**MT 6: Assignment #2 (A) – Reading**

**AMERICA AND THE WORLD**

**• The Rise of Dictators** *(page 537)*

The terms of the peace treaty that ended World War I and the economic depression contributed to the rise of dictatorships in Europe and Asia. In Italy, Benito 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 believed that to be strong, a nation needed a strong government led by a dictator to impose order on society. Fascists also believed that a nation became strong by expanding its territory and building up its military. Fascists were anti-Communist. Many Europeans feared that Communists were trying to bring down their governments. Fascists played on these fears.

Mussolini marched on Rome in 1922. He claimed that he was coming to defend Italy against a Communist revolution. Conservative leaders of the Italian parliament persuaded the king to appoint Mussolini as the premier and head of the government. Once Mussolini took over, he quickly set up a dictatorship. He was supported by business leaders, landowners, and the Roman Catholic Church.

After the Russian Revolution began in 1917, the Bolshevik Party, led by Vladimir Lenin, set up Communist governments throughout the Russian empire. They renamed these territories the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). To control these territories, the Communists set up a one-party rule. They suppressed individual rights. They punished those who opposed them. Joseph Stalin became the Soviet leader by 1926, two years after Lenin died. Stalin started industrialization in the Soviet Union. He also caused the death of 8 to 10 million people who opposed the Communist policies.

In Germany, Adolf Hitler became leader of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, or the Nazi Party. The party was anti-Communist and nationalistic. Hitler hated the Allies for their treatment of Germany after World War I. Hitler wrote his autobiography, entitled *Mein Kampf,* in which he called for the unification of all Germans under one government. He claimed that certain Germans, especially blond, blue-eyed ones, were part of a “master race” called Aryans. He believed these Germans needed more living space. Therefore, he wanted Germany to expand east into Poland and Russia. Hitler believed that the people of Eastern Europe were part of an inferior race. Hitler’s prejudice was especially directed toward Jews. He believed that they were responsible for many of Germany’s problems.

Hitler worked to have Nazis elected to Germany’s parliament. Many Germans voted for Nazis, hoping that they might lead them out of the Great Depression that struck Germany. By 1932 the Nazis were the largest party in the German Parliament. Many German leaders supported Hitler and his nationalism. In 1933 they appointed him chancellor, or prime minister. After Hitler took office, he called for new elections. He ordered the police to crack down on the Communist Party and to intimidate voters. After the elections, the Nazi-dominated Parliament gave Hitler the powers of a dictator. Hitler then became president, which gave him control of the army.

In Japan, the economy was suffering. Japan had to import nearly all the resources it needed to make goods. The country did not make enough money from its exports to pay for the imports it needed. The Depression made the situation even worse. Many military leaders blamed the poor economy on the corrupt politicians. They believed that the only way for Japan to get the resources it needed was to seize territory. They looked to Manchuria, a province in northern China, which was rich in resources. A group of military officers decided to act alone and invade Manchuria. The prime minister of Japan wanted to end the invasion, but he was assassinated by Japanese officers. The Japanese military was now in control.

**• America Turns to Neutrality** *(page 539)*

After World War I, many Americans supported isolationism. They believed that the United States should stay out of international commitments that could bring the United States into a war. Support for isolationism became even stronger when many European nations announced that they could not repay money that they had borrowed during World War I. Then several books appeared, arguing that the arms manufacturers had tricked the United States into entering World War I. In 1934 Senator Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota had held hearings to investigate how involved the United States was. The Nye Committee investigated the huge profits that arms factories had made during the war. This gave the impression that these manufacturers did influence the United States to go to war. In response, Congress passed the Neutrality Act of 1935, which made it illegal for Americans to sell arms to any country at war.

The Spanish Civil War started in 1936. It was a conflict between the Communist government there and a group of Fascist rebels. The Soviet Union helped the Spanish government. Germany and Italy helped the Fascist rebels. In the same year, Germany and Italy signed an agreement to cooperate on several international issues. This relationship was referred to as the Rome- Berlin Axis. Japan joined Germany and Italy. The three nations became known as the Axis Powers.

The United States passed the Neutrality Act of 1937. It continued to ban the sale of arms. It also required that countries at war buy nonmilitary supplies on a “cash-and-carry” basis. Countries that needed supplies had to send their own ships to pick up the supplies, and they had to pay cash. The United States wanted to avoid a situation that had helped bring it into World War I.

President Roosevelt knew that ending the Depression was his first priority. However, he was not an isolationist. Instead, he supported **internationalism.** This was the belief that trade between nations creates prosperity and helps to prevent war. Roosevelt knew that isolationism was too strong to resist, however, so he did not veto the Neutrality Acts.

In July 1937, Japan launched a full-scale attack on China. Roosevelt decided to help the Chinese. Because neither China nor Japan had actually declared war, Roosevelt claimed that the Neutrality Act of 1937 did not apply. He ordered the sale of weapons to China. Yet Americans still wanted nothing to do with another war.

**WORLD WAR II BEGINS**

**• “Peace in Our Time”** *(page 543)*

European leaders did not try to stop Hitler. They thought that if they gave in to his demands, they would be able to avoid another war. They also thought that Hitler’s idea that all German-speaking regions of Europe be united with Germany was reasonable. They also believed that if the Nazi regime received more territory, they would be more interested in peace.

Hitler wanted Austria and Czechoslovakia. He believed these territories would provide Germany with food and soldiers. Hitler threatened to invade Austria unless Austrian Nazis were given important government posts. The Austrian chancellor decided to put the possibility of Austrian unification with Germany to a vote. Hitler feared the results, so in March 1938 he sent troops into Austria and announced the *Anschluss,* or unification, of Austria and Germany.

Hitler then announced that he wanted an area of Czechoslovakia that had many German-speaking people. Unlike Austria, which had a common culture and language with Germany, people in Czechoslovakia spoke many different languages. Furthermore, Czechoslovakia was also allied with the Soviet Union and France. The Czechs resisted Germany’s demands for a portion of their nation. To help stop another war, in September 1938, Britain, France, Italy, and Germany sent representatives to a meeting in Munich, Germany, to decide what to do about Czechoslovakia. At the meeting, Britain and France agreed to Hitler’s demands. This policy became known as **appeasement,** or giving concessions in exchange for peace. They believed that if they gave Hitler what he wanted, war could be avoided. Germany violated the agreement in March 1939, when German troops marched into Czechoslovakia.

Hitler then demanded Poland. The British and French knew that appeasement had failed. In May 1939, Hitler ordered the German army to prepare to invade Poland. He then began negotiations with the USSR, because he did not want to have to fight the Soviets if he was going to have to fight Britain and France. In August 1939, Germany and the USSR signed the nonaggression pact. Britain and France believed that Hitler made the deal with the USSR to free himself to fight a war against them and Poland. They did not know that the nonaggression pact included a deal between Germany and the USSR to divide Poland between them.

**• The War Begins** *(page 544)*

Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. It invaded Poland from the west, and the Soviets invaded it from the east. Hitler assumed that Britain and France would use appeasement toward him as they did before. However, on September 3, Britain and France declared war on Germany. World War II had started.

The Germans used a new type of warfare called **blitzkrieg,** or lightning war. This type of warfare used large numbers of tanks to break through and encircle enemy positions. In addition, waves of aircraft bombed enemy positions. Blitzkrieg depended on radios to coordinate tanks and aircraft. The Polish army was not able to defend itself against the German attack. By October 5, 1939, the Polish army had been defeated.

After invading Poland, Germany attacked Norway and Denmark on April 9, 1940, and controlled both nations within a month. Hitler then turned his blitzkrieg tactics against France.

On June 22, 1940, France surrendered to Hitler. Germany then installed a puppet government in the town of Vichy, France, to govern France. The Germans believed it would be easy to take Britain.

**• Britain Remains Defiant** *(page 547)*

Hitler expected Britain to surrender just as France did. For British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, surrender was not an option. When Hitler realized that Britain would not surrender, he prepared to invade. Getting across the English Channel was a problem for Germany, however. Germany had few transport ships, so it would first have to defeat the British air force. In June 1940, the German air force, called the *Luftwaffe,* began to attack British ships in the English Channel. Then in August, Germany started an all-out air attack to destroy the British Royal Air Force. This battle lasted into October and became known as the Battle of Britain.

The British Royal Air Force was greatly outnumbered, but it had an advantage. It had developed the use of radar. As a result, the British were able to detect incoming German planes and to intercept them. They inflicted more damage on the Germans than they endured. On October 12, 1940, Hitler canceled his plans to invade Britain. He had not anticipated the bravery of the British people