German leaders supported Hitler's nationalism. They believed that if they helped Hitler become leader of Germany legally, they could control him. In 1933 the German president appointed Hitler as chancellor, or prime minister.

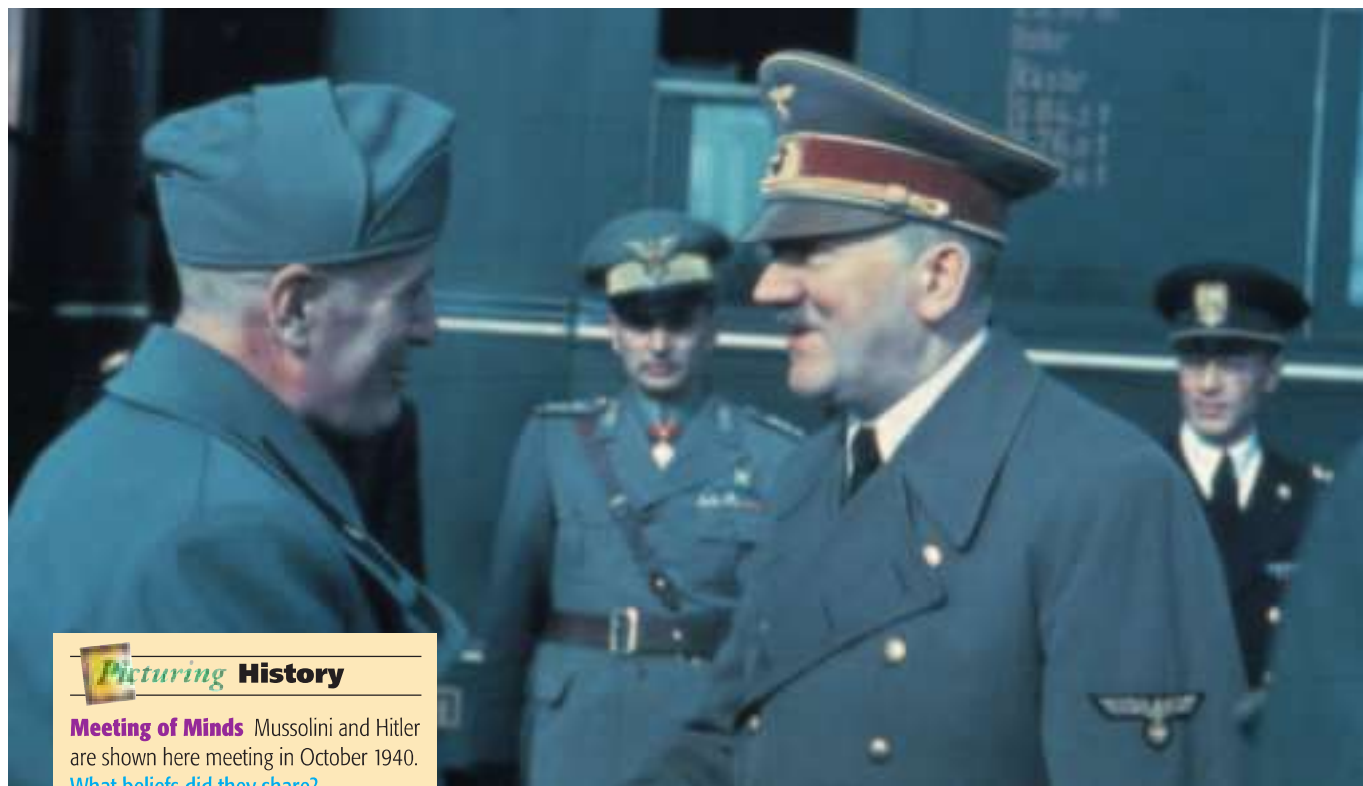
After taking office, Hitler called for new elections. He then ordered the police to crack down on the Socialist and Communist Parties. Storm Troopers, as the Nazi paramilitary units were called, began intimidating voters. After the election, the Reichstag, dominated by the Nazis and other right-wing

### Picturing History

**Supreme Soviets** Joseph Stalin (right) took over control of the Soviet Union after Lenin's death in 1924. He was determined to modernize and industrialize his nation. [How many people died while opposing Stalin's leadership?](#)







### Picturing History

**Meeting of Minds** Mussolini and Hitler are shown here meeting in October 1940. What beliefs did they share?

parties, voted to give Hitler dictatorial powers. In 1934 Hitler became president, which gave him control of the army. He then gave himself the new title of *führer*, or “leader.” The following year, he began to rebuild Germany’s military, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

**Militarists Gain Control of Japan** In Japan, as in Germany, difficult economic times helped undermine the political system. Japanese industries had to import nearly all of the resources they needed to produce goods. During the 1920s, Japan did not earn enough money from its exports to pay for its imports, which limited economic growth and increased unemployment. When the Depression struck, other countries raised their tariffs. This made the situation even worse.

Many Japanese military officers blamed the country’s problems on corrupt politicians. Most officers believed that Japan was destined to dominate East Asia. Many also believed that democracy was “un-Japanese” and bad for the country.

Japanese military leaders and the civilians who supported them argued that the only way for Japan to get needed resources was to seize territory. They targeted the resource-rich province of **Manchuria** in northern China as the perfect place to conquer.

A group of Japanese officers decided to act without the government’s permission. In September 1931, the Japanese army invaded Manchuria. After the invasion began, the Japanese government tried to

end the war, but when the Japanese prime minister began negotiations, officers assassinated him. From that point forward, the military was effectively in control. Although Japan still had a civilian government, it now supported the nationalist policy of expanding the empire, and it appointed several military officers to serve as prime minister.

 **Reading Check** **Examining** How did postwar conditions contribute to the rise of dictatorships in Europe?

## America Turns to Neutrality

 **Despite Roosevelt’s emphasis on internationalism, most Americans felt that they did not want to be involved in another war in Europe.**

**Reading Connection** Do you think that the United States should become involved in the wars of other nations even when it is not under attack? Read on to discover the attitude of Americans during the 1930s.

The rise of dictatorships and militarism after World War I discouraged many Americans. The sacrifices they had made during the war seemed pointless. Once again, Americans began to support isolationism, or the belief that the United States should avoid international commitments that might drag the nation into another war.



### **Picturing History**

**Anti-Fascist Propaganda** Spanish general Francisco Franco led the Fascist rebellion that received support from Hitler and Mussolini. This poster translates to “The claw of the Italian invader intends to make slaves of us.” [How did the United States respond to these events?](#)

**The Nye Committee** Isolationist ideas became even stronger in the early 1930s for two reasons. When the Depression began, many European nations found it difficult to repay money they had borrowed during World War I. In June 1934, all of the debtor nations except Finland announced they would no longer repay their war debts.

At about the same time, dozens of books and articles appeared arguing that arms manufacturers had tricked the United States into entering World War I. In 1934 Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota held hearings to **investigate** the country’s involvement in World War I. The Nye Committee documented the huge profits that arms factories had made during the war. The report created the impression that these businesses influenced the U.S. decision to go to war. The European refusal to repay their loans and the Nye Committee’s findings turned even more Americans toward isolationism.

**Legislating Neutrality** Worried that growing German and Italian aggression might lead to war, Congress passed the **Neutrality Act of 1935**. Based on the belief that arms sales had helped bring the United States into World War I, the act made it illegal for Americans to sell arms to any country at war.

In 1936 a rebellion erupted in Spain after a coalition of Republicans, Socialists, and Communists was elected. General Francisco Franco led the rebellion. Franco was backed by the Falangists, or Spanish Fascists, army officers, landowners, and Catholic Church leaders.

The revolt quickly became a **civil war** and attracted worldwide attention. The Soviet Union provided arms and advisers to the government forces, while Germany and Italy sent tanks, airplanes, and soldiers to help Franco. To keep the United States neutral, Congress passed another neutrality act, banning the sale of arms to either side in a civil war.

Shortly after the Spanish Civil War began in 1936, Hitler and Mussolini signed an agreement pledging to cooperate on several international issues. Mussolini referred to this new relationship with Germany as the Rome-Berlin Axis. The following month, Japan aligned itself with Germany and Italy when it signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany. The pact required the two countries to exchange information about Communist groups. Together Germany, Italy, and Japan became known as the Axis Powers, although they did not formally become allies until September 1940.

With the situation in Europe getting worse, Congress passed the Neutrality Act of 1937. This act continued the ban on selling arms to nations at war, but it also required warring countries to buy nonmilitary supplies from the United States on a “cash-and-carry” basis. If a country at war wanted goods from the United States, it had to send its own ships to pick up the goods, and it had to pay cash. Loans were not allowed. Isolationists knew that attacks on neutral American ships carrying supplies to Europe had helped bring the country into World War I. They were determined to prevent it from happening again.

**Roosevelt and Internationalism** When he took office in 1933, President Roosevelt declared that “our international relations, though vastly important, are in point of time and necessity secondary to the establishment of a sound national economy.” Roosevelt knew that ending the Depression was his first priority, but he was not an isolationist. He supported **internationalism**, the idea that trade between nations creates prosperity and helps to prevent war.

Internationalists also believed the United States should try to preserve peace in the world.

Roosevelt supported internationalism but knew that the public wanted neutrality. He warned that the neutrality acts “might drag us into war instead of keeping us out,” but he did not veto the bills. Isolationism was too strong to resist.

In July 1937, Japanese forces in Manchuria launched a full-scale attack on China. Roosevelt decided to help the Chinese. Since neither China nor Japan had actually declared war, Roosevelt claimed the Neutrality Act of 1937 did not apply, and he authorized the sale of weapons from the United States to China. He warned that the nation should not stand by and let an “epidemic of lawlessness” infect the world:

“When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community . . . joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease. . . . War is a contagion, whether it be declared or undeclared. . . . There is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality. . . .”

—quoted in *Freedom from Fear*

Despite Roosevelt’s words, Americans were still not willing to risk another war to stop aggression overseas. “It is a terrible thing,” the president said, “to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead—and find no one there.”

**Reading Check** **Evaluating** Why did many Americans support isolationism?



**Picturing History**

**Imperial Expansion** In 1931 Japan occupied the northeast Chinese province of Manchuria. In 1937 the Japanese invaded all of China, prompting FDR to authorize the sale of arms to the Chinese Army. **How did Roosevelt justify his actions in light of the Neutrality Act?**

**HISTORY Online Study Central**

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Study Central**.

**SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT**

**Checking for Understanding**

- Vocabulary** Define: fascism, impose, investigate, civil, internationalism.
- People and Terms** Identify: Benito Mussolini, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Manchuria, Neutrality Act of 1935.
- Explain** why isolationism was strong in the United States in the early 1930s.

**Reviewing Big Ideas**

- Examining** What events caused President Roosevelt to become more of an internationalist?

**Critical Thinking**

- Historical Analysis** **Interpreting** Why did antidemocratic governments rise to power in postwar Europe and Asia? Could the United States have slowed or prevented their rise? Explain. **CA HIT**
- Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to compare the antidemocratic governments that arose in Europe and Asia.

Country	Dictator	Ideology

**Analyzing Visuals**

- Analyzing Art** Study the Spanish Civil War era propaganda poster reproduced on page 540. Without being told the phrase, how would you be able to discover the poster’s meaning?

**Writing About History**

- Persuasive Writing** Write a newspaper editorial urging fellow citizens to embrace either isolationism or internationalism after World War I. Be certain to include reasons your readers should back a specific position.

**CA 11WS1.1; 11WA2.3a**



# World War II Begins

## Guide to Reading

### Connection

In the previous section, you learned how the United States tried to stay neutral as militarism gained strength in the world. In this section, you will read about the circumstances surrounding the beginning of World War II.

### Main Idea

- European nations tried to prevent war by giving in to Hitler's demands. (p. 543)
- Although Poland and France fell to the Nazis, the British were able to evacuate thousands of trapped British and French troops from Dunkirk in France. (p. 544)

- Disregarding the bombing of London and other major cities, Britain's Winston Churchill stood firm against the threat of Nazi invasion. (p. 547)

### Content Vocabulary

appeasement, blitzkrieg

### Academic Vocabulary

regime, furthermore, anticipate

### People and Terms to Identify

*Anschluss*, Maginot Line, Winston Churchill, Battle of Britain

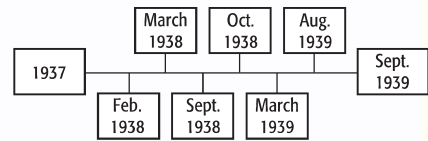
### Reading Objectives

- **Explain** why Hitler was able to take over Austria and Czechoslovakia.

- **Describe** the early events of the war and why Britain was able to resist the Nazis.

### Reading Strategy

**Sequencing** As you read about the events leading up to the beginning of World War II, record them by completing a time line similar to the one below.



### Preview of Events

◆ 1938

**March 1938**  
Hitler announces German-Austrian unification

◆ 1939

**August 1939**  
Hitler and Stalin sign Nazi-Soviet pact

**September 1939**  
World War II begins

◆ 1940

**June 1940**  
France surrenders to Germany

◆ 1941

**August 1940**  
Battle of Britain begins

The following are the main History-Social Science Standards covered in this section.

**11.7.1** Examine the origins of American involvement in the war, with an emphasis on the events that precipitated the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**11.7.4** Analyze Roosevelt's foreign policies during World War II (e.g., Four Freedoms speech).

**11.7.6** Describe major developments in aviation, weaponry, communication, and medicine and the war's impact on the location of American industry and use of resources.

## The Big Idea

**The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events.**

After establishing his rule in Germany, Adolf Hitler began his conquest of Europe by seizing Austria. His claims to the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia prompted Great Britain and France to pursue a policy of appeasement to avoid war. Despite an agreement, Hitler sent troops into Czechoslovakia and demanded the return of Danzig, a Polish seaport with German roots. When Germany invaded Poland and began the war, Britain and France fulfilled their promise to come to the aid of Poland. Hitler's tactics led to a quick victory in Poland and the fall of France. Britain remained defiant despite constant bombing raids by the Germans.

## “Peace in Our Time”

**Main Idea** European nations tried to prevent war by giving in to Hitler’s demands.

**Reading Connection** Do you think giving in to Hitler’s demands was a good idea? Read on to learn about the events leading to another world war.

Prior to 1940, when the Nazi **regime** was much weaker, European leaders did not try to stop Hitler. Instead, they vainly tried to buy peace by giving in to his demands. By 1940, however, the German army had been rebuilt, and Hitler was bent on conquest.

### ★ *An American Story* ★

In February 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt sent Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles to Europe to report on the political situation. A few months earlier, Germany had invaded Poland, and Roosevelt hoped to negotiate peace before wider hostilities erupted.

In Italy Welles found Mussolini intent on war and judged that “there was not the slightest chance of any successful negotiation.” In Paris Welles glumly noted the “sullen apathy” in people’s faces and concluded that France had little will to resist a German onslaught. After speaking to Hitler, Welles concluded that a negotiated peace settlement was impossible: “It was only too tragically plain that all decisions had already been made.” In London, Welles did not feel the sense of doom he had in Paris. The British, he reported, would “fight to the very last ditch.” Welles later reflected on his mission:

“Only one thing could have deflected Hitler from his purpose: the sure knowledge that the power of the United States would be directed against him if he attempted to carry out his intention of conquering the world by force. . . . At that time no representative of this government could have been authorized to intimate any such thing. . . . My mission, therefore, was a forlorn hope.”

—quoted in *Roosevelt and Churchill*

Whether or not the United States could have forced Hitler to negotiate is uncertain. Europe’s leaders had several reasons for hoping that Hitler could

be satisfied and war avoided. First, the memory of World War I made many leaders fearful of another bloody conflict. Second, some thought Hitler’s demand that all German-speaking regions of Europe be united with Germany was reasonable. Third, many people assumed that the Nazis would be more interested in peace once they gained more territory.

**The Austrian *Anschluss*** In late 1937, Hitler stepped up his call for the unification of all German-speaking people, including those in Austria and Czechoslovakia. Seizing Austria and Czechoslovakia would also gain food supplies, defensible frontiers, and soldiers for Germany. Hitler believed that Germany could only expand its territory by “resort[ing] to force with its attendant risks.”

In February 1938, Hitler threatened to invade German-speaking Austria, his native land, unless Austrian Nazis were given important government posts. Austria’s chancellor quickly gave in to this demand. Several weeks later, the chancellor tried to put the matter of unification with Germany to a democratic vote. Fearing the outcome, Hitler sent troops into Austria in March and announced the ***Anschluss***, or unification, of Austria and Germany.

**The Munich Crisis and Appeasement** Shortly after Germany annexed Austria, Hitler announced German claims to the Sudetenland, an area of Czechoslovakia with a large German-speaking population. Since Austrians shared a common culture and language with Germany, many people had accepted the *Anschluss*. In Czechoslovakia, however, people spoke several different languages. In addition, while Austria had an authoritarian government, Czechoslovakia was a democracy. **Furthermore**, Austria had no allies to help it defend itself, but Czechoslovakia was allied with France and the Soviet Union.

Sumner Welles ➤







**Appeasement in Action** At Munich in September 1938, Mussolini (third from left), Britain's Neville Chamberlain (second from left), and Hitler (second from right) were among those deciding Czechoslovakia's fate.

The Czechs strongly resisted Germany's demands for the Sudetenland. France threatened to fight if Germany attacked, and the Soviet Union also promised assistance. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain publicly promised to support France.

Representatives of Britain, France, Italy, and Germany agreed to meet in Munich to decide Czechoslovakia's fate. At the Munich Conference on September 29, 1938, Britain and France agreed to Hitler's demands, a policy that came to be known as **appeasement**. Appeasement is the policy of giving concessions in exchange for peace. Supporters of appeasement mistakenly believed that Hitler had a few limited demands. They felt that if they gave Hitler what he wanted, he would be satisfied and war would be avoided. Czechoslovakia was informed that it must give up the Sudetenland or fight Germany on its own.

Chamberlain had gambled that sacrificing part of Czechoslovakia would satisfy Hitler. He also knew that Britain's military was not ready for war. When Chamberlain returned home he promised "a peace with honor . . . peace in our time," but he also began to speed up British rearmament.

The following March, in brazen violation of the Munich agreement, Germany sent troops into Czechoslovakia and broke up the country. Slovakia became independent in name, but it was actually a satellite state under German control. The Czech lands became a German protectorate.

**Danzig and the Polish Corridor** After the Munich conference, Hitler turned his sights on Poland. In October 1938, he demanded the return of Danzig, a Baltic Sea port with strong German roots. Although Danzig was more than 90 percent German, it had been separated from Germany at the end of

World War I to give Poland access to the sea. Hitler also requested a highway and railroad across the Polish Corridor, which separated western Germany from the German state of East Prussia.

Hitler's demands on Poland convinced the British and French that appeasement had failed. On March 31, 1939, the British announced that if Poland went to war to defend its territory, Britain and France would come to its aid. This encouraged the Polish government to refuse Hitler's demands.

In May 1939, Hitler ordered the German army to prepare to invade Poland. He also ordered his foreign minister to begin negotiations with the USSR. If Germany was going to fight Britain and France, Hitler wanted to avoid the strain on his army of having to fight the Soviets too.

**The Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact** When German officials proposed a nonaggression treaty to the Soviets, Stalin agreed. He believed the best way to protect the USSR was to turn the capitalist nations against each other. If the treaty worked, Germany would go to war against Britain and France, and the USSR would be safe.

On August 23, 1939, Germany and the USSR signed the nonaggression pact. The Nazi-Soviet pact shocked the world. Communism and Nazism were supposed to be totally opposed to each other. Leaders in Britain and France knew that Hitler made the deal to free himself for war against their countries and Poland. They did not know that the treaty also contained a secret deal between Germany and the Soviet Union to divide Poland between them.

**Reading Check** **Explaining** What were three reasons European leaders agreed to a policy of appeasement?

## The War Begins

**Now Try** Although Poland and France fell to the Nazis, the British were able to evacuate thousands of trapped British and French troops from Dunkirk in France.

**Reading Connection** Can you think of a historical or contemporary situation in which people acted heroically to save those in danger? Read on to learn of the heroism of civilians and armed forces in World War II.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland from the west, and soon after the Soviets invaded from the east. On September 3, Britain and France declared war on Germany, marking the start of World War II.

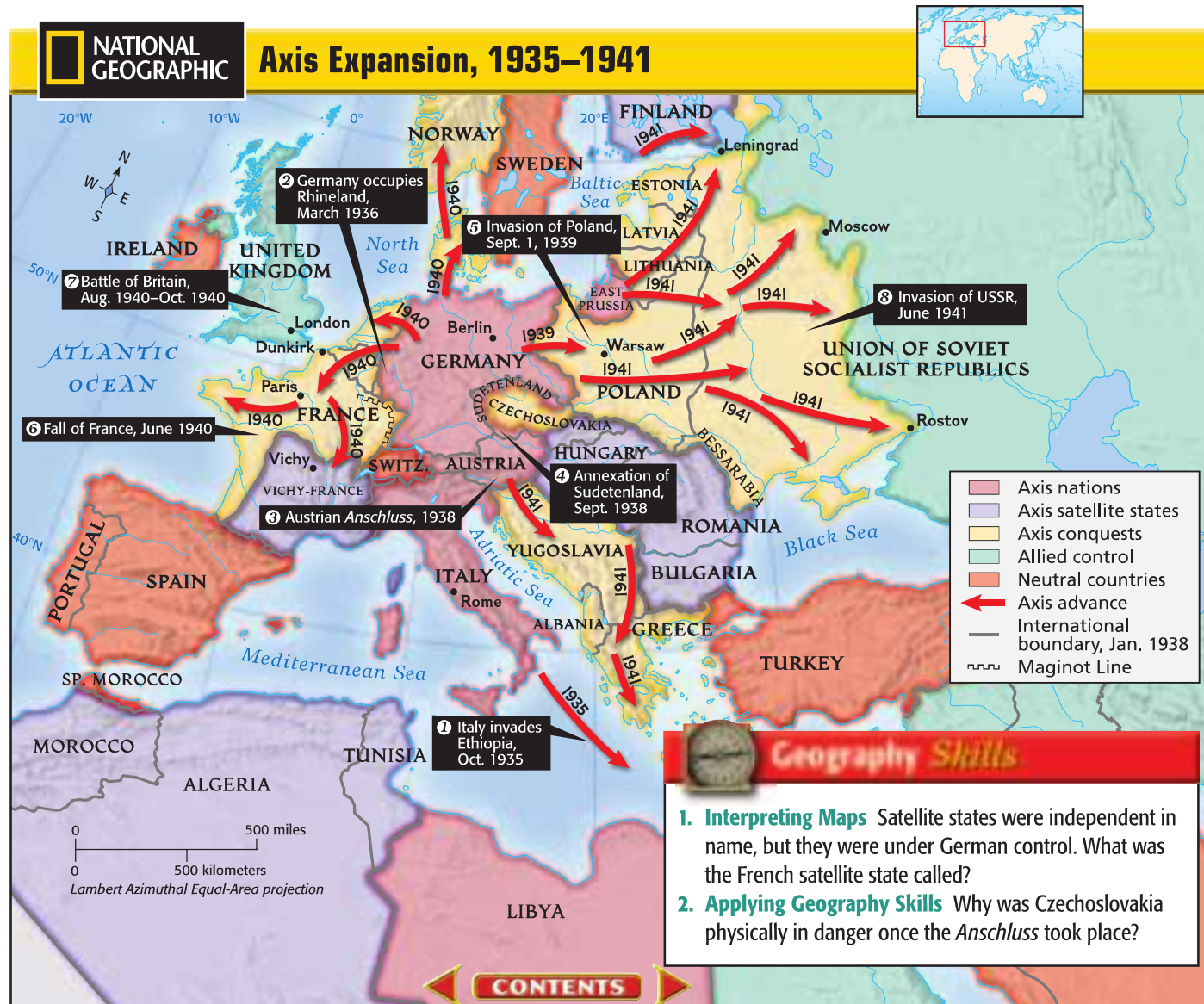
**Blitzkrieg in Poland** Poland bravely resisted Germany's onslaught but was unable to stop the attack. The Germans used a new type of warfare called **blitzkrieg**, or lightning war. Blitzkrieg used large numbers of massed tanks to break through and rapidly encircle enemy positions. Supporting the tanks were waves of aircraft that bombed enemy positions and dropped paratroopers to cut their supply lines. Blitzkrieg depended on radios to coordinate the tanks and aircraft. The attack left the German enemy completely surrounded, cut off from supplies, and with heavy losses. The Polish army was unable to cope with the German attack. On September 27, the Polish capital of Warsaw fell to the Germans. By October 5, 1939, the Polish army had been defeated.

**The Fall of France** In contrast to the war in Poland, western Europe remained eerily quiet. The Germans referred to this situation as the *sitzkrieg*, or sitting war. The British called it the "Bore War," while American newspapers nicknamed it the "Phony War." The

British sent troops to assist France, but because both countries remained on the defensive, waiting for the Germans to attack, there were no battles or warfare.

After World War I, the French had built a line of concrete bunkers and fortifications called the **Maginot Line** along the German border. Rather than risk their troops by attacking, the French preferred to wait behind the Maginot Line for the Germans to approach. Unfortunately, this decision allowed Germany to concentrate on Poland first, without the need to simultaneously fight the French, before turning west to face the British and French.

After conquering Poland, Hitler and his generals decided to attack Norway and Denmark before invading France. France continued to wait for attack. Germany's industry depended on iron ore from Sweden that had to be shipped down Norway's coast part of the year. If the British sent troops to Norway, they could block the iron shipments. On April 9, 1940, the attack began, and within a month, Germany controlled both countries.



**Geography Skills**

- Interpreting Maps** Satellite states were independent in name, but they were under German control. What was the French satellite state called?
- Applying Geography Skills** Why was Czechoslovakia physically in danger once the *Anschluss* took place?





**Dunkirk** Allied troops waded out to ships waiting to evacuate them from Dunkirk

With his northern flank secure, Hitler turned his attention to France. Hitler planned to go around the Maginot Line, which protected France's border with Germany but not France's border with Belgium and Luxembourg. To get around the Maginot Line, the Germans would have to invade the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg first—which is exactly what they did. On May 10, Hitler launched a new blitzkrieg in the west. While German troops parachuted into the Netherlands, an army of tanks rolled into Belgium and Luxembourg.

The British and French had expected the German attack. As soon as it began, British and French forces raced north into Belgium. This was a mistake. Instead of sending their tanks through the open countryside of central Belgium, the Germans sent their main force through the Ardennes Mountains of Luxembourg and eastern Belgium. The French did not think that large numbers of tanks could move through the mountains, and they had left only a few troops to defend that part of the border. The Germans easily smashed through the French lines, then raced west

across northern France to the English Channel. The British and French armies were still in Belgium and could not move back into France quickly enough. They were now trapped in Belgium.

**The Miracle at Dunkirk** After trapping the Allied forces in Belgium, the Germans began to drive them toward the English Channel. The only hope for Britain and France was to evacuate their surviving troops by sea, but the Germans had captured all but one port, Dunkirk, a small town in northern France near the Belgian border.

As German forces closed in on Dunkirk, Hitler suddenly ordered them to stop. No one is sure why he gave this order. Historians know that Hitler was nervous about risking his tank forces, and he wanted to wait until more infantry arrived. Hermann Goering, the head of the German air force, was also assuring Hitler that aircraft alone could destroy the trapped soldiers. There is also some evidence that Hitler thought that the British would be more willing to accept peace if the Germans did not humiliate them by destroying their forces at Dunkirk.

Whatever Hitler's reasons, his order provided a three-day delay. This gave the British time to strengthen their lines and begin the evacuation. Some 850 ships of all sizes, from navy warships to small sailboats operated by civilian volunteers, headed to Dunkirk from England. The British had hoped to rescue about 45,000 troops. Instead, when the evacuation ended on June 4, an estimated 338,000 British and French troops had been saved. This stunning success led British newspapers to refer to the evacuation as the "Miracle at Dunkirk."

The evacuation had its price, however. Almost all of the British army's equipment remained at Dunkirk—90,000 rifles, 7,000 tons of ammunition, and 120,000 vehicles. If Hitler invaded Britain, it would be almost impossible to stop him from conquering the country.

Three weeks later, on June 22, 1940, Hitler accepted the French surrender in the same railway car in which the Germans had surrendered at the end of World War I. Germany now occupied much of northern France and its Atlantic coastline. To govern the rest of the country, Germany installed a puppet government at the town of Vichy and made Marshal Philippe Pétain the new government's figurehead leader. Pétain predicted that Britain "will have her neck wrung like a chicken."

 **Reading Check** **Summarizing** Why was Germany able to overtake Poland?



## Britain Remains Defiant

**Main Idea** Disregarding the bombing of London and other major cities, Britain's Winston Churchill stood firm against the threat of Nazi invasion.

**Reading Connection** Describe a time when you felt the odds were against you. How did you react? Read on to find out about the resolve of the British when faced with Nazi air attack.

Neither Pétain nor Adolf Hitler **anticipated** the bravery of the British people or the spirit of their leader, **Winston Churchill**, who had replaced Neville Chamberlain as prime minister. Hitler fully expected the British to negotiate peace after France surrendered. For Winston Churchill, however, peace was not an option. The war was a fight to defend civilization. On June 4, 1940, Churchill delivered a defiant speech in Parliament, intended not only to rally the British people but to alert the isolationist United States to Britain's plight:

“Even though large tracts of Europe have fallen . . . we shall not flag or fail. . . . We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

—quoted in *Freedom from Fear*

When Hitler realized that Britain would not surrender, he ordered his commanders to prepare to invade. Only the choppy waters of the narrow English Channel separated Britain from Germany's powerful army, but getting across the Channel posed a major challenge. Germany had few transport ships, and the British air force would sink them if they tried to land troops in England. To invade, therefore, Germany first had to defeat the British air force.

In June 1940, the German air force, called the *Luftwaffe*, began to attack British shipping in the English Channel. Then, in mid-August, the *Luftwaffe* launched an all-out air battle to destroy the British

 NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

### MOMENT in HISTORY

#### NEVER GIVE IN

Few photographs capture the British resolve to keep a stiff upper lip better than this one. Night after night between September 1940 and May 1941, German warplanes rained bombs on London, Coventry, and other British cities. The attacks were intended to destroy British morale and war production, but Royal Air Force pilots shot down bombers faster than Germany could replace them. Plucky British civilians, like this milkman making his rounds through a debris-strewn London street, remained determined to carry on as usual each morning.





Royal Air Force. This air battle, which lasted into the fall of 1940, became known as the **Battle of Britain**.

On August 23, German bombers accidentally bombed London, the British capital. This attack on civilians enraged the British, who responded by bombing Berlin the following night. For the first time in the war, bombs fell on the German capital. Infuriated, Hitler ordered the *Luftwaffe* to stop its attacks on British military targets and to concentrate on bombing London.

Hitler's goal now was to terrorize the British people into surrendering. The British people

## Picturing History

**Never Surrender** Hitler ordered Nazi aircraft to bomb British cities, intending to weaken the people's will. Though shaken, the British, like the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral (right), stood firm.

What technology allowed the outnumbered Royal Air Force to resist the German *Luftwaffe*?

endured, however, hiding out in the city's subway tunnels whenever German bombers appeared. Hitler's attempt to destroy the morale of the British people failed.

Although the Royal Air Force was greatly outnumbered, the British had one major advantage. They had developed a new technology called radar. Using radar stations placed along their coast, the British were able to detect incoming German aircraft and direct British fighters to intercept them.

Day after day, with the ability to detect German aircraft, the British fighters inflicted more losses on the Germans than they suffered. The skill of a few hundred pilots saved Britain from invasion. Praising the pilots, Churchill told Parliament, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." On October 12, 1940, Hitler cancelled the invasion of Britain.

**Reading Check** **Evaluating** Why was Britain able to resist Hitler and the Nazis?

## HISTORY Online Study Central

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Study Central**.

## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- Vocabulary** Define: regime, furthermore, appeasement, blitzkrieg, anticipate.
- People and Terms** Identify: *Anschluss*, Maginot Line, Winston Churchill, Battle of Britain.
- Explain** why Hitler was able to take over Austria and Czechoslovakia.

### Reviewing Big Ideas

- Describing** How did the policy of appeasement affect France and Great Britain?

### Critical Thinking

- Historical Analysis** **Evaluating** Why do you think the British were able to prevent the Germans from invading their country? Do you think Hitler was wise in canceling the attempted invasion? **CA HI.4**
- Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the early events of the war in Poland and western Europe.

Events	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____
	_____

### Analyzing Visuals

- Analyzing Photographs** Study the photographs on pages 547 and 548. How do they reflect the British resolve to "never surrender"?

### Writing About History

- Expository Writing** Using library or Internet resources, find more information on the German annexation of Czechoslovakia. Use the information to write a report detailing the events leading up to and including the annexation. Share your report with the class.

**CA 11WS1.6; 11WA2.4b; 11WA2.4d**