

CHAPTER
29
SECTION 1

Section Summary

FROM APPEASEMENT TO WAR

READING CHECK

Who were the members of the Axis powers?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *sanctions* mean in the underlined sentence? Look at the words, phrases, and sentences surrounding the word. Use the context clues you find to help you figure out the meaning of *sanctions*.

READING SKILL

Recognize Sequence What happened in Spain before Francisco Franco started a civil war there?

Throughout the 1930s, dictators took aggressive action. Yet, they met only verbal protests and pleas for peace from Western powers. For example, when the League of Nations condemned Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Japan simply withdrew from the League. A few years later, Japanese armies invaded China, starting the Second Sino-Japanese War. Meanwhile, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935. The League of Nations voted sanctions against Italy, but the League had no power to enforce its punishment of Mussolini. Hitler, too, defied the Western democracies by building up the German military and sending troops into the "demilitarized" Rhineland. This went against the Treaty of Versailles. The Western democracies denounced Hitler but adopted a policy of **appeasement**. Appeasement developed for a number of reasons, including widespread **pacifism**. The United States responded with a series of **Neutrality Acts**. The goal was to avoid involvement in a war, rather than to prevent one. While the Western democracies sought to avoid war, Germany, Italy, and Japan formed an alliance. It became known as the **Axis powers**.

In Spain, a new, more liberal government passed reforms that upset conservatives. General **Francisco Franco**, who was opposed to the new government, started a civil war. Hitler and Mussolini supported Franco, their fellow fascist. The Soviet Union sent troops to support the anti-Fascists, or Loyalists. The governments of Britain, France, and the United States remained neutral, although individuals from these countries fought with the Loyalists. By 1939, Franco had triumphed.

German aggression continued. In 1938, Hitler forced the **Anschluss**, or union with Austria. Next, Hitler set his sights on the **Sudentenland**. This was a part of Czechoslovakia where three million Germans lived. At the Munich Conference, which was held to discuss the situation, British and French leaders chose appeasement and allowed Hitler to annex the territory.

In March 1939, Hitler took over the rest of Czechoslovakia. Months later, Hitler and Stalin signed the **Nazi-Soviet Pact**. They agreed not to fight if the other went to war. This paved the way for Germany's invasion of Poland in September of 1939, which set off World War II.

Review Questions

1. How did the United States respond to the aggressive action of dictators in the 1930s?

2. What was the result of the Munich Conference?
