

CHAPTER
29
SECTION 2

Section Summary

THE AXIS ADVANCES

READING CHECK

What was the name of the German government in southern France?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

Find the word *nullified* in the underlined sentence. In math class you might have learned that there is nothing, or zero, in the null set. Use this clue about related words to help you figure out the meaning of *nullified*.

READING SKILL

Sequence Events When did the United States declare neutrality?

In September 1939, Nazi forces launched a **blitzkrieg** against Poland. First the **Luftwaffe**, the German air force, bombed. Then, tanks and troops pushed their way in. At the same time, Stalin invaded from the east, grabbing land. Within a month, Poland ceased to exist.

Then, in early 1940, Hitler conquered Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium. By May, German forces had bypassed France's Maginot Line. British forces that had been sent to help the French were trapped. In a desperate scheme, the British rescued their troops from **Dunkirk**. However, in June, the French were forced to surrender. Germany occupied northern France and set up a puppet state, the **Vichy** government, in the south.

The British, led by Winston Churchill, remained defiant against Hitler. In response, Hitler launched bombing raids over British cities that lasted from September 1940 until June 1941. Despite this blitz, Hitler was not able to take Britain. Meanwhile, Hitler sent one of his best commanders, **General Erwin Rommel**, to North Africa. Rommel had a string of successes there. In the Balkans, German and Italian forces added Greece and Yugoslavia to the growing Axis territory. At the same time, the Japanese were occupying lands in Asia and the Pacific.

In June 1941, Hitler nullified the Nazi-Soviet Pact by invading the Soviet Union. Stalin was unprepared, and the Soviet army suffered great losses. The Germans advanced toward Moscow and Leningrad. During a lengthy siege of Leningrad, more than a million Russians died. The severe Russian winter finally slowed the German army.

As they marched across Europe, the Nazis sent millions to **concentration camps** to work as slave laborers. Even worse, Hitler established death camps to kill those he judged racially inferior. Among many others, some six million Jews were killed in what became known as the **Holocaust**.

The United States declared neutrality at the beginning of the war. Yet many Americans sympathized with those who fought the Axis powers. Congress passed the **Lend-Lease Act** of 1941, allowing the United States to sell or lend war goods to foes of the Axis. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor. Four days later, Congress declared war on Japan.

Review Questions

1. What countries were conquered by Germany in 1939 and 1940?

2. What was the purpose of the Lend-Lease Act?
