

Chapter Summary

A World in Flames, 1931–1941

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Could World War II have been prevented? Why do some people fail to respond to injustice while others try to prevent injustice?

This chapter examines the rise of dictatorships in Europe, specifically Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, U.S. resistance to being involved in European conflict, the atrocities of the Holocaust, and finally Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

Origins of World War II

- Post-war Germany gave rise to Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party, which believed in an all-powerful state, territorial expansion, and ethnic purity.
- Hitler believed Germany needed more living space and invaded Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia,
- At the Munich Conference, Britain and France appeased Hitler and agreed to his demands to avoid war.
- Germany used new and bold warfare to invade Poland and France.
- Britain and France declared war on Germany after its invasion of Poland.
- Mussolini's Fascist Party believed in the supreme power of the state.
- In 1922 Mussolini threatened to march on Rome; the King appointed him as the Premier.
- Japan's military leaders pushed for territorial expansion.
- Japan attacked Manchuria in 1931.
- Hitler began air strikes on Britain; Churchill vowed never to surrender.

From Neutrality to War

- War weary Americans became isolationists.
- Congress passed the Neutrality Act of 1935.

- President Roosevelt favored internationalism, believing trade would create prosperity and avoid war.
- Although neutral, the United States supported Britain by sending destroyers and supplies.
- The Lend-Lease Act allowed Britain to receive weapons if they paid for them after the war.
- Japan became a member of the Axis powers.
- Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.
- The United States declared war on Japan.
- Hitler declared war on the United States.

The Holocaust

- In 1935 the Nuremberg Laws were passed.
- In 1938 half of Germany's Jews were unemployed.
- Anti-Jewish violence called *Kristallnacht* erupted, destroying hundreds of homes, businesses, and synagogues.
- Between 1933 and 1939, thousands of Jews left Germany.
- Many countries limited immigration, and many Jews were turned away.
- The SS *St. Louis* was forced to return to Europe.
- During the Holocaust Germany killed an estimated six million Jews.