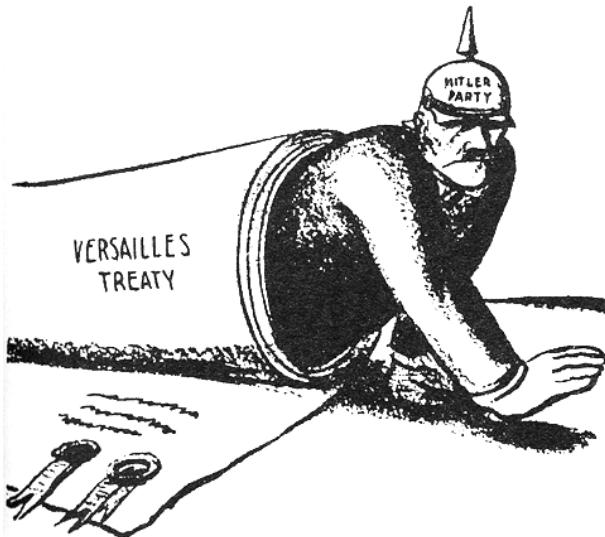


# The Treaty of Versailles

## Punishment of Germany:

The treaty that ended the First World War was actually one of the leading causes of World War II. First of all, under the terms of the treaty, Germany was forced to pay reparations to the victorious Allied Powers. These cash payments put Germany deep into debt. Secondly, Germany was forced to disarm and give up all of her colonies both overseas and in Europe. Thirdly, Germany was forced to take full blame for the war even though it was not entirely their fault. Adolf Hitler used the German anger over these conditions of the Treaty to unite the German people behind his NAZI party.



## The United States:

Lastly, because of American refusal to sign the Treaty, we were not in the League of Nations. The effect of this lack of membership meant that the League of Nations did not have any

big, strong countries in it. When people like Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini started being losers in the 1930's, there was no one to stand up to them.



# Appeasement

Hitler came to power in 1933 and he sought to (1) destroy the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles and (2) unite all the German speaking peoples under the rule of Germany.

1. In 1936, Adolf Hitler moved troops into the Rhineland, near the border of France and Belgium.
2. In 1938, he took over Austria.
3. Later that year, he demanded the Sudetenland – the western border of Czechoslovakia.
4. In early 1939, Hitler invaded the remainder of Czechoslovakia.

All of these moves were intentional violations of the Treaty of Versailles. Britain and France continually gave into German aggression in Europe because they wanted to avoid another war. Hitler knew the European powers were unwilling to join another World War and he continued to gobble up territory without any fear of penalty from Britain and France.

## Stepping Stones to Glory



# Aggression by Dictators

## Germany:

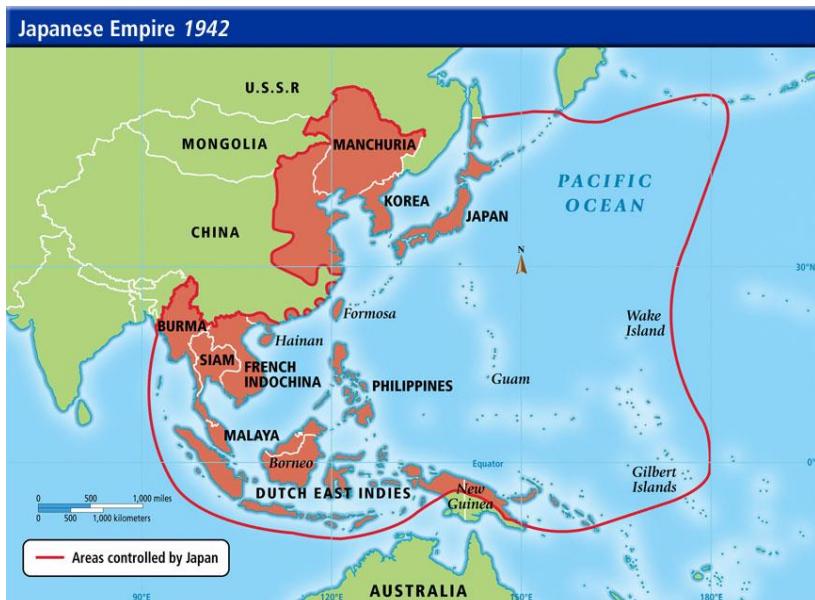
There were three examples of aggression that led to World War Two. First, and probably the largest, were the warlike acts of Adolf Hitler and the NAZIS. Hitler came to power in Germany promising to rebuild the defeated country. Soon, he had increased the size of the army, and began taking over countries such as Rhineland, Austria, western Czechoslovakia, and Poland.



## Japan:

Secondly, Japan was beginning to emerge as a world power. Japan, a small island nation that is smaller than California, lacked many important natural resources such as coal and oil. Japanese leaders felt that expanding into Asia was the only way for them to

prosper. In 1931 Japan invaded northern China. Later in the decade, the Japanese began an all out war in China. Japanese planes bombed Chinese cities and the Japanese army took over much of northern and central China.



## Italy:

Lastly, Benito Mussolini seized power in Italy. Once in power, Mussolini outlawed all other political parties except his own Fascist Party. Children were made to recite "Mussolini is always right" in school as early as kindergarten. Mussolini convinced Italians that to be the second coming of the Roman Empire, they must take over the weaker countries around them. Therefore, in 1935, Italy invaded the tiny African Empire of Ethiopia. Ethiopia's horse cavalry and antique rifles were no match for Italy's air force and tanks. And, like all of the other examples of aggression across the world, the League of Nations stood by and did NOTHING.



# Worldwide Depression

## The United States (Allies Powers):

In the United States during the 1930's, people had too many economic worries to care about what was going on in Europe and Asia. American stayed out of the events surrounding Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese because we were just too poor to care.

## Germany (Axis Powers):

In other countries, however, the Great Depression had a different effect. Adolf Hitler, for example, used the poor economic state of his country to get elected. He promised every German a job and a better lifestyle. The jobs Hitler provided happened to be in the military or producing goods for the armed forces.



Probably from the mid-1930's, this poster reads, "Hitler is building. Help him. Buy German goods."

## Japan and Italy: (Axis Powers):

Other countries such as Japan and Italy saw the Great Depression as an opportunity to take what they needed from the nations around them. Because everyone was weak, these large, aggressive countries attacked weaker nations without resistance.

