

## **US History**

### **World War II - Europe**

#### **Learning Target:**

*I can assess how appeasement helped lead to the start of WWII and examine events of the war before US involvement.*

#### **1. The Outbreak of World War II**

##### ***Nazi Expansion –***

- March 1939 Hitler's armies occupied all of Czechoslovakia
- Hitler then proposed to annex the Polish port city of Danzig
  - Poles refused to give control of Danzig to the Nazis
- France and Britain announced they would go to war if Hitler attacked Poland
  - Called on Soviet Union for assistance against Nazi expansion

##### ***The Soviet/Nazi Nonaggression Pact –***

- August 23, 1939 Stalin & Hitler shock the world
- Stalin & Hitler agreed not to attack each other
- Secretly the two nations agreed to divide a conquered Poland between them
- Shocking because Stalin had been trying to rally the world against fascism

##### ***War Breaks Out –***

- Sept. 1, 1939 – German armies moved into Poland
- Sept. 3, 1939 – Britain and France declare war on Germany & become known as the Allied Powers
- Soviet troops invaded Poland from the east and occupied parts of Poland & Finland

##### ***The Fall of France –***

##### **German Blitzkrieg –**

- Known as "lightning war"
- The use of tanks, planes, paratroopers, and advanced communication to attack quickly and overwhelm one's opponent
- Very quickly defeated Poland with this method

##### **France Mobilizes & Falls–**

- French troops mobilized for attack around the Maginot Line
  - Located on the southern border of France and Germany
  - A line of concrete fortifications built to stop an invasion
  - Germans invaded through the Ardennes instead (thought to be impassable)
- Using Blitzkrieg the Germans quickly defeated Belgium, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and Northern France
- Germans then proceeded to establish a puppet French government in Vichy in southern France

### The Battle of Britain –

- May 10, 1940 – Winston Churchill is elected Prime Minister of Britain
- With the fall of France Britain stood alone against the Axis
- Churchill strongly opposed anymore appeasement towards Hitler and vowed to continue fighting
- August 1940 – The British withstood continuous bombing by the Germans
  - Greatly outnumbered the British Royal Air Force never quit defending the British from the Germans
- Hitler eventually called off the invasion of Great Britain indefinitely

### ***US Response to War –***

#### Amendment of the Neutrality Act –

- President Roosevelt urged Congress to amend the neutrality acts that barred export of military supplies
- Congress compromised and allowed nations to buy military supplies but had to transport the supplies on their own ships

#### Presidential Election of 1940 –

- At the same time Roosevelt won reelection for his third term in 1940 by promising to keep the US out of war
- Roosevelt secretly saw American involvement as unavoidable

#### Lend-Lease Act –

- War materials flowed between the US & Britain
- Britain lacked the money to continue purchasing American supplies
- Roosevelt proposed the US lend or lease these supplies to Britain
- The U.S. became the “Great Arsenal of Democracy”

### ***Tensions Mount –***

- German subs were waging war on all Allied ships in the Atlantic
- Roosevelt issued “shoot-on-sight” orders to US warships in the Atlantic
- US was almost in undeclared war with Germany

### ***The Soviets Are Attacked –***

- June 1941 – Hitler again shocks the world by invading the Soviet Union
- Soviets were caught off guard by the violation of their agreement
- The Soviets suffered many defeats early on
- By the fall of 1941 the Germans had advanced deep into the Soviet Union