

Aggression & Conflict: An Overview

- ❑ World War I left many feeling like war no longer had a place in society.
 - Attempts were made to reduce the likelihood of conflict including the creation of the League of Nations and the Kellogg–Briand Pact which renounced war as a tool of state.
 - These efforts failed; by the 1930s a series of regional conflicts began.
- ❑ Over the course of the decade, these regional conflicts drew the attention of an increasing number of global powers and by the 1940s they culminated in the Second World War.



Japanese Aggression & Conflict

- ❑ In 1931, Japan invaded the northern Chinese territory of Manchuria.
- ❑ Japanese business interests were heavily invested in the regions iron and coal resources.
- ❑ The Japanese military used an explosion along a Japanese owned railroad in the Manchurian town of Mukden as a pretext for invasion.
 - Once in control, the Japanese set up a puppet government to ostensibly give Manchuria independence.
 - Members of the League of Nations saw the invasion for what it was, Japanese imperialism.
 - The League demanded that Japan withdraw from Manchuria.
 - Japan opted to stay in Manchuria and withdraw from the League of Nations instead.
- ❑ The Japanese invasion of Manchuria was the first in the series of regional conflicts that led to WWII.
- ❑ In 1937 German and Japanese aggression continued.
 - In July of 1937 Japan mounted a full scale invasion of China.
 - The better equipped Japanese forces advanced quickly and by December of 1937 they took the Chinese capital city of Nanjing.
 - In what is called the Rape of Nanjing, Japanese troops killed 300,000 prisoners of war and civilians and raped 20,000 women.
 - The treatment of Chinese civilians in Nanjing was savagely violent and public with many photographers recording the carnage.



Italian Aggression & Conflict

- ❑ Encouraged by the League's failure to contain Japanese imperialist ambitions in Asia, Benito Mussolini of Italy ordered an invasion of Ethiopia in 1935.
 - Like the Japanese, Mussolini sought to glorify his nation through imperial conquest.
 - Further he wished to avenge an Ethiopian defeat of Italy in the 1890s.
- ❑ Haile Selassie, the emperor of Ethiopia, appealed to the League of Nations for help.
 - The League condemned the invasion but none of the great powers did anything to stop him.
 - In fact, the British allowed the Italian military to use the Suez Canal to move supplies and troops to East Africa for the invasion.



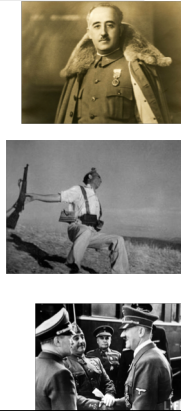
German Aggression & Conflict

- ❑ In the same year that Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, Hitler announced that Germany would no longer obey the troop limits placed on them by the Treaty of Versailles.
 - The League condemned this move but did nothing.
- ❑ In March of 1936, Hitler violated the treaty again by moving German troops into the demilitarized buffer between Germany and France called the Rhineland.
 - While the move stunned members of the League, they took no action.
- ❑ Britain argued for a policy of appeasement in the hopes of maintaining peace.
- ❑ In October of '36 Germany and Italy formed an alliance to which they added Japan in November forming the Axis Powers.



Spanish Aggression & Conflict

- ❑ In July of 1936, Francisco Franco a Spanish General led a revolt against Spain's Republican government.
 - Franco and his supports in the military wished to establish a fascist regime similar to that of Hitler and Mussolini.
- ❑ A civil war broke out that lasted until Franco's victory in 1939.
 - Mussolini and Hitler sent troops and equipment to support Franco during the civil war; only the Soviet Union supported the forces of the Spanish Republic.



Continued German Aggression & Conflict

- ❑ In November 1937 Hitler announced plans for the Anschluss, the unification of Germany and Austria.
 - While this move was prohibited by the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler carried out the annexation of Austria in March of 1938 with little resistance from other European nations.
- ❑ Next he turned to the German speaking region of Czechoslovakia called the Sudetenland.
 - Hitler demanded that this land be turned over to Germany in September of 1938.
- ❑ German, French, British, and Italian leaders met to discuss these demands in Munich.
 - Hoping to maintain peace through appeasement, France and Britain agreed to the German annexation of the Sudetenland at the Munich Conference.
- ❑ In March of 1939 Hitler took all of Czechoslovakia.
 - With this move it became increasingly clear that appeasement would not prevent war; Britain and France pledged to declare war on Germany if Hitler threatened Poland.