****Chapter 2 ‘Between the Wars’ summary

2.1 Prosperity and crisis in the United States

The United States had become one of the most, if not the most, prosperous countries in the world in the first ten years of the **interbellum**. Especially the car and electro-technical industry experienced a boom. Productivity increased because of the switch from coal to electricity and the introduction of the **assembly line**. The US became the first **consumer society**, with the increasing demand of e.g. refrigerators and washing machines.

Though, this tempestuous time wouldn’t last for long. After the **stock market crash** of 1929, where people frantically sold their stocks, the economy fell into a great depression. From 1933, President Roosevelt was able to ease the crisis with the **New Deal**, where he saved banks with government money and for example started investing in industry and agriculture again.

Interbellum period between the two world wars

Assembly line production system where workers always perform the same task on products that pass them by

Consumer society society in which many consumer products are bought

Stock market crash sharp and quick decline of the price of stocks on the stock exchange

New Deal president Roosevelt’s policy to fight the economic crisis with government spending

2.2 Fascism and communism

Italy After 1915, Italian war veterans felt cheated by their politicians. They became members of commando groups and fought under the name of ‘**fascism**’, thought of by their leader Mussolini. The fascists came to power with violence in 1922. This believe quickly became popular, mainly because of Mussolini’s talent of speaking. Fascism glorified violence and was against democracy.

In October 1922 Mussolini organized a march on Rome and threatened that they would take over the city if the government did not step down. Fearing a civil war, the king dismissed the government and appointed Mussolini as prime minister. Afterwards, Mussolini drew all the power to himself and became a **totalitarian** state. Though, he did not completely succeed at becoming a totalitarian state, because the church, army and business life still partly remained independent.

Russia The Russian revolution and civil war had caused a famine. To make revival of the economy, Lenin introduced the **New Economic Policy** (NEP). Small private companies were allowed again and farmers were allowed to sell part of their production on the free market. This resulted in a certain level of prosperity.

After Lenin’s death, Stalin came forward as communistic party leader. During his first years he eliminated his competitors. After this he thought it was time to make a superpower of Russia and decided that they’d have to catch up with industrialized countries. Very exact plans were made which contained precisely which goals had to be met. The development of heavy industry was a top priority. In this area **planned economy** was a great success.

Small peasant farms were eliminated and replaced by gigantic farms. Consequently, agriculture was collectivized. The land and other possessions of the farmers were taken away and given to large agriculture companies, named **kolkhozy**. This is because independent farmers did not fit in a communist society, according to Stalin. Millions of people were killed because of refusing to work on the **collectivization** of agriculture.

Fascism anti-democratic, totalitarian, and extreme-national political movement

Totalitarianism system where the government has total control over complete society

New Economic Policy Lenin’s policy from 1921 that allowed farmers and small companies to work for the free market

Planned Economy economy in which the state decides what should be produced

Kolkhozy large agricultural company where farmers worked together and had to make deliveries to the state at a fixed price

*Kulaks rich farmers, communist term of abuse for farmers who did not cooperate with collectivization*

*Stalinism variant of communism with extreme oppression under one leader who is revered*

2.3 Germany from democracy to dictatorship

After the mass **inflation** of 1923, a period of peacefulness and prosperity followed. The stock market crash of 1929 ended all this. The economy plunged and millions of Germans became unemployed. The democratic parties did nothing and the two anti-democratic parties benefited from this: the communist party and Hitler’s Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterspartei (NSDAP)

The defeat in 1918 made Hitler a bitter man. In 1920 he joined the recently founded NSDAP. It appeared he was very talented in stirring up his audience. Because of this he quickly became the party’s leader. **National-socialism** was similar to fascism. It was just as anti-democratic, nationalistic and totalitarian. But unlike the fascists, the **Nazis** supported a **racial doctrine**.

In 1923 Hitler was arrested because of his attempt to overthrow the government in Berlin. After his release, the role of the NSDAP seemed to have played out. Because of the global crisis it even became more popular. Hitler blamed the democrats and the Jews. He would erase the ‘dictate of Versailles’ and would make Germany powerful again. He also promised work and prosperity. The **SA**, the armed division of the NSDAP stormed Jewish shops and bet up Jews, socialist and communists. Also the **SS** grew which came from Hitler’s security service and was feared for its extreme cruelty.

In January 1933, the conservative elites thought they could use Hitler to end democracy and made him chancellor. They were terribly wrong. Hitler soon dissolved parliament and took over leadership over Germany.

After the transfer of power, the Nazis started building a totalitarian state at lightning speed. Only the NSDAP party was prohibited. A ministry for propaganda was created under the leadership of Hitler’s loyal adjudant Goebbels, who controlled all newspapers, films and radio. Of course all that was advertised was he himself. All boys and girls had to become members of the Hitlerjugend.

Hitler officially called himself *führer* of the German nation in 1934.

In violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler started an enormous armaments programme. This led to a decrease in unemployment. Hitler was very popular. But what people did not see, or did not want to see was the terror against political opponents and Jewish citizens who had been deported to **concentration camps** one year later.

Inflation when money is becoming worth less

National-socialism extreme nationalist, totalitarian and racist political movement

Nazi abbreviation for national-socialist

Racial doctrine incorrect theory that states are superior and inferior races

SA abbreviation of Sturmabteilung, party army of the NSDAP

SS abbreviation of Schutzstaffel, Hitler’s elite troops

Concentration camps prison camp

**TIMELINE** (see learning target \*15)

1922 Mussolini becomes prime minister of Italy

1928 Stalin becomes dictator of the Soviet Union

1929 Beginning of the global crisis

1932 NSDAP became the largest party

1933 - Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany

- Roosevelt becomes president of the US

- German Parliament building goes up into flames

- Parliament gave Hitler total control, and he abolished other party’s